THE IMPACT OF THE END OF THE COLD WAR ON TRANSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that F.W. de Klerk's historic February 1990 speech was the end product of a set of circumstances in recent South African and global history which made possible the new phase of transitional politics which South Africa is currently experiencing. It seeks to establish that of all the factors that contributed to change, it was the late 1980s thaw in the Cold War, and its resultant repercussions internationally and regionally which was the catalytic factor which made the new era possible. In all the literature on transition there has been no comprehensive analysis of the plausible link between the two superpowers agreeing in the mid-1980s to abandon confrontational practices and to change their approaches to regional conflicts and the South African government agreeing to negotiate for a new political dispensation. This thesis will seek to establish and analyse such a link.

By 1986 there was in certain governmental circles a non-public view that the policy of apartheid had failed both as a solution to the problem of black political aspirations and as a legitimating ideology. Constraining any serious move towards political change was a widely held fear at the top level of government that an accelerated reform process would make South Africa vulnerable to external aggression and internal revolutionary forces. This thesis suggests that the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe and the 'new political thinking' in Soviet foreign policy resulted in the notion of a communist-inspired total onslaught against South Africa losing currency - as did the position of those within the ruling elite who remained dogmatically attached to it.

The end of the Cold War is the common thread which links South Africa's international, regional and domestic environments. Two important events occurred in the international and regional arenas, which against the backdrop of the end of the Cold War, strengthened the credibility of the alternative view in government: (i) the October 1986 Reykjavik Summit and (ii) the South African Defence Force setback at Cuito Cuanavale.

P.W. Botha's resignation as leader of the National Party and soon after as State President created the political space through which the view of the reformers could emerge as dominant. Recognising that neither the international nor regional environments sustained the beliefs and fears held by the military hawks, F.W. de Klerk was able to capitalise on the ambience of negotiations and apply it to the South African situation. De Klerk's February 1990 speech was therefore the culmination of a process which had its origins in the mid-1980's.

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INTRODUCTION

F.W. de Klerk's speech of February 1990 redefined politics in South Africa and ushered in a new era of transitional politics - away from confrontation and apartheid towards co-operation and negotiation. Contrary to an oft-stated view, the President's dramatic announcements were not the result of one leaders vision, nor were they, as Joe Slovo put it, "the result of a sudden conversion by de Klerk on the road to Damascus" (Chakadoza, 1989: 153). The speech was rather the end-product or a culmination of a set of circumstances in recent South African and global history which made possible the new phase of politics which South Africa is currently experiencing. This thesis will argue that of all these factors, it was the late 1980s thaw in the Cold War, and its resultant repercussions internationally and regionally, which was the decisive factor in triggering De Klerk's u-turn in National Party politics.

During the mid-1980s South Africa was in the grip of a profound political and economic crisis. Amongst its symptoms were:

* Unprecedented levels of violence throughout the country. The overriding grievance triggering violent protests in September 1984 was the adoption of a racially segregated Tricameral Parliament which gave limited voice to Coloureds and Indians, but excluded Blacks. The unrest spread rapidly across South Africa as internal resistance developed into a popular uprising of unprecedented scope, duration and intensity.

* An economic recession as a result of political factors aggravating economic pressures. The declaration of a State of Emergency in July 1985 and Botha's security forces' ruthless methods of quelling township disturbances fuelled strong Western criticism and increased the call for sanctions. The effect on the economy was a marked devaluation in the external value of the rand. Additionally, during this time, the international impact of P.W. Botha's Rubicon speech on the South african economy was calamitous. The following day share prices dropped and the value of the rand plummeted. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange was closed for three days, while restrictions were placed on the outward flow of capital. These events were subsequent to the decision of major foreign banks, following the lead of Chase Manhattan in New York, not to 'roll over' South Africa's due short-term loans. This impacted severely on the balance of payments problem. Output and investment declined, interest rates rose along with inflation and billions of rand left the country in capital flight.

* A third contributing factor to South Africa's economic crisis which followed the banks' action was the passage by the United States Congress of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) in 1986 which imposed a range of economic sanctions on South Africa. Also, the escalating cost of, and casualties in, the wars in Angola and Namibia and the burden of parasitic bantustans awash with corruption further compounded the economic crisis.

These domestic and international pressures together tipped the balance in favour of negotiation. However, these pressures had been mounting for many years, so the question

which needs to be posed is why in 1990 did the National Party move to address them, and not say in 1986? It will be argued in this thesis that these pressures in themselves, were not sufficient to precipitate the process of transition in South Africa. The end of the Cold War was the catalytic factor which made negotiations possible since it provided a changed context in which domestic issues could be resolved.

By 1986 serious divisions within the ruling elite were emerging as to the nature and pace of proposed solutions to the crisis facing South Africa. There was in certain government circles a non-public view that the policy of apartheid had failed, both as a solution to the problem of black political aspirations and as a legitimating ideology. These elements in both the government and bureaucracy had come round to the view that the solution to South Africa's lay in support for negotiations and a transformation of government policy away from apartheid policies.

Constraining any serious move towards profound political change and reform, however, was a widely-held fear at the top level of government that an accelerated reform process would make South Africa more vulnerable to external aggressors and internal revolutionary forces. This faction of the ruling elite sincerely believed that the ultimate aim of the Soviet Union was the overthrow of the body politic in South Africa and its replacement with a marxist-orientated government tied body and soul to the Soviet Union. In this perspective, the major threat to the South Africa's security was seen as being the Soviet Union, working through its surrogates - the African National Congress (ANC) and South African Communist Party (SACP). In Namibia, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was seen as playing a similar role in regard to Soviet objectives. This was the worldview of that faction

within the P.W. Botha government, which, at that time, constituted the most powerful and dominant faction within the ruling power bloc.

By the mid-1980s the validity of this perception was being seriously questioned. Alternative policy proposals were being developed and debated, particularly in diplomatic and intelligence circles. Complementing this group were other reformists within Afrikanerdom, such as Willem de Klerk (F.W. de Klerk's brother), who argued that the National Party had lost the political initiative and who accepted the inevitability of black majority rule. This faction of the National Party argued for a political solution to South Africa's crisis. By contrast, the securocrats continued to advocate domestic repression and destabilisation.

Despite the fact that political and economic crises facing South Africa and an ideologically divided power bloc constituted tremendous pressures for reform, the National Party would have been able to remain on power for years. This due to the fact that P.W. Botha's power was firmly entrenched because his political base was established in and supported by the military. As long as it had the backing of the military, the National Party could cancel elections, suspend the constitution, or continue with minority party domination through the existing administrative-security apparatus. During the mid-1980s the military was at the centre of the decision-making structure, wielding more political power than ever through the State Security Council (a core of military, intelligence and party chiefs). The end of the Cold War, however, rendered obsolete the whole notion of a "Total Onslaught" and collapse of the Soviet Union put paid once and for all to any fear of revolutionary overthrow of the South African government. More than that, it strengthened the position of those in government who favoured a negotiated settlement within South Africa.

It is most unlikely that the government would have moved towards negotiations had the international climate remained as unfavourable as the securocrats had perceived it to be. In those governmental circles no settlement with the ANC and its affiliates would have been possible as long as it was backed by the Soviet Union. By the late 1980s the Soviet Union had indicated that it favoured a peaceful settlement in South Africa and stressed it was up to the South Africans themselves to reach accommodation.

The Cold War factor was thus a catalytic trigger to the transformation of South Africa towards transition. President De Klerk himself in his seminal speech on 2 February 1990 noted that the option to negotiate had become attractive precisely because of the 'collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union' (Van Zyl Slabbert, 1990: 34). Like the ideology of communism, the entire structure of apartheid constructed by Malan and maintained by Strijdom, Vewoerd, Vorster and Botha had begun to collapse. For South Africa, the ultimate collapse, as represented by De Klerk's speech, was both the result of and reinforced by international and regional events in which Eastern Europe and Angola/Namibia were critical.

The politics of South Africa are multifaceted, with a dynamic interplay between domestic forces and regional and international developments. Internationally, the thaw in the Cold War fundamentally changed superpower politics, affecting their approach to regional conflicts. Four years prior to F.W. de Klerk's momentous speech, at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on 1 March 1986, Secretary General Gorbachev maintained that the southern African conflict was among the Third World 'flash points' which needed to be solved by political means (Tetekin, 1990: 6; Kempton, 1991:

551). This thesis will argue that a plausible link can be established between the two superpowers agreeing in the mid-1980s to abandon confrontational practices and to change their approaches to so-called 'regional conflicts' and the South African government agreeing to negotiate for a new political dispensation.

Two important events occurred in the international and regional arenas which, against the backdrop of the end of the Cold War, strengthened the credibility of the alternative view in governmental circles.

The first important development determining the future of southern Africa took place in Iceland at the October 1986 Reykjavik Summit between President Ronald Reagan and Secretary General Mikail Gorbachev. Here a bargain was struck between the two superpowers which ultimately determined the development of the democratic process in southern Africa. In return for US assurances of non-intervention in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union renounced its aspirations to hegemony in Africa. The effect was to leave the United States as the sole power in the region. The Soviet Union, instead of backing diplomacy with force, began to place more emphasis on political and diplomatic alliances than military ones (Africa Confidential: 3.3.1988). Since Soviet activism in southern Africa had been the major spur to South Africa's aggressive involvement in the region from the late 1970s, the collapse of communism seriously undermined the view that there was a Soviet threat to South Africa.

The second event was the South African Defence Force (SADF) setback at Cuito Cuanavale which produced a new regional conjecture. The loss of South African air superiority; the

introduction of more modern and technologically advanced equipment by the Cubans; and their more offensive behaviour changed the balance of military power in Angola. The significance of Cuito Cuanavale is that it smashed the myth of SADF invincibility and exposed important vulnerabilities. The change in the balance of forces after Cuito Cuanavale created a new situation in which even those factions in the state most committed to escalating aggression and destabilisation were compelled to consider other options. After Cuito Cuanavale, objectives which seemed possible to advance through economic and diplomatic action took precedence over military ones.

In the context of the changed international environment, the setback at Cuito Cuanavale demonstrated that negotiations offered the best solution to South Africa's regional crisis, since through negotiations all parties could seek an honourable withdrawal. Soviet support for American initiatives to secure the withdrawal of Cuban and South African forces from Angola and their arrangements for Namibian independence through the implementation of Security Council Resolution 435 represented concrete application of their changed regional policies. South Africa's commitment to negotiations and the positive role it played in the Namibian independence process highlighted the untenability of continued domestic minority rule. It also bolstered the position of the reformers in government.

P.W. Botha's resignation as leader of the National Party and soon after as State President created the political space in which the view of the reformers could emerge as dominant. F.W. de Klerk, receptive to the changes internationally and regionally as a result of the end of the Cold War, seized the opportunity to negotiate South Africa's future. With the collapse of the Cold War the government was able to negotiate from a position of strength since it did

not consider the state to be under serious threat; nor did it perceive a transfer of power to be imminent.

Thus, F.W. de Klerk was able to move the government into transition firm in the conviction that the outcome of negotiations would strengthen the state. It was believed that through negotiation South Africa would be accepted back into the international community, its domestic crisis be resolved while white privilege could be preserved by ensuring that whites would retain some power and control in a future South Africa. The end of the Cold War, therefore, is the common thread which links South Africa's international, regional and domestic environments. Consequently, President de Klerk's February 1990 speech was the culmination of a process which dated back to the mid-1980s.

CHAPTER 2

GORBACHEV'S 'NEW POLITICAL THINKING'

The second half of the 1980s was to be an era of dynamic change in international affairs as a result of Mikhail Gorbachev's succession to the Kremlin leadership in March 1985. Gorbachev's reform programme of domestic restructuring (*perestroika*) and "new political thinking" (*novoe politchesekoe mysclenie*) in foreign affairs, along with the associated openness (*glasnost*), evolved in response to socioeconomic stagnation on the domestic front and the prohibitive costs of the expansion of Soviet power abroad. In their application, the principles of "new thinking" affected almost every area of Soviet foreign policy, most notably superpower relations and Soviet involvement in Third World regional conflicts in which Moscow took upon itself the role of mediator/peacemaker.

When Gorbachev came to power it was evident that the most crippling price that the Soviet Union had paid for its immense military growth and globalist ambitions was the disorientation, dislocation and deformation of the Soviet economy. The Soviet Union had entered into a period of stagnation and decline, far behind the United States, Western Europe and Japan as they moved into an era of high-technology. The stagnation of the Soviet economy had domestic reverberations as the demand and competition for scarce resources and wealth among the various nationalities and republics became sharper and more aggravated as the decade of the eighties unfolded.

With the advent of the Reagan Doctrine's Strategic Defence Initiative, Moscow was compelled to enter into a new phase of competition with the US. This, together with

accumulated domestic problems, seriously compromised the capacity of the Soviet Union to advance its globalist ambitions abroad and compelled a fundamental re-examination of the Soviet agenda and its priorities in foreign and domestic policy (Aspaturian, 1990: 4-6).

Gorbachev's 'new political thinking' on foreign policy was based on four major views.

First, the Soviet leadership recognised that the nuclear arms race posed a potential threat to the very existence of mankind, rather than a means of stabilising world affairs. In a bi-polar world "mutually assured destruction" (MAD), through nuclear weapons, was intended to restrain the power blocs from launching an attack on each other. This principle did prevent the two blocs from engaging in direct warfare. However, the Third World, in particular, became an arena of intense competition when the Reagan Administration actively sought to roll back the progress of communism.

The necessity for a change of direction in Soviet foreign policy was conceptualised by Gorbachev:

> But while concentrating enormous funds and attention on the military aspect of countering imperialism ... we allowed ourselves to be drawn into an arms race, which could not but affect the country's socioeconomic developments and it's international standing .... To put it more bluntly, without overturning the logic of this course, we could actually have found ourselves on the brink of a military confrontation. Hence, what was needed was not just a refinement of foreign policy, but its determined reshaping. This called for new political thinking. (Aspaturian, 1990: 6)

The 'new political thinking' rejected war as a means of resolving political and ideological contradictions between states. Further, the arms race had developed a momentum of its own in the efforts of each superpower to remain technologically ahead of the other. In the quest

to maintain an advantage over the enemy growing technological innovation in the provision of armaments began to take priority over political and socioeconomic conditions. In the process the survival potential of mankind decreased dramatically as the weapon systems became more invulnerable.

Gorbachev's 'new political thinking' emphasised that a full-scale nuclear war should be avoided for the sake of the survival of mankind. In order to achieve this it was necessary to move away from the traditional bi-polar conception that security could be guaranteed by means of military deterrence. Given that military developments had brought the world to the brink of destruction, diplomatic and political means had to be regarded as the only legitimate channels through which differences could be settled (Gorbachev, 1987: 140). This replaced the old doctrine of *si vis parabellum* (if you want peace, prepare for war) with the belief that war could only be prevented through mediation.

The second principle of 'new political thinking' was based on the Soviet leaders' belief that because nuclear warfare posed such a threat to the survival of mankind, any conflict situation which had the potential to escalate should be settled through negotiation. Gorbachev stressed the urgency and necessity for this "since the hotbeds of danger of war are not dying down, either in Asia or on other continents. We are in favour of stepping up collective searches for ways of diffusing conflict in the Middle East, in Central America, in southern Africa, in all the planets hot spot's" (Gorbachev, 1987: 15,16). According to the new thinking, regional conflicts held the real possibility of escalating into an ultimate confrontation between the two superpowers, since there was no guarantee that nuclear weapons would not be used in such circumstances. Incorporated in this principle was a willingness to co-operate with

Western countries, particularly the United States, to achieving it.

A profound implication of the 'new thinking' for the Third World was that regional conflicts were no longer viewed through a rigid moral prism in which the protagonists were defined in terms of "progressive" and "reactionary" forces, but viewed in terms of conflicting interests, which are susceptible to negotiation and settlement. It followed from this that the Third World was no longer seen as an arena for zero-sum competition and confrontation between the superpowers (Aspaturian, 1990: 34). This was spelt out in *Pravda* by Evegnii Primakov:

> ... to exclude the exporting of revolution is the imperative of the nuclear age. At the same time, the stabilisation of the international situation cannot and must not be achieved by artificial maintenance of the status quo, in other words by exporting counterrevolution .... The new philosophy of foreign politics must include renunciation of the horizontal spreading of confrontation between the USA and the Soviet Union. In this context it is of particular importance to dispense with looking at regional conflicts through the prism of Soviet-American rivalry, which would hamper their settlement. (de V. du Toit, 1990: 177)

According to the new conception, one of the inherent dangers of regional conflicts was that they carried the threat of sparking superpower confrontation. This was due to their propensity to spread geographically from one issue to another, thereby drawing in the superpowers. The two superpowers as such held responsibility to sponsor and support the policies of national reconciliation necessary to achieve a political settlement, be prepared to guarantee any settlement reached and prevent external intervention (Light, 1991: 264, 265).

The Soviet acceptance of the concept of 'regional conflict', previously an ideological anathema to Soviet thinking which preferred "wars of national and social liberation" or

"imperialist wars", meant that the concept of national liberation also diminished as an analytical tool (Aspaturian, 1990: 28, 33).

This was illustrated by the reduced attention given to liberation movements and Soviet disillusionment with developments in the Third World. Soviet Third World Policy had been more of a financial and economic drain on resources than a source of replenishment. By treating some Third World states as viable economic entities, not requiring 'national liberation' the Soviet Union was more likely to attract diplomatic support for its policies. (Valenta & Cibulka, 1990:34)

Third, the new Soviet foreign policy no longer perceived socialism as the dominant development model for the Third World. This was based on the precept that the world is an integrated whole in which instability in one of the constituent parts threatens the whole. In the Cold War era, Soviet ideology was based on the belief that the world was divided into two conflicting power blocs: capitalism and socialism. Gorbachev amended the Brezhnev Doctrine by arguing that countries have "no claims to be imposing their notions about social development on anyone" (de V. du Toit, 1990: 177).

The 'new political thinking' promoted the fact that countries had the freedom to choose their own developmental directions. This concept was supported by Gorbachev in his book *Perestroika* where he wrote:

> Universal security in our time rests upon the recognition of the rights of every nation to choose its own path of social development ... A nation may choose either capitalism or socialism. This is its sovereign right. Nations cannot and should not pattern their life after the United States or the Soviet Union. (Gorbachev, 1987: 143)

Not only did Soviet policy in the Third World fail to measure up to the criterion of "economic profitability", but it had also damaged the *credenza* of socialism. This was indicated by an article in *Izvestia* by Aleksander Borin, an advisor to Gorbachev, when he wrote:

> ... socialism's principle economic task - overtaking capitalism in labour productivity and per-capita output - was not solved. We had not created a society that in every respect was capable of serving as an example, as a model for imitation, and as a stimulus in the struggle for the socialist transformation of the world .... (Aspaturian, 1990: 22)

The fourth element of 'new political thinking' was that foreign policy would no longer be based on class interests, but universal human values as a basis for international relations (Nel, 1990: 7). By linking a state's foreign policy to its domestic affairs, it was argued that peaceful coexistence could no longer be subordinated to the international class struggle, thus giving higher priority to 'national interest' over 'class interest'. In effect, this meant that Soviet foreign policy decisions would not be made according to Marxist-Leninist principles geared towards promoting the cause of the proletariat worldwide.

The improvement of relations between the Reagan government and Moscow from 1986 led to an informal agreement being reached regarding regional conflict resolution. Basically it consisted of the following:

* that the US and USSR would actively cooperate to resolve conflicts through negotiations;
* that the superpowers would not become involved in Third World conflicts since they escalate into global warfare;
* that the United Nations would be used as a forum and as a facilitator in settling existing conflicts; and
* that the two superpowers would act as guarantors to a negotiated settlement (Nel, 1990:74).

2.1 New Political Thinking Towards South Africa

A number of local factors made application of the new doctrine towards South Africa somewhat complicated and at times ambiguous. These were the Cuban involvement in Angola, international condemnation of apartheid and the USSR's close alliance with the ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP).

Even though the region was not inherently important to either of the superpowers, as an area of competition it constituted an obstacle to the Soviet Union's relationship with the US. Soviet concerns about the escalatory potential of disputes in the region arose when the Reagan Administration decided to resume direct military assistance to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in the wake of US Congress' decision to rescind its ban of such assistance in Angola. According to Roothman and Nel, this expressed concern over escalation accelerated collaborative efforts of seeking regional ways of stabilising current allies while safeguarding and legitimising a Soviet role in regional affairs (Roothman & Nel, 1990: 25).

The degree of common ground between Soviet and American interests in the region increased with the implementation of sanctions on South Africa by the United States and other Western powers. This served to modify the Soviet approach. Soviet officials disassociated the conflict from the global struggle between capitalism and socialism and underlined the fact that the area was not linked to the overall struggle between East and West. They stressed that local factors were responsible for stimulating and perpetuating the conflict. Victor

Goncharev argued:

> ... the situation in southern Africa is considered not in the light of a confrontation between East and West. ...The current conflict in this area of the world is primarily, the result of [the] development of internal socio-economic and political process in the region, the natural consequence of decay of the exhausted vicious system of social relations itself. (Roothman & Nel, 1990: 24)

Soviet policy toward South Africa consisted of four major components:

* to promote a negotiated settlement which would serve the interests of the ANC;
* an acknowledgement that such a settlement would only be possible if the legitimate interests of minority groups were accommodated;
* to further its diplomatic and economic status in the region; and
* a willingness to cooperate with the US in developing a joint approach to the situation (Nel, 1990: 2).

Concurrent with the 'new thinking' in state circles, the Soviet academic community was also by 1986 taking a more conciliatory, less revolutionary stance towards the trends in South Africa. In June 1986 Dr Gleb Starushenko, the Deputy Director of the Institute for African Studies in Moscow, at the second Soviet-African conference, delivered a controversial paper in which he put forward a number of compromise proposals for settling the South African problem. These proposals included constitutional guarantees for the white minority, arguing that white power in South Africa could not simply be defeated and that the rights of the whites as a group would therefore have to be accommodated. As such, he suggested an upper house of parliament in which whites would have a number of guaranteed seats and a veto right (Freeman & Narsoo, 1989: 10). In other words, Starushenko proposed an federal system which institutionalised guarantees for whites on a scale disproportionate with their

actual numbers (Kempton, 1990: 550).

In a later interview Starushenko defended his proposal by arguing that, as in the Soviet case, ethnic differences were a South African reality which would exist for the next 100 years. Starushenko further argued that the May 1989 election and other developments confirmed that the conditions for revolution were not present in South Africa which meant that a compromise between black and white interests was necessary. Recognising that a settlement based on group rights would not fulfil the goals of many opponents of the apartheid regime, he added that it was up to black Africans to decide when apartheid had been abolished (Freeman & Narsoo, 1989: 10, 11).

Starushenko further cautioned against a too hasty transition to socialism and advised the ANC to explore ways of building political support among all population groups. Noting the position of the white community, Starushenko maintained that "whites are not tied to the chariot of apartheid" and that "they will prefer compromise to dying in the last ditch of the camp" (Soviet Review, 1987: 19) and suggested to the ANC that as part of a longer-term political strategy, they should look at methods to widen the cleavages already present in the white community. He therefore proposed that the ANC should work out a constitutional and economic model which could be implemented after the elimination of the apartheid regime that would gain the allegiance of a broad section of white interests (Nel, 1989: 168).

At the time Starushenko's ideas seemed idiosyncratic and were rejected by Soviet hardliners, but it soon became apparent that the trend of his suggestions formed part of the more general Soviet re-think about the strategy of national liberation and Soviet policy in southern Africa.

The more flexible approach by Soviet official spokesmen and academics coincided with a major policy statement by Joe Slovo, General Secretary of the SACP, where he supported the need for a political settlement in South Africa.

Slovo explained that the Leninists saw the struggle as passing through two phases - the first being the "national liberation struggle" which could be achieved through political negotiations; and the second being the "national democratic revolution" which could begin to appear after the national liberation struggle had been won. The ANC had always favoured the idea of a negotiated settlement as being preferable to a continued armed struggle. Its differences with the Pretoria regime were over the prerequisites for ensuring meaningful negotiations took place (Legum, 1990: 166).

A more authoritative view than Starushenko's was put forward by Dr Victor Goncharev, Deputy Director of the Institute of African Studies, Moscow, in an interview with *Work in Progress* in June 1987. He predicted changes and differences of approach in Soviet policy toward the problems of southern Africa "... to behave more realistically, more flexibly, with every side participating in the resolution of conflicts." Significantly, he expressed some doubts about ANC attempts to put the "socialist revolution before a national liberation struggle." He advised the ANC to use less "dogmatic formulations" and put more stress on the issue of national liberation; otherwise they risked losing "potential allies" in South Africa. In a frank forecast he expressed the view that it would take "black South Africans at least ten years to achieve their liberation, but that it could take from twenty-five to one-hundred years to bring about a socialist revolution," adding, "I am an optimist." (Legum, 1990: 166; Kempton, 1990: 550; Nel, 1989: 169).

While the Soviet leadership had since March 1986 emphasised the need for political settlement of all regional problems, eighteen months passed before the first **official** declaration that this also applied to the South African situation.

On 5 August 1987 *Izvestia* published the full text of a speech Gorbachev gave in honour of Joaquam Chissano, newly appointed President of Mozambique. Here Gorbachev declared that the collapse of apartheid was inevitable and endorsed the modifications which the Soviet approach had undergone over the past two years:

> But we are not supporters of the thesis 'the worse the better' (chem khuzhe, tem lushche). There is no doubt that an elimination of the racist system by way of a political settlement would be in the interests of all South Africans - both black and white. One should look for and find the road to such a settlement. It is time at long last for Pretoria to understand this as well. New ideas, a fresh approach and collective efforts are needed. (Nel, 1990: 172)

Though never formally abandoning its principal support for the organisations and movements which traditionally received help from them, Soviet diplomacy in southern Africa became re-orientated toward achieving a more stable situation in the region. The Soviet leader continued to state his support for the ANC. Congress leaders Oliver Tambo and Alfred Nzo, together with the SACP's Joe Slovo, still visited the Soviet Union regularly. At a meeting with ANC President Oliver Tambo Gorbachev told him

> We side with you in your struggle against the apartheid regime and its henchmen, for a democratic state and independent development, for equality of all races and ethnic groups. Significantly more and more white South Africans are condemning apartheid, voicing support for the ANC's goals, seeking contacts with it. That proves once and again that there is no future in apartheid. (Gorbachev, 1987: 187)

The new moves in the policies of the Gorbachev government were frequently interpreted as a sign of weakness, not strength, of the South African liberation movements. This led to the

development, particularly among young South African radicals, of the view that the "Soviet renegades" were betraying the cause of the anti-apartheid struggle (Tikhomirov, 1989: 59.

The regime's staying power was displayed by the ruthless strength of the South African government in restoring law and order in the country during the uprisings of 1985 and 1986: the deployment of the SADF in black townships to supplement the police force; the detention of thousands of black activists; and the clampdown on foreign press reporting on unrest. This produced a re-evaluation of Soviet assessments and predictions regarding the demise of the apartheid regime and its replacement by an ANC government (Nel, 1989: 167). Violence as a means of achieving a revolutionary transformation became more muted. Emphasis was placed on a process of constitutional reform within the country to deal with the incumbent regime rather than a search to supplant it.

Soviet discussion of the process of constitutional reform went well beyond the ANC proposals in its willingness to address the fears of the white community. Soviet diplomats also expressed impatience with the ANC's insistence on a negotiation agenda which precluded meaningful dialogue with the white mainstream. Criticising the ANC, Alexander Yakovlev, Head of the restructured African Section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cautioned that the South African government should not be spoken to "only through threats or pounding fists" and that instead "there should be dialogue." (Kempton, 1990: 553; Roothman & Nel, 1990: 25, 26, 27).

Boris Ayosan, then Soviet Ambassador to Lesotho, was particularly pessimistic about the success of the armed struggle in South Africa and warned that the alternative to a negotiated

settlement may be an endless war not only between races, but between political factions. In 1988 he also criticised Soviet efforts to impose socialism on African societies which were not ready for it and was of the view that such experiments destroyed the local economy. Along the same lines, Vladimir Tikhomirov warned that the enactment of radical reforms would probably lead to a 'deep economic crisis' in South Africa (Ayosan, 1991: 3, 4).

According to Freeman and Narsoo, Moscow had realised that it could not be relieved of the need to support the ANC's armed struggle and reduce its costly commitments in the region unless the ANC was convinced that a political settlement could be negotiated and ensure that there was no longer a need for armed struggle. As such, they identified Moscow's chief aim as to find ways of bringing Pretoria to the bargaining table so as to be rid of its costly commitments as soon as possible.

Some academics argued that the evolution of 'new political thinking' led to a gradual divergence between Soviet interests and those of the SACP and ANC, heralded by Soviet statements that the era of the 'export of revolution' were over. Pörzgen maintains that the first public and official sign of disagreement between the ANC and Soviet leadership came in 1987 when the Soviet Union voted together with other socialist countries and the United States not to exclude South Africa from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This was in direct contravention of the ANC's demand that South Africa should be expelled (Pörzgen, 1991 168; Humphries, 1989: 10). Responding to the combined US-USSR pressure on negotiations in November 1987, the ANC issued a statement setting out clearly that negotiations with the South African authorities could not be opposed in principle.

The new Soviet approach of taking ideology out of global politics meant that in the South African context the USSR was prepared to recognise any future government elected by the majority of the people. Moscow had made it clear that it was not seeking to establish a socialist one-party state in South Africa, but was pressing for the development of a capitalist multi-party system which was to be forged through a negotiated process with the participation of all South African parties (Tikhomirov, 1989(a): 60; Tikhomirov, Moscow Papers: 12). Apartheid in South Africa was seen as the main cause of violence in the region, therefore the Soviets linked peaceful settlement in region to the abolition of apartheid.

This reevaluation of Soviet policy together with the collapse of communism as a legitimating ideology in turn required a reassessment in South African official thinking. There is evidence of a split in National Party thinking towards the Soviet Union in the latter half of the decade in reaction to circumstances within and emanating from the Soviet Union. Reaction was divided between the *verligtes* (reformers) who recognised the changes in the Soviet Union and saw it as an opportunity to promote a negotiated settlement in the region and increase diplomatic ties. In the other camp, the *verkramptes* (conservatives) were still highly suspicious of the Soviet motives and argued for a continued military solution.

Whereas it was argued by the Pretoria government that destabilisation was necessary to ward off the communist threat, Hanlon maintains that South Africa was conducting an undeclared war against its neighbours in order to defend apartheid (Hanlon, 1986: 16). This is because the securocrats perceived a direct link between violence and uprisings within South Africa and an ANC presence in neighbouring states. A White Paper on Defence maintained that "The South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress, which,

for all practical purposes, has been integrated with the SACP and acts as its military wing, are the major elements of a Soviet plan to obtain control of the RSA" (Geldenhuys, 1988: 11).

Despite reassurances from Gorbachev, those in power continued to see the ANC/SACP alliance as revolutionary extensions of Moscow. P.W. Botha asserted that Gorbachev was outwitting the West by appropriating Western concepts of freedom and democracy and in so doing the Soviet leader was sending his propaganda into the world with "devilish cunning" (Geldenhuys, 1988: 11). For the military hawks Soviet and Cuban involvement in Angola and continued Soviet support for SWAPO and the ANC/SACP alliance further confirmed their suspicions of Soviet intentions. According to Malan, then Minister of Defence, the ANC and SACP "are still being used by the Russians as an instrument for overthrowing the order in the Republic of South Africa" (Geldenhuys, 1988: 12). These policy-makers saw a SWAPO government in Namibia as being tantamount to the "red flag" being hoisted there.

According to Coker, the verligtes were worried about the increase in military influence, but realised that they had to buy time until an agreement to contain the ANC's operation was reached with the Soviet Union, even if it meant carrying the conflict in South Africa to neighbouring countries. In this way

> ...the more liberal elements in the cabinet could no longer feel themselves hapless instruments in the soldiers' hands. (Coker, 1988: 7)

When General J. Geldenhuys, SADF Chief and member of the State Security Council (SSC), was asked whether there was friction within the National Party government itself over whether to negotiate or not he said the following:

> I am not a politician. However, there was never a dispute over wether to negotiate or not the differences were over when negotiations would take place. That was what was argued about. The trouble is that P.W. Botha listened too much to Magnus Malan - the SADF was not a pressure. Within the SSC there were four senior ministers who P.W. Botha listened to more than the rest of us: Heunis, Sleubusch, F.W. de Klerk and Gerrit Viljoen - they were personal advisors to P.W. - he listened more to them. (Interview with Author, December 1992)

Thus one can draw the conclusion that negotiations could have taken place sooner had it not been that those who preferred the military solution wielded the power and determined foreign policy.

CHAPTER 3

RESOLUTION OF REGIONAL CONFLICT: ANGOLA AND NAMIBIA

Until April 1974 South Africa was protected by a *cordon sanitaire* provided by Portuguese colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique and the illegal Smith regime in Rhodesia. However, this barrier of white-controlled states between South Africa and independent black Africa to the North was broken when the Portuguese army carried out a successful *coup* against the regime of Marcello Caetano in Lisbon on 25 April 1974. One of the earliest decisions of the new Lisbon government was to dismantle its African empire. With the exception of Angola, all its colonial territories attained independence with relative peace and order. Within Angola three resistance movements claimed the legitimacy of true representation of the Angolan people: the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MNLA), the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) and the União Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA).

With the liberation movements divided, Portugal sought a neo-colonial solution. UNITA and later the FNLA signed a cease-fire, accepting General Antonio de Spinola's view that Angola was not ready for independence and that there would be a gradual decolonisation. The MPLA rejected this and continued fighting until Spinola's overthrow in September 1974 after which the MPLA signed a cease-fire in November. At the all-party conference in Alvor, Portugal, accords were signed in which a transitional government of MPLA, UNITA, FNLA and Portuguese representatives was agreed to. Independence was set for 11 November 1974 (Joseph Hanlon, 1989: 156).

A tripartite government was formed. However, before long bitter fighting erupted in Luanda between mainly the MPLA and FNLA, with the MPLA, after intensive fighting, evicting the FNLA. The violation of the Alvor Accords renewed and intensified the civil war in Angola between the MPLA, assisted by Cuban troops and the military hardware and expertise of the Soviet Union, and UNITA who had formed a temporary alliance with the FNLA, supported by the US and South Africa.

3.1 South African Involvement in Angola

In 1975 a military column sent to within 100 miles of Luanda initiated a long period of South African intervention in Angola. From the South African government's perspective this intervention was necessary on several grounds. One was the destruction of camps of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). These had moved into Angola after Portuguese withdrawal. A second was to assist the UNITA, an anti-Marxist liberation movement fighting against the government in Luanda and to destabilise that government as part of an overall destabilisation policy towards the frontline states during the 1980s. Finally there was a desire to show the West that Pretoria was an ally in combatting communism in southern Africa (Arnold, 1992: 4).

With the collapse of the cordon sanitaire, the South African government felt itself to be faced with a communist threat in its own backyard. The new African governments in Angola and Mozambique were controlled by political parties that (i) were committed to Marxism-Leninism; (ii) had historically opposed apartheid; (iii) had close ties with the ANC and (iv) received substantial diplomatic, economic and military assistance form the Soviet Union and

its allies (Price, 1990: 40).

In the face of these factors, the whole basis upon which Pretoria had rested its national security policy during the previous decade fundamentally altered. Furthermore, SWAPO with Soviet assistance, was fighting a low level conflict against the SADF for control of South Africa-administered Namibia, and was now able to set up bases in Angola for cross-border raids into Namibia. Consequently, the South African response to this "Communist Onslaught" was "Total Strategy" involving direct military intervention and support for UNITA, which was considered an appropriate destabilising force against the MPLA and as a possible alternative government for Angola. South African destabilisation of Angola and support for UNITA were explained as necessary defence against the spread of communism. In 1987 General Magnus Malan in a speech to the Swiss South African Association in Zurich explained South African support of UNITA as follows:

> We went to his (Dr Jonas Savimbi's) support because UNITA forms a buffer in south-east Angola between countries such as Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana - as well as, of course, South West Africa/Namibia - and Russian/Cuban expansionism.... And it must also be remembered that the ultimate objective of this expansionism is to seize control of South Africa itself. Russia's expansionist ambitions, with Angola as the starting point or springboard, are beyond doubt. (Malan, 1987/88: 411)

Thus Pretoria intervened militarily in the conflict between the three rival Angolan political movements and sought to prevent the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which was seen to be Marxist and implacably hostile to South Africa's interests, from establishing military and political dominance in Luanda. Further, UNITA was envisaged as a suitable buffer against black Africa and SWAPO incursions from southern Angola.

In October 1975, a strong South African military force intervened directly in support of UNITA and FNLA, invading Angola from Namibia, pushing deep into Angolan territory towards Luanda. Within a month, the South African forces were 200 kilometres from Luanda and was poised to take the capital with the help of the FNLA which was attacking from the North. The MPLA had lost most of its territory in the joint attack and only maintained control of the capital, a narrow strip of territory in south-central Angola and the small enclave of Cabinda. It was at this point that the MPLA called on Cuba to help defend the Angolan capital.

Cuba responded by airlifting combat troops from Havana to Luanda on 11 November. As a result the South Africans were halted at the Keve river by 20 November. The Portuguese, in order to extricate themselves from a situation they no longer wished to control, simply recognised Angola's independence on 11 November and transferred power to the MPLA which proclaimed the People's Democratic Republic of Angola (Price, 1990: 40). The MPLA government received recognition from approximately thirty states including the communist bloc, but did not immediately obtain a majority in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (Arnold, 1992: 10).

Russian and Yugoslav arms had been shipped to the MPLA from March 1975, before Portuguese withdrawal, in anticipation of the forthcoming power struggle. By October, when the South African military column was becoming a threat to Luanda, the sophisticated military equipment, together with the Cuban troops were essential in turning the fortunes of war in favour of the MPLA and holding back the FNLA forces which were attempting to enter Luanda from the north. According to estimations by Dr Henry Kissinger, US Secretary

of State, there were about 12 000 Cubans in Angola and the MPLA received about $200 million worth of Soviet military equipment (Arnold, 1990: 40).

In the Cold War circumstances prevailing at the time it might have been expected that the Soviet build-up of arms for the MPLA and the Cuban build-up of troops would have been matched by comparable US assistance. However, contrary to South African expectations, this did not occur. Paralysed by the effect of Vietnam and Watergate, opposition to foreign adventure was fierce and President Ford, who succeeded errant Richard Nixon, did not carry enough weight to secure US involvement in Angola (Coetzer, Brooderyk & Du Pisani, 1992: 127). Thus in mid-December 1975 the President's appeal for greater intervention in Angola was rejected in Congress by 323 votes to 99. The Clark Amendment effectively prohibited the Central Intelligence Agency from continuing to provide military and other forms of assistance to UNITA and the FNLA (something which they had been doing since January) (Price, 1990: 41).

There is much controversy over the part played by Henry Kissinger in the South African invasion of Angola. While Kissinger denied any "collusion" with the South African forces, Pretoria insisted that its intervention in Angola was based on an understanding with Washington that the United States would back it with supplies of weaponry. The fact that no Western country had any intention of coming to their assistance was a major blow to the South African establishment.

Believing that they had been abandoned by the United States, the South Africans withdrew, since, according to the Minister of Defence, South Africa was not prepared to stand alone

in the "free world" (Price, 1990: 41). By the end of January it was clear that Soviet-Cuban support for the MPLA and US indecisiveness had ensured the recognition of the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola. South African troops were pulled back to the Namibia/Angola border area.

The South African intervention in Angola had a number of effects which deeply undermined the Republic's position. First, contrary to preventing a Marxist MPLA from coming to power, the South African intervention ensured that it did. Both UNITA and the FNLA had been discredited in independent Africa by South African backing, while the MPLA's military efforts were applauded by most African states as an effort to protect Angola from conquest by white supremacist South Africa.

Second, due to South African intervention, what started as moderate Soviet and Cuban support for the MPLA turned into major commitments to ensure the survival of the Luanda government. The direct consequence of this was to create a strong Cuban presence in Angola for the next 15 years and served to introduce the Soviet Union as a major diplomatic and military actor in the affairs of southern Africa, which fundamentally affected the geopolitics of the region.

Third, the failure of Western support for South African initiatives confirmed her pariah status in the world. Last, the independence of Angola and Mozambique, under Marxist governments, had significant implications for the stability of white rule in Rhodesia and Namibia. The Rhodesian civil war escalated rapidly and the military balance shifted decisively away from the Smith government.

By 2 February 1976 twenty five African states had recognised the MPLA governments in Luanda. This represented a small majority in the OAU but entitled President Aghostino Neto's government to take its seat with that organisation. On 4 February 1976, the SADF had been pulled back to a 100 kilometre deep cordon on the Angolan side of the Angola-Namibia border. In the meantime the MPLA forces had recaptured all the UNITA-held towns in south Angola. On 27 March South Africa reached an agreement with the MPLA government guaranteeing the safety of the Ruacana dam which formed part of the hydroelectric scheme on the Cunene river in which South Africa had invested heavily (Arnold, 1992: 15).

The events of 1975-6 in Angola set the scene for the next 15 years. The civil upheaval on South Africa's borders encouraged internal defiance which exploded in the Soweto uprisings later in 1976. South Africa used the presence of SWAPO bases in southern Angola as justification for mounting cross-border attacks, yet these were more often than not in support of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA operations than directed at SWAPO. With no end to the wars in Namibia and Rhodesia in sight, conflicts within the region escalated.

South Africa was now under mounting international pressure over Namibia culminating in the United Nations Security Council's imposition of a mandatory arms embargo in November 1977. In an attempt to regain control of the situation on its borders, Prime Minister P.W. Botha, as part of his "total national strategy", put forward the concept of a constellation of southern African states. This envisaged that between seven and ten states south of the Kunene and Zambezi rivers should join forces in a formal constellation in which "a common approach in the security field, the economic field and even the political field" would be

devised (Foreign Minister Pik Botha as quoted by Geldenhuys, 1984: 41). The grouping envisaged the inclusion of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and South Africa and its three 'independent' homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda, and possible inclusion of Zambia and Mozambique.

P.W. Botha's envisaged grand constellation failed to materialise mainly because of the political and ideological divisions between the Republic and the newly independent black states who were unwilling to formalise relations with Pretoria, the non-recognised bantustans and South African-controlled Namibia. A further setback to the constellation plan were the events in Rhodesia. At the British-chaired Lancaster House Conference in 1979, the Muzorewa government and the Patriotic Front, composed of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU), reached an agreement on an independence constitution and a cease-fire. In the February 1980 elections Mugabe's ZANU PF scored a landslide victory. On 18 April the Republic of Zimbabwe was declared independent with Robert Mugabe as Prime Minister. Mugabe, vehemently opposed to apartheid made it clear that his country would not join the South Africa-designed constellation of states. Instead, Zimbabwe, Angola, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania formed the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in order to reduce the nine black states' dependence on the South African economy and transport network (Geldenhuys, 1984: 40, 41).

3.2 US Policy of Constructive Engagement

The advent of majority rule which brought ZANU PF to power in Zimbabwe marked a

watershed in Southern Africa as it represented the breaking of the last link in the *cordon sanitaire* around South Africa. The country now found herself surrounded by hostile, and in her view communist-orientated states which openly opposed the government and its apartheid policies. According to the 1982 Defence White Paper, "the establishment of Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique as Marxist satellites has completed the link between the Atlantic and Indian oceans and this leaves the Republic of South Africa as the last stronghold of the West in Africa." (Geldenhuys, 1988: 11).

The Carter Administration, coming into office soon after the collapse of Portuguese rule and the Soweto uprisings, saw white power as fading and the initiative in black hands. Carter's policy, with its emphasis on human rights, did not see communism as the ubiquitous menace behind the smoke screen of African nationalism and had, to the distress of the Pretoria government, identified white racism as the more serious threat to American interests in southern Africa. Southern Africa was not regarded as "part of the West", as a zone automatically in the Western sphere of influence, but rather as an area that would be shaped by African self-determination. It was thus felt that a free southern Africa could naturally have close relations with the West based on common economic interests and attitudes (Leonard, 1983: 231).

The coming to power, however, of President Reagan in the late 1980s provided some optimism for the South Africans since it represented a decisive change of US policy on southern Africa. This was brought about by President Reagan's choice of Dr. Chester Crocker, an academic, as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. The choice of Crocker was influenced by an article called "South Africa: Strategy for Change" which he

had published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1980. Here he spelled out the essence of "constructive engagement", which became the new US policy towards South Africa. Constructive engagement, Crocker implied, was a new beginning since it was neither the "clandestine embrace" of the Nixon administration, nor the "polecat treatment" of the Carter years (Crocker, 1980: 346). The Reagan Administration held the notion that the West was losing out to the communists and that a counter-attack was necessary. The Reagan Doctrine placed the primacy of American strategic interests above all other considerations and proclaimed the right to intervene in wars of national liberation in the Third World directly or by proxy whenever there was a chance to fight Soviet or Marxist influence.

Thus, under the Reagan Doctrine, the situation in southern Africa became conceptualised in Cold War terms, with Angola-Namibia the point of confrontation. At the time Namibia appeared to be making some progress towards independence in terms of UN Security Council Resolution 435, a package negotiated in 1978 by the Western Contact Group. The Reagan Administration pursued a policy of appeasement towards South Africa.

In Crocker's constructive engagement, the South Africans found an ally and much needed prop for its policies. He saw the South African military, which had gained increased political influence under P.W. Botha, as "a lobby of modernising patriots" and said that it "would be unwise to view the South African Defence Force (SADF) as an instrument of domestic brutality or as the rogue elephant of southern Africa, crashing across borders and wrecking Western interest." (Crocker, Winter 1980: 338). Crocker further gave voice to South African fears when in a speech in August 1981 he said "We are concerned about the influence of the Soviet Union and its surrogates in Africa." (Arnold, 1992: 128).

In effect, in its relations with southern Africa, the United States was far more concerned about real or perceived communist threats than ever it was about racial injustice. US and South African interests converged over Namibia, with the introduction of the concept of "linkage" where the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola was linked to the process of Namibian independence. Crocker explained the US position as follows:

> It never made sense to treat Namibia in isolation from its regional context, as if it were part of another planet. The question of Cuban troops in Angola was central to South African official thinking from the day they were introduced, just as South Africa's presence in Namibia and its military intervention in Angola from Namibia were central to Angolan and Cuban thinking .... So we decided to link the intractable problem of Namibia to the seemingly intractable problem of Angola. This radically altered the structure of negotiations, expanding the range of trade-offs and the number of parties. (Daniel and Mosia, 1992: 8)

An intensification of South African domestic repression, an acceleration of its destabilisation policy, and refusal to reach a settlement on Namibia all occurred against the backdrop of constructive engagement. The rapprochement between the US and South Africa led to the Reagan Administration dragging its heels on the question of economic sanctions against South Africa (Chakaodza, 1990: 7). Crocker's proposed bilateral relationship with South Africa indicated a refusal to resort to trade or investment sanctions against South Africa. In his words, "constructive engagement does not mean waging economic warfare against the Republic." (Crocker, 1980-81: 346)

In July 1982 Fidel Castro said that Cuban forces would not be withdrawn from Angola until South African troops had withdrawn from Namibia and had ceased their attacks on Angola. This produced the circular diplomacy that continued for most of the 1980s.

Constructive engagement provided the perfect vehicle for Botha's total strategy, enabling the military hawks to justify its militarisation and regional aggression along with its domestic oppression. The "total strategy" against the communist onslaught enabled the South African government to keep the liberation struggle as far from South Africa as possible, remain in power, preserve white minority rule and safeguard South Africa's strategic and economic hegemony in Southern Africa (Ohlson, 1989: 181).

Throughout 1982 and 1983, South African forces raided deep into Angola either targeting SWAPO bases or assisting UNITA, during which US officials held dozens of negotiating sessions with South African and Angolan officials in an attempt to formulate a timetable, acceptable to both sides, that would allow for a parallel withdrawal of South African forces from Namibia and Cubans from Angola (Bender, 1989: 20). At the end of the 1983 the South Africans had launched a major offensive into Angola prompting a United Nations resolution condemning their action. After agreeing to a ceasefire in early February the Angolan officials met with South Africa and US representatives in Lusaka, Zambia, where the South Africans agreed to withdraw from Angola in return for a promise that Luanda would not permit either Cuban or SWAPO forces to occupy the vacated areas and the establishment of a Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC) to monitor implementation.

In March 1984 President dos Santos visited Cuba where he and President Castro agreed that there could be a slow Cuban withdrawal provided South Africa implemented Namibian independence (Arnold, 1992: 17). President dos Santos wrote an letter to the UN Secretary-General in which he proposed a three-year timetable for the withdrawal of a portion of the Cuban combat troops - thus conceding that there was a linkage between Cuban withdrawal

and Namibian independence. However, the three-year withdrawal timetable satisfied neither Washington nor Pretoria.

During this period attempts to bring about a cessation of hostilities and negotiate a compromise, including a meeting between the Administrator-General of South West Africa and SWAPO in Cape Verde on 25 July 1984, came to naught. The USA suggested that the timetable for Cuban withdrawal correspond roughly with the timetable envisaged for the withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia under Resolution 435, so that 80% of the Cuban troops south of the 13th parallel would be withdrawn within one year. Initially this was rejected by both Luanda and Pretoria.

In the meantime P.W. Botha signed the proclamation establishing the new Transitional Government of National Unity in Windhoek on 17 June 1985 and by the end of 1985 showed signs that it was interested in the compromise as a basis for negotiating. During the ensuing talks in December 1985, the Angolan government asked that the USA induce South Africa to demonstrate its good faith by setting a date for Namibian independence.

Pretoria responded on 4 March 1986 by proposing that 1 August should be set as the date for commencement of implementation of Resolution 435 (Bender, 1989: 21; Botha, 1988: 16). However, neither Angola nor the Secretary-General of SWAPO responded positively. Bender attributes this to contention within the MPLA over how to proceed with negotiations and to developments within the USA that contributed to the uncertainty in Luanda. He maintains that the Reagan strategy was seriously handicapped by domestic political constraints.

The second half of the decade was to witness major shifts in international attitudes towards South Africa which were matched by growing realisation among Whites inside the Republic that the apartheid stalemate could not be sustained indefinitely. Gorbachev had come to power in the Soviet Union and despite his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Crocker and the State Department had lost control of their southern African policy to right-wing forces in Congress. They had transformed the momentum of Jonas Savimbi's successful visit to Washington in early 1986 into support for a covert programme of military assistance for UNITA (Bender, 1989: 21).

In July 1985 the US Senate repealed the Clark Amendment which had prohibited covert military intervention in Angola and in September the US House of Representatives voted 229 - 189 to provide UNITA with $15 million of financial aid to help stem Soviet expansionism in southern Africa. UNITA was targeted by the US right-wing for aid since it considered them to be the group of "freedom fighters" with the greatest prospects for success in overthrowing the Soviet-backed regime (Bender, 1989: 21). US military support for UNITA was a blow to the MPLA. Angola broke off all negotiations with Crocker and announced that it no longer accepted the legitimacy of the Reagan Administration as a broker in the negotiations since it had become partisan in the Angolan war.

Turning to the military option, Luanda invested over one billion dollars in weapons and training. This, together with aid from the Soviet Union and Cuba ultimately tilted the military balance, particularly in terms of air power against the SADF/UNITA alliance. Meanwhile during the latter half of the 1980s Pretoria's situation within the region changed fundamentally. This was the product of two decisive factors - the October 1986 Reykjavik summit between Reagan and Gorbachev and Cuito Cuanavale.

3.3 The Reykjavik Summit

In order for Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* to succeed, not only was a stable international environment necessary, but relations with the West, particularly the United States, needed to be restructured. Regional conflicts constituted an obstacle towards this goal and imposed a limit on the degree of Soviet-American co-operation, reflected in statements made by both countries which stressed the importance of their resolution. According to Evegenii Primakov, one of Gorbachev's prominent policy advisors:

> On the eve of the Geneva Summit in November 1985 ... US spokesmen and President Reagan himself insisted on a particular hierarchy: first a settlement of regional conflicts, observance of human rights, and confidence-building measures, and only then arms reduction. (Aspaturian, 1990: 29)

While this does not reflect the preferred primacy of Soviet goals, a later statement by Primakov revealed that progress was being made on regional conflicts since "new attitudes about the nature of regional conflicts and new approaches to their settlement have naturally become an integral part of the foreign policy strategy being elaborated in the Soviet Union" (Aspaturian, 1990: 29).

The most important development for southern Africa was the October 1986 Reykjavik summit between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Here a bargain was struck between the two Presidents which ultimately determined the development of the democratic process in southern Africa. In exchange for assurances on non-US intervention in Eastern Europe, Moscow renounced its aspirations to hegemony in Africa. The Soviet renunciation did not mean that it had abandoned its connections with

Africa, merely that it was no longer willing to back its diplomacy with force and as such placed more emphasis on political and diplomatic alliances rather than military ones (Africa Confidential: 3.3.1988).

The importance of this meeting is mentioned by Gorbachev during his speech on 2 November 1987 commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution:

> The October 1986 meeting in Reykjavik ranks among the events which have occurred since the new stage in international affairs began, which deserves to be mentioned on this occasion and which will go down in history. The Reykjavik meeting gave a practical boost to the new political thinking, enabled it to gain ground in diverse social and political quarters and made international political contacts more fruitful. The new thinking, with its regard for universal human values and emphasis on common sense and openness, is forging ahead on the international scene, destroying the stereotypes of anti-sovietism and dispelling the distrust of our initiatives and actions. (Gorbachev: 1988, 7)

Regional conflicts constituted a drain upon Soviet resources and contributed to the distortion of Soviet economic, domestic and military priorities. Margot Light argues that by the time Gorbachev came to power it was obvious that the Brezhnev Doctrine toward the Third World had failed and that retrenchment was urgent. Foreign indebtedness to the Soviet Union, which was made public in 1990, showed that socialist and socialist-orientated countries owed millions of roubles to the Soviet Union. For example Angola and Mozambique had outstanding debts of 2028,9 and 808,6 million roubles respectively (Margot Light: **). Thus the highest priority was accorded to the domestic reform programme and the purpose of Soviet foreign policy was to create the international conditions in which it could be implemented.

Moscow could point to very few tangible benefits from its commitment in Angola. However, it could not abandon its two close allies on the battlefield; backing out would have caused severe damage to Soviet prestige in Africa. Also, the USSR would have lost its principle foothold in southern Africa - thereby casting doubt on its status as an actor with a legitimate' role in regional politics (McFarlane, 1989: 33). The only acceptable way out was through the successful conclusion of the Crocker negotiations.

3.4 Cuito Cuanavale

Much controversy surrounds Cuito Cuanavale. One school maintains that the battle of Cuito Cuanavale is a myth where SADF chief General Jannie Geldenhuys helped Fidel Castro fake a victory over the SADF in order for the Cubans to secure an honourable exit from Angola.

> The epic battle of Cuito Cuanavale at which the apartheid war machine was supposed to have met its Waterloo - turns out to have been a legend: a romantic saga scripted by the Cuban leader as part of a forcefully executed strategy to end his African entanglement. (Sunday Times: 25.10.1993)

Another view argues that the SADF was defeated outright. Horace Campbell writes

> Trapped by the rainy season, bogged down with their conventional weapons by the African terrain and encircled, the South Africans made one desperate attempt to break the encirclement on June 27, 1988 and were again defeated, with the Angolan pilots demonstrating that they were in control of Angolan airspace. One South African newspaper called the defeat of the South African forces a "crushing humiliation". (Campbell, 1990: 1)

The absolute secrecy under which the securocrats conducted the war operation in Angola has added to the controversy around Cuito Cuanavale. In a personal interview with General Jannie Geldenhuys (December 1992), he maintained that the SADF objective was not to take

Cuito Cuanavale because of "military logistics". According to him the SADF's mission was to break the Russian/Cuban/Angolan offensive. While the capture of Cuito Cuanavale was discussed, it was immediately rejected since the military did not want to be drawn into a Vietnam-type war where if Cuito Cuanavale was taken it would have been necessary to take Menongwe and so on. Briefing journalists on the issue in January 1989, General Geldenhuys said:

> A big thing has been made (of the fact) that we were defeated there. I laid down the mission myself and I never said it was an objective .... We have never intended to stay in Angola (and) UNITA would not have been able to hold Cuito Cuanavale by itself in the face of a counter-attack. So there was absolutely no point in going for it, and we didn't. (Steenkamp, 1989: 152)

In a personal interview (December 1992) with a major in the South African Air Force (SAAF), the emphasis was, however, slightly different. According to the major, the objective of Operation Modular was to capture Cuito Cuanavale. Then, due to loss of air superiority, this was not possible. As a result Operation Modular's objective was redefined at the end of November 1987 and renamed Operation Hooper. The objective of Operation Hooper was to "harass, withdraw" and protect Jamba, the location of UNITA headquarters, which was being threatened by a Cuban/Angolan offensive. The major maintains that the initial idea was for UNITA to take Cuito Cuanavale, with the SADF providing ground troop assistance.

> The army said they would not need air force. Initially they were not going to use air force to show that it was UNITA, not our forces taking Cuito, ... but they (UNITA) were bloody useless soldiers. UNITA was supposed to be in front and then the SADF would move through the bush behind to help. UNITA made a flanking movement and then came up behind the SADF .... No troops went into Cuito ..., the MPLA was in charge of it the whole time. The MPLA had a big air force base at Menongwe and from there they flew in all the supplies they needed .... They (MPLA) had Mig 23's with front firing capability. The SADF radar coverage could not extend to Cuito. This

> meant it was too dangerous for SAAF to fly. They had complete air superiority. We used Puma's to fly in equipment to Mavinga, but we flew at night. G5's and G6's were used to bombard Cuito every night. The next morning the Mig's were overhead to find us .... They had amphibious tanks, which the SADF did not have so they could cross the river, we couldn't .... Then it was decided that because the air force was not involved, Cuito couldn't be taken. (Interview with Author, December 1992)

Despite the controversy surrounding Cuito, it nonetheless represents a major turning point in South Africa's regional stance; a watershed for both antagonists. After Cuito Cuanavale, objectives which seemed possible to advance through economic and diplomatic action began to assume increasing importance. The changes in the balance of forces created a new situation in which even those factions in the state most committed to escalating aggression and destabilisation were compelled to consider other options.

In August/September of 1987 the Angolan forces, with Soviet backing, launched a concerted effort to take the town of Mavinga, with its strategically placed airstrip, in the Cuando Cubando province. Then, using Mavinga as a rear base, the Angolan troops planned to attack the UNITA headquarters in Jamba further to the south-east. This had been tried once before in 1985, but had failed. Since then FAPLA had improved its air defence, with Cuban and Soviet help, and now owned MiG-23s which were superior to any of the South African air defence. By 1987 it is estimated that Angola had purchased some $4 billion worth of sophisticated Soviet military equipment (Arnold, 1992: 17). A line of air defence - radar and missiles, had been extended from Namibe on the Atlantic coast to Cuito Cuanavale, 350 kilometres north of Jamba. An estimated 35 000 Cuban troops were in Angola, deployed in mainly defensive roles. A total of 14 Angolan brigades were deployed for the attack on Mavinga and Jamba.

South African units, consisting of elements from the ethnically integrated 32 and 101 battalions, as well as white conscripts and permanent force members and units from the South West African Territory Force (SWATF) came to UNITA's assistance. US supplies for UNITA (following the June repeal of the Clark Amendment and vote to supply $15 million in arms) were being flown from Kamina in southern Zaire to Mavinga. The Angolan offence was halted and in December, the South African Defence Minister Magnus Malan decided to press home his advantage after winning the battle of Mavinga by launching a counter attack against retreating FAPLA and carrying out an all-out assault on Cuito Cuanavale.

While Cuito was not the most important of the FAPLA air-bases, it was the most forward of them. Its use threatened South Africa's ability to intervene in Angola and cut-off supply-lines to UNITA (Africa Confidential: 5.02.88.). Cuito Cuanavale became the point where the SADF/UNITA counterattack was stopped and at which a military deadlock ensued; where the South African forces became bogged down and in danger of being trapped by the Angolans and their Cuban allies. Angolan forces dug themselves in and established firm defence lines. Over the next few months 15 000 new Cuban troops were sent to Angola, including pilots and elements of the vaunted 50th Division. Castro also sent four of his best generals to take command (Sunday Times: 25.10.92).

At the suggestion of General Anrnaldo Ochoa Sanchez, a flanking manoeuvre was launched to the west into the previously uncontested Cunene Province. By late May 1988, 11 000 Cuban troops, backed by FAPLA and several large SWAPO units, had established a 400 km southern front running parallel to and at some points no further than 20 km from the

Namibian border. The front was protected by MiG-23's and helicopter gunships located at the newly upgraded air-bases of Cahama and Xangongo, as well as 200 tanks, artillery, air-defence radar and five different surface-to-air missile systems (Sunday Times, 25.10.92).

The combined and interlinked efforts of the loss of air superiority, the enhanced fighting capabilities of FAPLA, and the introduction of more modern equipment and more offensive behaviour by the Cuban forces shrunk the South African control zone considerably (Ohlson, 1989: 84). An SADF analysis made in January 1988 argued that it was possible to take Cuito, but that it would entail the loss of up to 300 white troops since the land assault would not enjoy much air cover from the SAAF. Pretoria decided that a political "win" was no longer worth the potential loss of material and white soldiers, so the infantry assault was shelved. Instead, it was decided to hold the existing line of defence (delineated by Mavinga, the Cuito and Lomba rivers, and the Caprivi strip) through artillery battle in which the SADF shelled Cuito with G-5 and G-6 howitzers, Valkiri multiple rocket launchers and, when in range, Olifant tanks (Ohlson, 1989: 183).

The SADF did not suffer a decisive defeat at Cuito Cuanavale, nor did it become militarily weak. The significance of Cuito Cuanavale is that it smashed the myth of SADF invincibility and exposed what Ohlson has termed "important windows of vulnerability" (Davies, 1989: 172; Ohlson, 1989: 184). Cuito Cuanavale represented a decisive setback which produced the new regional conjuncture. The most apparent set of vulnerabilities involved weapons and equipment, especially loss of air superiority. At Cuito Cuanavale the SADF was confronted with a full-sized, well-equipped and battle-hardened conventional force. South Africa possessed a number of relatively modern or modernised Mirage fighters. The mandatory UN

arms embargo, enforced in 1977, meant that Pretoria could not openly acquire new fighters from abroad, and ARMSCOR had not mastered the technology to manufacture the Mirage-3, the Mirage F-1 or any other essential components of modern warfare such as dedicated attack helicopters.

Also, the country's air defence were vulnerable as access to modern anti-aircraft missiles and up-to-date radar systems was limited, as was access to modern C3I (command, control, communications and intelligence) systems. South Africa lacked the technology vital for aircraft protection and airborne attacks on defence missile sites and other radar and missile-protected targets. For example, SADF forces were unable to repel a Cuban air attack on SADF positions near the Calueque dam inside Angola, but close to the Namibian border (Ohlson, 1989: 182).

Despite loopholes, all these vulnerabilities can be explained in the light of the arms embargo, which did have an effect. These weaknesses were known to southern African strategists and upper echelons of the military, but were only demonstrated when Angolans and Cubans introduced modern Soviet equipment into the frontline at Cuito Cuanavale.

The second set of vulnerabilities exposed at Cuito related to personnel or human factors. Here, the sensitivity of the government to the loss of white conscripts played a major role. By its own account, the SADF lost more than 50 white soldiers in Angola, although Luanda claims the figure to be higher. The plan put forward to take the town by infantry assault was rejected by Pretoria's politicians because of the estimated loss of white conscripts. This highlights the increased political constraints on the SADF, showing that increasingly white

South Africans were becoming more critical of the war. In August 1988, 143 white conscripts publicly refused to accept an SADF call-up order (Weekly Mail: 05 - 11.08.88). Increasingly public opinion swayed towards support for negotiation between the Botha government and its adversaries over Namibia (Ohlson, 1989: 186, 187). Further, sensitivity to the loss of white conscripts was enhanced by the electoral consequences for the National Party.

Cuito Cuanavale also exposed economic vulnerabilities. It is estimated that the war in Angola was already costing R4 billion a year by mid-1988 and an escalation would have put "an intolerable burden ... on an economy, already running out of steam." (Sunday Star: 04.07.88).

By this time the military solution was being seriously questioned in government. In the words of John Marcum: "In Pretoria the influence of the military was giving way to that of the Foreign Office, as the government seemed to realise the geopolitical limits of its power" (Pauline Baker, 1990: 68). Taking the cue from Gorbachev, General Malan made a public offer to the Soviet Union. In a statement to parliament on 5 March 1988, he said:

> Viewing the future of Angola the words of Mr Gorbachev when he visited the USA in 1987 were applicable with regard to Afghanistan.
> He [Gorbachev] said clearly:
> We do not want and do not strive for a pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan but the American side must state just as clearly that it is not striving for a pro-American regime there. In a non-aligned and neutral Afghanistan the Government must be established on the basis of reconciliation. (Report by *Novisti* Press Agency in Soviet News January 6, 1988 Page eight)
>
> If Mr Gorbachev is willing to express himself along the same lines on Angola, South Africa is willing to say the following:
> The South African government is not striving for the establishment of a pro-South Africa government in Luanda. The MPLA and Unita will on the basis

of reconciliation have to come to a settlement. (Malan, 1988: 280)

The intention of this statement was clear: the South African government, and particularly the Defence Force, wanted to make it known to the world that South Africa was prepared to negotiate on the Angolan issue. It also had the positive consequence of informing the USSR that the Republic had taken note of its changed rhetoric on Angola. However, General Malan left the impression that South Africa was prepared to negotiate directly with the USSR and bypass the other parties such as the Cubans, the MPLA government and the US. The Soviet government rejected the announcement and denied that there was an analogy between Afghanistan and Angola. This was in spite of the fact that in November 1987 Gorbachev had said to President Kaunda of Zambia that the kind of solution applied in Afghanistan could be applied in southern Africa. The Soviet Union was not rejecting the idea of a negotiated settlement, but wished to make it clear that the USSR was not disposed to ignore the interests of Cuba and the MPLA, and that more importantly, it had no desire to be involved in anything which would jeopardise its relationship with the Americans (Nel, 1990: 100).

The main problem now was to reach agreement over the timetable for Cuban troop withdrawal. According to General Geldenhuys, he suggested to his military counterparts that they join the mainstream of negotiations. He met with General O Sanchez of Cuba at Sal Island where the technical withdrawal of troops was negotiated. Accompanying General Geldenhuys at the discussions were Colonel T. Oelschig and Colonel Eddie Viljoen from the operational area. According to General Geldenhuys most of what was agreed to at Sal Island was implemented at Geneva (Interview with Author, December 1992).

Indications of Pretoria's changed attitude became clear at a meeting in New York in July 1988, where Angola, Cuba and South Africa developed a document entitled "General Principles for a Peaceful Settlement in Southern Africa". Here a number of provisos were agreed to and concessions made, *inter alia* that South Africa would cease aid to UNITA and in return Angola would close the ANC's bases in the area. The principles gave momentum to the talks which led to a formal meeting in Geneva in early August resulting in a cessation of fighting in Angola.

The South Africans agreed to withdraw from Angola by the end of August and Cuba and Angola agreed to ensure that SWAPO forces be kept north of the 16th parallel, approximately 200 km from the Namibian border. 1 November 1988 was set as the date for the implementation of Resolution 435. In Angola, South Africa and UNITA began to withdraw, ending the military deadlock at Cuito Cuanavale. The last SADF units pulled back into Namibia ahead of schedule at the end of August. This was a very different situation from 1986 when President Botha pledged that South Africa would stay in Angola until the Cubans left (Baker, 1990: 69).

An indication of the importance of the collapse of communism is evident in an address on South West Africa to Parliament by State President P.W. Botha on 24 August 1988. He asked what had changed since 4 March 1986 when South Africa proposed 1 August 1986 as the date for the implementation of Resolution 435, after which an agreement could not be reached on the withdrawal of Cuban troops. Among the changes which had occurred he mentioned the following (*translated*): "**The Gorbachev factor is also evidently important** ...." While pointing out that this did not mean that the Russians had changed

their plans for world domination or had become the friendliest neighbours he maintained that

> What it means that Mr Gorbachev has realised that the Russian economy is unable to afford expensive involvement in distant regions. The first sensational example is Afghanistan. There is little doubt that the Russians support the effort to work towards peace in Angola and South West Africa. (Botha, 1988: 16)

Between March and December 1988, sixteen negotiating sessions were held in Lusaka, Brazzaville, London, Cairo, Geneva and New York. Agreement was finally reached on 13 December 1988 with the signing of the Protocol of Brazzaville, which committed the parties to sign two interlocking peace treaties and established the Angolan-Cuban-South African Joint Commission to monitor the implementation of UNSCR 435. The United States and Soviet Union were granted observer status in the commission. The terms of the final agreement changed 1 November 1988 to 1 April 1989 as the implementation date for the UN Namibian plan, with the election date set as 1 November 1989. It was agreed that Cuban troops would leave Angola in a phased withdrawal that would be implemented by mid-1991.

The treaties were ratified in the United Nations headquarters in New York on 22 December 1988. One was a tripartite agreement between Angola, Cuba and South Africa providing for the independence of Namibia through free and fair elections and the departure of South African troops from Namibia in accordance with UNSCR 435/78. The other was a bilateral agreement between Angola and Cuba detailing the Cuban withdrawal schedule from Angola. The United States would act as mediators and guarantors of the accords, with the Soviet Union granted observer status.

On the basis of this agreement hostilities between the South African and Angolan

governments came to an end. While Crocker received acclaim for his role in negotiations, the evidence indicates that is was a convergence of international and regional dynamics, rather than his actions, which created the conditions for the successful outcome of negotiations. As Daniel Ottaway, writing in the *Washington Post* on 23 December 1988 noted "Starting in April 1981, when [he] made his first trip to southern Africa, the U.S. mediator had been waiting patiently for the right alignment of local, regional and international events - like planets lining up for some rare astronomical happening as he himself put it - to clinch a deal." (Pauline Baker, 1990: 70).

3.5 Implications of the Peace Agreement

The Angola/Namibia Accords and subsequent peace settlement in Angola had major political consequences in the region.

First, it accelerated the process of transformation within South Africa itself. The military setback at Cuito Cuanavale discredited the securocrat strategies and eroded their influence in state decision-making circles. The eclipse of Soviet power in the region and progress in Namibia according to Western democratic principles further altered the power equations in these circles adding to the credibility of the reformers' strategies. The intervention in Angola that resulted in the stalemate at Cuito Cuanavale led logically to withdrawal from Angola and independence of Namibia and deemed P.W. Botha's destabilisation tactics irrelevant.

Thereafter South Africa faced a choice: withdraw into the *laager* and defy the world; or monopolise on the opportunity which the events of 1987-90 offered and negotiate to seek

accommodation with the black majority. No longer able to shield behind the communist threat or postpone with the problems in Namibia, President de Klerk's speech of 1990 indicated that South Africa was willing to come to terms with majority rule and 'cross the Rubicon'.

Second, the threat which the securocrats believed was posed by the location of ANC bases in Angola was removed with their expulsion after the signing of the Accords. The reformers could refer to this as further evidence of the declining external threat to South Africa's security. According to Daniel and Mosia (1992), in reality, Mkontho we Sizwe's (MK/Spear of the Nation) removal from Angola had little impact on its capacity for military activity inside the country, which was already at a low ebb as a result of the SADF's regional war of attrition on the its forces, together with the decline in Soviet aid. Further, by 1989 the ANC was sending out clear signals that it was willing to negotiate a political solution.

Third, the signing of the Accords led directly to the independence of Namibia and the accession to power of the SWAPO government, a condition which P.W. Botha swore would never happen. Pretoria had played the Namibia card for two decades of mounting pressures, knowing that they had no long-term legitimacy in Namibia and would eventually have to surrender control. During the 1980s linkage provided further opportunity for delay. With linkage, the Namibian solution became conditional upon a resolution of the Angolan war.

For the government in Pretoria, which had been hovering on the brink of accepting UN decisions, linkage was a major short-term victory, where with the Cold War at its height, there seemed little prospect that Cuba would withdraw in the foreseeable future. Linkage

detracted away from South Africa's internal situation, and prolonged her tenure of control in Namibia. However, linkage also tied South Africa's hands, so that in the circumstance of 1988 - the stalemate of Cuito Cuanavale coupled with cooperation between the USSR and USA in solving regional conflicts - Pretoria had little other option than to accept the implementation of UNSCR 435 (Arnold, 1990: 32). After a decade, the US's primary concern had been met, albeit at a very high cost in terms of human lives and an economy destroyed: the Cubans were out of Angola, leaving South Africa to fulfil their side of the bargain.

The final consequence was that the Angolan peace settlement left America as the uncontested power in the region - able to exert pressures and influence development along the lines it determines. As the world hegemon, in military terms, the US is able to and willing to go to any lengths to protect its interests - as illustrated by the Gulf War.

CHAPTER 4

ESCALATING CRISIS AND SUBSIDIARY REFORM PRESSURES

This chapter examines several factors which constituted pressures for reform in South Africa. The most important of these were:

(i) Internal uprising.

(ii) 'Rubicon' and the foreign debt crisis.

(iii) International reaction to uprising.

  (a) Disinvestment

  (b) The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act

(iv) Economic stagnation.

(v) Escalating domestic and regional security costs.

Together, all of these factors, among others, contributed to changes in National Party politics. They were not, however, in themselves sufficient to bring about transformation in South Africa. All had been impacting on the government for a some time. Why then did the National Party not seek to address them in 1986 instead of 1990? It is argued that the end of the Cold War was the catalytic trigger to transformation. It is unlikely that the de Klerk leadership would have moved towards negotiations had the international climate remained as unfavourable as it had during the Cold War era. The deterministic argument that the end of the Cold War caused transition must be rejected. Instead it is argued that of the mix of motives which combined to bring about the demise of statutory apartheid, the end of the Cold War was the determining factor.

The government perceived the ANC without the backing of the Soviet Union to be a containable force. The government also did not perceive a transfer of power to be at hand. White domination of the economy, military and bureaucracy provided a secure framework in which the ANC could be drawn into the political and bureaucratic structures without leading to a radical transformation of its character (Giliomee, 1992(b): 357, 364). Thus, the pressures discussed in this section must be seen against the backdrop of the Cold War. The regional and international environment in which the Pretoria government operated changed. This created the political space in which they could finally be addressed.

4.1 Internal Uprising

Prime Minister Botha, in the context of changing circumstances and growing international pressures, attempted to give the appearance of reforms by eliminating the more obnoxious forms of public apartheid while still maintaining Afrikaner power and control. In 1983 a constitutional referendum for Whites approved a racially segregated Tricameral Parliament for Whites, Coloured and Indians but which excluded Africans. In September 1984 the new Parliament was put into effect, consisting of a House of Assembly (178 Whites elected by Whites), a House of Representatives (85 Coloureds elected by Coloureds) and a House of Delegates (45 Asians elected by Asians) so that joint sessions would still be dominated by a white majority. The African majority were granted no vote or say in the new constitutional arrangement. The rhetoric of 'power sharing' led to far-reaching splits in Afrikanerdom, with 16 MP's leaving the National Party in March 1982 to join the Conservative Party under Dr Andries Treurnicht (Taylor, 1987: 57).

On the day the new constitution went into effect, 3 September, violent protests broke out in the townships in the Vaal Triangle. These were triggered in part by local issues such as rent and education, but the overriding grievance was the racially segregated Parliament. The vehicle for this resistance was the newly formed United Democratic Front (UDF), an umbrella organisation of hundreds of diverse groups. Among them were trade unions, youth, community, women, student, professional, religious and educational organisations. The unrest spread rapidly from one area to the next across South Africa, turning into a popular uprising of unprecedented scope, duration and intensity. The security forces responded by opening fire on protestors and clamping down on press coverage of events.

Between 1984 and 1986 multiple forms of mass resistance and protest interacted and reinforced each other (Baker, 1989: 27). Simultaneous waves of school boycotts, political strikes, consumer boycotts, rent strikes and huge community rallies, as well as controversial people's courts and their punishments (especially "necklacings") of those regarded as collaborators with the regime combined with escalating armed sabotage by the ANC/MK to turn protest and resistance into insurrection (Grundy, 1991: 36). In two-and-a-half years, between August 1984 and the end of 1986, four times as many political work stoppages or "stayaways" were staged than in the entire preceding three-and-a-half decades (Price, 1990: 193).

One of Botha's greatest political 'achievements' was to transform the South African armed forces into a formidable modern fighting organisation, which under the guidance of military chief General Malan, attempted to establish "law and order" with a show of extreme force. In July 1985 the government declared a State of Emergency to check the process of black

political mobilisation.

At the opening of Parliament in January 1985 Botha proposed the removal of the 'negative and discriminatory' aspects of apartheid. Parliament repealed the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act as well as sections of the Immorality Act and removed aspects of influx control by restoring South African citizenship to residents of the former homelands. However, in the climate of 1985 their passing was hardly noticed. The turmoil in South Africa was shown in the electronic and print media in almost daily reports over a period of fourteen months, from September 1984 when the protests began, to November 1985, when television coverage was banned by the South African government.

Constructive engagement came under fire since it seemed that little had been accomplished. The Lusaka Agreement and Nkomati Accord were ignored as Pretoria, instead of withdrawing from Angola, increased support to UNITA. Clandestine military supplies continued to flow to the counter-insurgency movement, Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana (Renamo) which was attempting to undermine the Marxist-orientated Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique (Frelimo) who had come to power in Mozambique. The Namibia talks had reached an impasse. In November 1984 Bishop Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Tutu, an outspoken critic of apartheid, drew worldwide attention to the political unrest in South Africa.

4.2 'Rubicon' and the Foreign Debt Crisis

What credibility remained in South Africa was dashed by President Botha's 'Rubicon' speech

on 15 August 1985. Amidst a considerable build-up to the speech high expectations for sweeping new reforms and conciliation internationally and within South Africa had been raised. The message instead was one of intransigence. Under great pressure from Afrikaner conservatives who opposed any easing of apartheid, and with militant black opposition fuelled by the confidence that its time was near, demanding reforms beyond any level Pretoria had ever contemplated, Botha retreated into the *laager*. His principal message was that he had "crossed the Rubicon" in terms of his reform program, implying he was committed to change, but at his own pace and on his own terms. He ruled out significant power sharing in South Africa and blamed the disturbances on "barbaric communist agitators ... on the payroll of their masters far from this lovely country of ours". He further stated "I am not prepared to lead white South African and other minority groups on a road to abdication and suicide. Destroy white South Africa and our influence, and this country will drift into faction, chaos and poverty" (Baker, 1989: 33; Arnold, 1992: 40). The effect on South Africa was calamitous.

Against this background, a fiscal crisis was sparked off in August 1985 when US Chase Manhattan Bank refused to roll over South African short-term loans after which other American and European creditors followed suit. The banks created an immediate balance of payments crisis for Pretoria, since the central bank lacked sufficient foreign reserve to cover outstanding external obligations and also created a barrier to new borrowing. The global economy's reaction to the volatile political climate coupled with the let down of the 'Rubicon' speech was a sharp drop of confidence in the South African economy, reflected in a nearly instantaneous decline of over 50% in the rand's value relative to the US dollar. The government was forced to suspend stock exchange dealings for five days and announce

a freeze on debt-servicing payments. An international debt mediator was appointed and protracted negotiations for rescheduling ensued between the government and South Africa's foreign creditors (Price, 1990: 223; Arnold, 1992: 41; Baker, 1989: 33).

As the level of violence increased the security forces ruthlessly destroyed the structures of people's power through intimidation, restrictions and detentions. The partial State of Emergency of 1985 was extended to cover the whole country in 1986, and was still in force by the end of 1989. Emergency rule centralised power to an even greater extent in the hands of the securocrats and the institutions associated with repression, notably the military and police (Moss and Obery, 1989: xxii). Countless organisations were banned and between June 1986 and May 1987 around 25 000 people were detained. By the end of 1985 dissatisfaction with the governments heavy handed approach to the situation had increased to a significant level, both internationally and within the white community, particularly the business community, which saw a rapid erosion of international business confidence taking place.

4.3 International Reaction to Uprising

(a) Disinvestment

Although the violence had been quelled to a degree by the tightening of the emergency regulations in 1986, public concern about conditions in South Africa had rapidly been translated into political action by anti-apartheid organisations, particularly in the US and Britain. Domestic support for economic pressure on South Africa was mobilised. By 1985 in the United States there was an increasing gap between the Administration and popular opinion, as represented by a growing number of congressmen and lobby groups such as the

Congressional Black Caucus and American Committee on Africa (ACOA). In the early months of 1985 these groups were successfully pressuring large institutional investors to adopt divestment policies aimed at reducing or eliminating South African-related stock from their equity portfolios (Baker, 1989: 45; Price, 1991: 222).

Many of the disinvesting companies did not explain their withdrawal in political terms. General Motors announced in 1986 that it was selling out to local interests due to poor sales. Other US companies to withdraw were IBM, Coca-Cola and Honeywell. Eastman Kodak withdrew completely, refusing even to supply its products to South Africa. In 1987 Exxon sold its operations in South Africa. Its president, Lawrence Rawal explained the decision: "The deterioration of the South African economic and business climate caused by the continuing internal and external constraints has affected our business and its potential for growth" (Arnold, 1992: 132). The number of big-name corporations to withdraw during 1986 increased, because as Raymond Parsons, head of South Africa's association of Chambers of Commerce explained, "The political pressure exerted on the multinationals makes a small stake in South Africa not worth that amount of hassle" (Arnold, 1992: 132).

Large amounts of capital left the economy through disinvestment. Although this received the most attention, it actually had the least impact. Despite the fact that between 1984 and 1989 approximately 184 US companies and 125 other firms pulled out of South Africa, the loss of capital to the economy was minimal. This was because the sale of these firms to local companies usually involved an arrangement for the extended repayment of the purchase price out of future profits. Thus, the value of US direct investment in South Africa was only reduced by 10% between 1982 and 1986, despite the high degree of disinvestment. Of the

main effects of disinvestment however, was that it significantly undermined investor confidence because of the appearance of abandonment of South Africa by many of the worlds leading industrial firms (Price, 1991: 225).

(b) The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act

By the end of Reagan's first term apartheid had become a major political issue in the United States. Under pressure from Congress, in September 1985, President Reagan issued an executive order containing mild measures:- a prohibition on the sale of Kruger Rands in the US; a prohibition on the transfer of nuclear technology; a prohibition on computer sales to South African agencies; and a prohibition on new bank loans to the South African government (Price, 1990: 222). President Reagan's executive order was not well received by either liberals or conservatives in Congress. The liberals were unhappy since the measures were regarded as punitive and seen as a substitute for more comprehensive sanctions. On the other hand, the conservatives believed Reagan's willingness to adopt sanctions, albeit limited, would tilt the US towards Black radicals in South Africa and play into the hands of the Soviet Union. The order, which was supposed to appease both sides, instead intensified the debate (Baker, 1989: 42-44; Clough, 1988: 1070).

Despite opposition, Reagan unwaveringly supported constructive engagement and stood firm in his belief that Pretoria deserved to be defended. In a televised speech on July 22, 1986 he praised P.W. Botha's "dramatic change" politically and maintained that it was because of these changes "that [white] extremists have denounced him as a traitor". He further referred to the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups as radical organisations engaged in acts of

"calculated terror" in order to bring about a racial war through "Soviet-armed guerillas". Using inflammatory speech, which mirrored Pretoria's, the President declared that "the South African government is under no obligation to negotiate the future of the country with any organisation that proclaims a goal of creating a communist state and uses terrorist tactics and violence to achieve it" (Clough, 1988: 1071, 1072; Baker, 43).

The speech triggered strong criticism. Even the conservative columnist Simon Barber argued that the speech did not address the domestic or South African political reality; "Indeed, it seemed deliberately calculated to provoke the worst possible responses from all sides: it gave Pretoria comfort, black South Africa reason to despair, and Congress no choice" (Baker, 1989: 44). The sanctions debate now became a domestic civil rights issue within the United States in which political and moral concerns became paramount. Within Congress, the vote on South Africa was portrayed not only as a key foreign policy decision but as a test of where it stood on racism. In a speech to the Senate, Nancy Kassenbaum, Republican Senator and Chair of the Upper House's Committee on Africa expressed the following view of sanctions legislation

> Whatever, the shortcomings ... they are far less onerous than a failure to respond to the challenge of the present moment ... to correct the South African misperception that it has tacit Western approval for its course of gradualist reform without political change, ...to show white South Africans that intransigence will have tangible costs for them .... (Baker, 1989: 44)

In August the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) was passed by both Houses of Congress, but vetoed by the President. On 3 October 1986 the veto was overturned by an overwhelming majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, proving to be one of the most decisive defeats of Reagan's foreign policy during his tenure. The legislation

imposed the strongest sanctions yet taken against Pretoria by one of its major western trading partners.

The CAAA contained some eighteen different types of sanctions of which some main provisions prohibited US firms from making new investments in or bank loans to the South African economy; and prohibited a range of South African imports including coal, uranium, steel, textiles and agricultural products. Further, the legislation also threatened to cut off military aid to allies suspected of breaching the international arms embargo against Pretoria. This curbed contacts with, for example, Israel, with whom South Africa had traded military technology.

The primary purpose of CAAA was defined as to "set forth a comprehensive and complete framework to guide the efforts of the United States in helping to bring an end to apartheid in South Africa and lead to the establishment of a nonracial, democratic form of government" (Baker, 1989: 45). What this implied was that CAAA was intended to establish a new US policy. Congress abandoned the President because his policy of constructive engagement had failed and had lost credibility domestically.

(i) The Ambiguities of the CAAA Legislation

Despite passage of the CAAA by landslide votes, a congressional consensus did not exist on policy toward South Africa. Because the coalition supporting the act was composed of many groups with different sets of motives, the CAAA consisted of what Clough refers to as "a jumble of provisions". The legislation was in some areas broad and sometimes contradictory leading to confusion about its real purpose.

For some, sanctions were a means to punish Pretoria, while others saw it as a way of sending a strong message to the South African government that it should change its policies. For others, such as those members of Congress who responded to the sentiments of their constituents, domestic considerations were predominant. On the other hand, some saw it as an opportunity to inflict a foreign policy defeat on the Reagan Administration. Special interests also played a role where, for example, strategic minerals were excluded from the list of banned South African imports.

Ambiguity also lay in the provisions concerning the ANC. Although urging the release of ANC President Nelson Mandela from jail and the unbanning of anti-apartheid organisations, the Act also required the Administration to prohibit assistance to any organisation supporting or encouraging "necklacing" which some attributed to the ANC and its supporters. The Act further urged the Administration to encourage the ANC to:

(i) suspend terrorist activities;

(ii) commit itself to a free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa;

(iii) agree to enter into negotiations; and

(iv) reexamine its ties to the SACP (Clough, 1988: 1073).

The act was strongly anti-communist in sentiment, requiring the Administration to submit a report on the role of the SACP in the ANC.

(ii) CAAA Conditions for Negotiation

The law also outlined guidelines on the policies the US should adopt toward Pretoria; the elements of a negotiated political solution in South Africa; and the US position on matters ranging from aid for Black education to labour unions. It also spelled out measures which

the South African government would have to take in order to have sanctions lifted which included:

(i) the release of all detainees and political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela;

(ii) repeal of the state of emergency and all detainees held under the state of emergency;

(iii) unbanning of all political parties and the right of all races to participate in the political process;

(iv) repeal of the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act; and

(v) that South Africa agree to enter into good faith negotiations with representative members of the black majority without preconditions (Sanctions Update, 1991: 43).

There is much debate over the effectiveness of sanctions on South Africa. George Frederickson argues that "it was sanctions that, more than anything else, brought the government to the bargaining table in the first place" (Giliomee, 1992(a): 111). Giliomee rejects that position, by arguing that had that been the case, the private sector, which was most directly affected by sanctions, would have been critically involved in pushing for the necessary socio-political changes to bring sanctions to an end. According to a study on the subject, English-speaking business leaders were left outside the socio-political policy discussions in government. The Afrikaner business leaders, who had access, were found to hold no political views independent of those expressed by the Botha government. Giliomee concluded that by and large business leaders had learnt to live with sanctions - the way P.W. Botha wanted them to (Giliomee, 1992(b): 359).

Whatever the stance on sanctions, the CAAA was a watershed in US-South Africa relations because for the first time US policy stated unequivocally that the South African government

would have to pay a price for the denial of black political rights. The new relationship was institutionalised in law and could only be changed with Congress's consent.

4.4 Economic Stagnation

By the late 1980s, bank and economic sanctions were hurting the economy through the loss of foreign earnings and exchange. Derek Keys, now Finance Minister then Chairman of Gencor, pointed out the effect of long-term sanctions as being to "deprive us of the kind of growth we could otherwise have expected" (Price, 1991: 229). While referring to Gencor, this held true for the whole South African economy in general.

The impact of CAAA was exacerbated by the constrained state of the economy at the time due to a residue of sanctions imposed as a result of the 1976 Soweto riots. For example, billions were invested in the Sasol oil-from-coal plants in an effort to shield the economy from the international oil embargo in effect since 1979. According to government figures released in 1986 the oil embargo was costing the South African economy between one and two billion dollars per year, and a total of 22 billion dollars since its imposition. Thus, South Africa's potential for economic growth was undermined because there was a sizeable outflow of foreign capital which took place in the context of constrained export earnings and artificially high energy costs.

However, in relation to the size of the economy, South Africa's debts were not large. At the end of 1989, before de Klerk announced the reforms, South Africa's debts had been reduced to $20 600 million which was lower than the $23 700 million owing in August 1985

when the crisis broke. Thus in 1989 the ratio of foreign debt to Gross National Product (GNP) was 23%, whereas in 1985 it had been 41,2%. Therefore despite the effects of disinvestment and sanctions, and although experiencing a deep recession, the economy was still strong.

4.5 Domestic and Regional Security Costs

The cost of Pretoria's domestic and regional security policies soared in the late 1980s. The budget allocation for defence was 218% higher than 1984. Between 1986 and 1989 alone, the defence budget increased at a rate of 30 times the economic growth rate and at twice the rate of inflation, bringing the allocation for security to nearly one quarter of the total national budget. (See Figure 1.) A further drain on the economy was the escalating cost to South Africa for its continued administration of Namibia.

The high level of security spending jeopardised the other budget allocations, especially domestic reform plans for physical upgrading of housing and education which required large-scale government outlays. Part of the total strategy plan involved the creation and co-option of a black middle class as a buffer against the forces for majority rule (Marks & Swilling, 1989: 89).

Due to the economic recession there was an accelerated flow of black people to the cities. The high defence budget undercut the regime's efforts to provide social services such as school construction, housing projects and township electrification. It was also unable to act on its plans to reduce the political alienation of the hundreds of thousands of Blacks living

in squatter camps and rural areas through an amelioration of their squalid living conditions. Squatting unintentionally became one of the most massive acts of civil disobedience and passive resistance. The governments intolerant response to it became an important contributing factor to external isolation and domestic revolt and mobilisation (Van Zyl Slabbert, 1990: 6; Boraine, 1989: 108, 113).

This chapter has identified a number of subsidiary pressures which contributed to the reform process in South Africa. Despite the evidence that apartheid rule was impractical, unacceptable and unaffordable, the Botha government remained resolute and unbending in the face of pressure for fear of appearing vulnerable and weak should they yield. It is argued that without the thaw in the Cold War, none of the subsidiary pressures in themselves would have been powerful enough to bring the government to the negotiating table. The reasons for this are as follows.

(i) Due to the duration and intensity of the internal uprisings, most of the Western world believed that it was just a question of time before the South African state would succumb to resistance. Soviet analysts optimistically predicted the imminent demise of the apartheid regime and its replacement by an ANC government. By mid-1986 it was evident that white power was not going to collapse. This was due to the ruthless, yet successful attempts by the Botha government to restore law and order. Through P.W. Botha the South African state had been transformed into a military-bureaucratic complex, with decision-making firmly in the hands of a few at the top. It was demonstrated by 1986 that as long as the military backed the National Party it could, through the use of force, remain in power indefinitely. The Botha government perceived the ANC liberation struggle, with the backing

of the Soviet Union, to be the major cause of domestic turmoil. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism as a legitimating ideology, de Klerk perceived the ANC to be a containable force. He firmly believed that by seizing the initiative and taking the ANC on politically, he would be negotiating from a position of strength.

(ii) South Africa was plunged into a debt crisis in 1985 when President Botha, in his controversial 'Rubicon' speech failed to live up to any of the expectations that observers in South Africa and abroad had of the address. After the Chase Manhattan Bank decision the country faced a 'global credit freeze'. In response to the foreign debt crisis, the South African government announced a temporary standstill in its debt repayments. By February 1986 South Africa and its 34 creditors had reached a rescheduling agreement. In September 1988, South Africa received further reprieve from its creditors when they agreed to extend beyond 1991 the repayment period for $3 billion of loans. The depreciation of the rand also meant that debt servicing has become more expensive.

Despite these obstacles, South Africa still managed to meet all its debt repayments between 1985 and 1989. Further, despite the highly adverse international conditions prevailing since 1985, the South African economy recorded three successive years of growth from 1986. Real growth (in GDP) increased from 0.5% in 1986, to over 2% in 1987 and more to than 3% in 1988 (Geldenhuys, 1990: 333). The South African state responded to the debt crisis with a 'go-it-alone' attitude. Although experiencing an economic recession, the situation was, to a certain extent, brought 'under control'.

(iii) The international community responded to the domestic crisis by disinvesting

and in 1986 the US imposed wide-ranging economic sanctions against South Africa.

The effects of disinvestment have been difficult to assess because of the large amount of confusing and contradictory statistics available (Geldenhuys, 1990: 397). This is compounded by the fact that there are many forms of disinvestment, of which withdrawal is only one†. There is no clear evidence to suggest that the South African government became more reformist or less repressive under the pressure of disinvestment during this time. Further, there is no indication that the South African government intended to transfer power to a black leadership because of disinvestment.

The impact of economic sanctions on South Africa is a matter surrounded by much controversy. Despite features of a seige economy as a result of sanctions, South Africa managed to maintain wide-ranging external economic ties, specifically with regard to trade (both imports and exports), especially with other pariah states. Thus, while South Africa experienced comprehensive economic isolation, it was by no means total.

These pressures had been impacting on the government for some time. Many of the sanctions and embargoes had been in place since the 1976 Soweto riots. It is argued that F.W. de Klerk, in the context of the end of the Cold War, made a deliberate political choice to negotiate. The thaw in the Cold War changed the context in which policy choices could be made. South Africa's principle adversary, the Soviet Union, had indicated a reassessment of its policies towards the Republic and the region generally. An application of this had

† See Geldenhuys, Deon., *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis*, for a discussion on the types of disinvestment.

already been demonstrated in 1988 with the implementation of UNSCR 435 in Namibia. Had the political climate remained as unfavourable and perceived to be as hostile as during the Cold War, there would not have been political change.

By opting for transition away from apartheid domination F.W. de Klerk brought the country into the mainstream of the two international trends concerned with democracy and a market-driven economy. In addition, through meeting the conditions required for the lifting of sanctions it provided the opportunity to address long-standing domestic problems, secure in the knowledge that the security of the state would not be jeopardised.

Further, de Klerk understood, much better than P.W. Botha, that the white minority stood a much better chance of striking a bargain in 1990, than if they had waited a further 10 years. F.W. de Klerk articulated this in a speech shortly after legalising the liberation movements:

> We have not waited until the position of power dominance turned against us before we decided to negotiate a peaceful settlement. The initiative is in our hands. We have the means to ensure that the process develops peacefully and in an orderly way. (Giliomee, 1992(b): 357)

CHAPTER 5

THE BREAKDOWN OF AFRIKANER UNITY

By the mid-1980s it was evident that Afrikaner political unity, as embodied by the National Party was fragmenting. This was in reaction to the thaw in the Cold War and collapse of communism as a legitimating ideology. Divisions were also arising within the ruling elite as to the scope and pace of the reform process. Many were disappointed at Botha's slow progress to political reform, while others maintained that he was already going too fast. Right-wing opposition from within Afrikanerdom to P.W. Botha was not merely evident outside the National Party, but also clearly within. Although his moves on political reform were limited and cautious, they were nonetheless sufficient to cause considerable tension in Nationalist ranks[†].

Willem de Klerk, F.W. De Klerk's brother, defined the term "verkrampte" during a speech before a youth congress in which he referred to those opposed to the reform process. He described them as:

> His watchword is: back to the old ways. He stands for the continuation of the past; closing his mind to innovation, he casts suspicion on anyone and anything that advocates openness to criticism. He lives and thinks by a system of regulations that has gained validity over the years, without questioning the principles of those regulations. He is trapped in political stagnation. He is a propagandist for the bigoted, traditionalistic, isolated Afrikaner, even ready to launch a campaign against heresy, and skilled in the extremistic use of hairsplitting to enforce his visions on any issue. (W. de Klerk, 1991: 110)

[†] In March 1982 17 MPs left the National Party following an open right-wing revolt against P.W. Botha. The main reason for the most serious split in Nationalist Party ranks since 1969 (when an ultra-right-wing group walked out to form the Herstigte Nationale Party) was the government's plans for constitutional reform involving Whites, Coloureds and Indians. The rebel MPs formed the Conservative Party and Dr A.P. Treurnicht, previously a member of P.W. Botha's Cabinet, became its leader (Geldenhuys, 1984, 37).

In short, a 'verkrampte' was as an uncritical supporter of apartheid policies, whereas 'verlig' (enlightened) became a cliché to describe Afrikaners who were seeking renewal and change in political policies. Informal groupings within the National Party took place around these two terms. Enlightened Afrikaners were regarded as the "fourth power" in South African politics (W. de Klerk, 1989: 61). De Klerk described the Afrikaner movement as:

> ... a movement of incremental political renewal which tried, inch by inch and in tiny doses, to shift the government and the Afrikaner nation from the accent of segregation and apartheid to the accent of unity. (W. de Klerk, 1991: 118)

The enlightened movement was not an orchestrated, structured campaign among Afrikaners. Nor did it have any fixed strategy. It was rather the collective expression of like-minded individuals. Church officials, Afrikaans editors, political commentators, businessmen, Broederbond leaders, academics and some NP parliamentarians "carried the standard of Afrikaner enlightenment". Initiatives taken by the 'movement' included writing columns for newspapers, addressing open and closed meetings, drafting proposals and reports, and the formation of delegations to meet with the authorities. Also, over a period of three years the ANC was met in secret, thank-tanks were attended and a network of communication channels opened (W. de Klerk, 1989: 124, 125). In this way the enlightened movement among Afrikaners became a dynamic force that paved the way for F.W. de Klerk's reforms.

The verligtes have also been called "New Nats". Willem de Klerk argues that the verligtes, over the years, gained respectability within the National Party, whereas ultra-conservatism was more and more seen as being disreputable. During the mid-1980s the "New Nats" took a stand on the realities of South Africa and began to openly attack the government's apartheid policies on its fallacies, *inter alia*: that the order apartheid had sought to impose had failed;

that apartheid was doomed; that the financial balance sheets had proved apartheid unaffordable; that the immorality of the policy had to be acknowledged; that racism lay at the root of apartheid; that black people had justified nationalistic claims; and that complications of the system were proof of its impracticability.

In 1987 Sampie Terreblanche, a leading National Party intellectual and verligte wrote "The NP cannot transform South Africa in its present state of stagnation, crisis, structural inequality, international isolation and apartheid into a country of prosperity, international respectability, fairness and good hope for all people" (Price, 1991: 239).

The verligtes advocated constitutional co-existence, arguing that the existing constitution offered no model for a settlement. It believed that all groups should be responsible for the constitution. This formula was developed progressively into joint decision-making, equal participation, power sharing and a democratic dispensation that recognised the majority principle, but demanded the protection of minorities. The verligtes also spoke out against the network of discriminatory laws, propagating the principles of a constitutional state. The government was also persistently confronted with the question of security legislation. In 1985 the "New Nats" in parliament declared that they were willing to entertain discussions of a future based upon majority rule, and called for the unbanning of the ANC in recognition of the fact that it was the leading actor in black politics. They aimed at sensitising the authorities and public to the urgency of the situation in South Africa and the need for rapid, planned tempo of change (W. de Klerk, 1989: 123).

Despite evidence that the Soviet Union was a declining power and that communism as an

ideology had lost its momentum, the Soviet Union and communism was still paradêd as a threat by the militarists since South African defence involvement within the region and the suppression of black domestic political movements in order to maintain white domination was heavily dependent on Cold War rhetoric and Cold War theory. Both were now being threatened by the development of Moscow's 'new political thinking'. Thus, the basis for South Africa's regional policy and domestic suppression was being inverted, leaving the decision-makers floundering to regain the momentum which had been lost due to these new developments and searching for a driving force to legitimise military actions. For P.W. Botha, the maintenance of white power lay in continued military suppression and domination of any group which opposed the governmental view.

While this was the view of the military hawks, it was recognised in other official circles that the Soviet Union was adopting a totally different approach, both in its domestic and foreign policies which provided a new constructive role for the Soviet Union in South Africa. This was confirmed by the establishment of a new section for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the Department of Foreign Affairs towards the end of 1987. (Geldenhuys, 1988: 12).

Evidence of the changed thinking in certain government circles towards the Soviet Union is apparent in the address by Kobus Meiring, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Orange Free State Congress of the Nationalist Party in September 1988. Here he told National Party followers that the Soviet Union had embarked on a new course in domestic and foreign policies which had resulted in dramatic changes in the international political scene. He went on to say that in southern Africa a changed Soviet approach held out promise of resolving

the region's conflicts and that South Africa should be ready to seize any such opportunity. Meiring explained to National Party followers that domestic issues necessitated Gorbachev's policy of large-scale reform and compelled him to improve relations with Western powers. Meiring went on to say that

> The USSR has begun to realise South Africa plays a key role in the achieving of economic and political stability in Angola and Mozambique as well as in Southern Africa as a whole. (Geldenhuys, 1988: 13)

Further, he stated that the Soviet Union was beginning to understand the complexity of the South African situation and Pretoria welcomed this "new realism" of Moscow.

Pieter Bezuidenhout, Head of the Eastern Europe and Soviet Union section of the Department of Foreign Affairs, argued along similar lines when he addressed a conference organised by Stellenbosch University's Institute for Future Research (Geldenhuys, 1988: 15). Here he maintained that Gorbachev had inherited a domestic political system already in an advanced stage of decay. He went on to argue that an indication of the Soviet Union's profound "ideological re-orientation" was the abandonment of the notion of an eventual Soviet-orchestrated triumph of socialism over capitalism. He reiterated the Soviet's commitment to peaceful co-existence and argued that Gorbachev had to put an end to Brezhnev's "foreign fiasco's" in order to prevent further deterioration in the USSR's great power status while at the same time retaining credibility both at home and abroad. This, he stated, was the reason for their accommodating attitude regarding Afghanistan and Angola.

Bezuidenhout went on to point out that the Soviet Union had global interests in southern Africa, arguing that it was not in South Africa's interests that the US and USSR make decisions about southern Africa without consulting the Republic, the regional power. He

declared that South Africa would "naturally welcome it" if the Soviet Union were to play a "stabilising role" in southern Africa with regard to solving existing regional conflicts (Geldenhuys, 1988, 14).

An article titled "ANC Changes Style" in the RSA Policy Review (1986) provides further evidence of a re-articulation of thinking. The RSA Policy Review is an official journal published by the Bureau for Information in which governmental views on current political events are expressed. The author attributed the ANC's willingness to negotiate with the government and its drafting of constitutional guidelines for a post-apartheid South Africa as the local application of the new Soviet policy. The author went on to argue that since Gorbachev had reasonable success with his new policy strategies, so the ANC hoped to gain from presenting itself as a moderate alternative to the South African government, thus its talks with numerous South African groups.

These pronouncements represented a major departure from the rhetoric in the security establishment which maintained that the Soviet Union was an aggressive intruder and implacable enemy.

5.1 The 'Trek to Lusaka'

Between 1985 and 1989 delegations of prominent South Africans, respected members of the social, economic and political elite travelled outside the country for discussions about the future of South Africa with the exiled ANC leadership. This was initiated in September 1985 at a meeting in Lusaka, Zambia between several executives of South Africa's largest

industrial firms and the most senior members of the ANC's National Executive Committee. The discussions centred around the character of a future South African government and economy after the demise of apartheid.

Soon after Dr F. van Zyl Slabbert of the Progressive Federal Party, Colin Eglin, a spokesman from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Peter Gastrow, a Member of Parliament and Dr Alex Boraine, Deputy Leader, initiated a meeting with the ANC. This was followed by other delegations containing prominent clergymen, academics, politicians, journalists, students, farmers, professionals and sportsmen who met with ANC officials to discuss subjects ranging from the future of universities to constitutional guidelines for a post-apartheid South Africa. At first the participants were primarily English-speaking, but by the end of 1986 many prominent Afrikaners had joined in.

Pretoria publicly opposed these talks. In November 1985 when a group of clergymen from the conservative Afrikaans Dutch Reformed Church announced a planned meeting with the ANC, State President P.W. Botha publicly criticised them and warned "If these naive discussions with the terrorist organisation continue in spite of appeals by the head of state and his ministers, it will amount to a defiance of the states' authority" (Price, 1991: 239). There were several political consequences as a result of the 'trek to Lusaka'.

First, the positive reports of the meetings 'de-demonised' and demystified the ANC which had always been portrayed as a terrorist organisation controlled by Moscow. It reduced white apprehension about the ANC's role as a significant player in South Africa's future, and correlatively rendering less threatening a restructured political system based on some form

of majority rule.

Second, apart from fostering pluralism within South Africa, the meetings also facilitated the legitimation of the ANC as a political, rather than terrorist organisation internationally. What had been unthinkable during the Cold War era had become a viable position within white politics: that "the ANC must form part of the search for the resolution of conflict and the transition towards a peaceful and just future". This does not deny the relevance of other anti-apartheid organisations in the struggle, but that the relationship between the regime and the ANC had to be normalised before transition could take place (Van Zyl Slabbert, 1992: 34).

5.2 The Elections of 1987 and 1989

Other indicators of the pluralisation and fluidity in the National Party were provided by the elections of 1987 and 1989. A split "to the left" had occurred prior to the 1987 elections when several dozen Afrikaner intellectuals and academics publicly abandoned the NP. The National Party, whose political hegemony had seemed steadfast and unchallengeable at the beginning of the 1980s, had by the end of the decade lost substantial ground in both popular vote and parliamentary seats.

Elections for the election of Members of the House of Assembly (White Chamber of Parliament) were held on 6 May 1987[§]. During the 1987 election campaign the

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[§] Parliament is elected for a period of five years, and may be dissolved by the State President at any time after assumption of its terms of office. Thus the South African Parliament does not have a fixed term. The

Conservative Party committed itself to reversing the limited reforms and re-establishing the principle of partition for each South African group and race. The CP emerged from the election as the Official Opposition in Parliament.

According to an analysis of the election by Esterhuyse this was due to the NP's emphasis on the 'total onslaught', the revolutionary threat posed by the ANC and foreign interference in South Africa's internal politics during the campaign. This pushed many Afrikaners into the CP-*laager*. He criticised the NP campaign as being counter-productive because it revived the 'go-it-alone' sentiments, *laager* mentality and isolationistic mechanisms of the past. Instead of opting for a strategy of reform, party leaders opted for the ideological certainties and ideals of the past. It was also due to the fact that the elections took place during one of the stormiest periods of South African history (de Kock, 1987: 297; Esterhuyse, 1987: 337). (See Figure 2 for the number of injuries, deaths and unrest incidents between September 1984 and July 1987.)

In the 1987 election the NP received a mandate for a proposed multi-racial statutory National Council. Esterhuyse interpreted this as indicating "that the majority of white voters have accepted a new idea of power sharing with blacks." He argued that the electorate accepted that reform was necessary and inevitable and that the majority of white voters in South Africa perceived the National Party as the only viable political instrument in the bargaining process for power (Esterhuyse, 1987: 339).

State President may dissolve a single House and call for fresh elections for members of that House. This does not alter the term of Parliament, but is a 'by-election' for the one House. Such an election was held for the House of Assembly in 1987 after President Botha had dissolved the House in order to hold fresh elections (Venter, 1989: 50).

While not disputing the validity of Esterhuyse's argument, it is clear that the National Council merely formed part of the National Party's legacy of attempting to disguise apartheid with legitimating ideology. It represented a further attempt by the Botha government to disguise the commitment to a white power-advantage in the constitution. Since no serious black leaders were prepared to participate in that forum, it came to nothing (Price, 1991: 242; Taylor, 1989: 56, 57).

The early months of 1989 signalled the end of the P.W. Both era. On 18 January Botha suffered a stroke and was forced to step down as National Party leader on 2 February, forcing a snap leadership election[1]. In the final round of voting the NP Caucus elected F.W. de Klerk over Barend du Plessis, the candidate for the enlightened element in the caucus by a mere eight votes.

The 61 votes for Barend du Plessis was another indication that the verligte faction in the National Party had become very strong (de Klerk, 1989: 61). For years Pik Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had been regarded as the political leader of the enlightened element in the caucus, and the in-fighting around Pik and F.W. had been perceived as a struggle between the enlightened and the conservative factions of the party. After Pik Botha was eliminated in the first round of the leadership ballot, his supporters rallied around Barend du Plessis. P.W. Botha remained State President, but as friction within the NP leadership increased it was agreed on 6 April that an election would be held on 6 September and thereafter Botha would retire.

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[1] Under the constitution an election for all three Houses of Parliament had to be held by March 1990.

On February 8, 1989 de Klerk made his first speech as leader in Parliament. This speech reflected the direction he intended to take as policy maker. His political promises and declarations of intent were as follows:

* a total change in South Africa's goals;
* a South Africa free from the antagonism of the past, of domination and oppression, that would find expression in a true democracy.

He expressed the necessity for

* a plan of action to address the grievances hampering negotiation;
* efforts towards normalisation of international relations;
* cessation of white domination in politics; and
* prevention of domination by either majority or minority, since discrimination was deemed unacceptable (de Klerk, 1991: 29).

For many, de Klerk's actions after his election as party leader, came as a surprise because of his image as a conservative. In an interview with his brother about his conservative image F.W. de Klerk said the following:

> When those of us in the inner circles ... had reached the conclusion that our policy had to shift from separate development to power-sharing I gave it my full support. I want to put this very strongly: once we had gone through the process of reassessment I took a leap in my own mind, more decisively than many other National Party politicians, that power-sharing with blacks was the right course for a new political dispensation. From then on - for example in the 1987 election - I was the one who stuck my neck out the furtherest to sell that idea all over the country. I made it emphatically clear that the logical consequence of our policy was the inclusion of blacks in any new political system. This proves that my image as an ultra-conservative national leader of the party was false, a distorted image. (de Klerk, 1991: 25)

Aside from whether F.W. de Klerk was *verlig* or *verkramp*, within the National Party he

recognised the need for a breakthrough in South African politics - away from apartheid rule towards democratisation. And that the only means of achieving this was through negotiation.

In the 1989 elections the National Party was challenged by the Conservative Party on the right and the Democratic Party (DP) on the left. The founding of the DP in 1989 was an unsettling development for the National Party. The Democratic Party was launched in 1989 out of a merger between the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and two other minor political parties which had been formed by two defectors from the National Party in 1987 (the Independent Party and National Democratic Movement). This presented a much stronger front than the fragmented leftist opposition of the past. It also stood to attract the disaffected Nationalist Afrikaners and build a better relationship with the black extra-parliamentary opposition (the DP was already involved in extensive unofficial negotiations with these groups).

Willem de Klerk estimated that the "New Nats" formed about 22% of the NP's constituency, while Sampie Terreblanche put the number at 30%. The DP also stated that they intended to set up a negotiating table with the participation of the ANC and Inkatha. This added to the government's apprehension that they might lose the initiative (W. de K, 105; Boraine, 61). During the election campaign the CP demanded a return to Verwoedian apartheid. The DP on the other hand stood for a commitment to abolishing apartheid and laying the institutional foundations of a democracy. The DP manifesto advocated one-person one-vote in a federal, not a unitary system.

Rejecting both the CP's adherence to grand apartheid and the DP's support for liberal

democracy, the NP's campaign suggested that a position somewhere between apartheid and democracy could be arrived at. It chartered a Five Year Action Plan, advanced at the NP Federal Congress in June, which stressed the need to negotiate a system of full political participation for all and a move away from rigid race classification. Whilst racial groups remained the basis for political participation, the plan advocated dialogue and negotiation; it argued for a universal franchise and a bill of rights. In this way the campaign payed lip-service to the foundations of both an apartheid and a democratic state, reflecting in many ways the ambiguities of the white voting population (Boraine, 1989: 60).

However, continuing personal differences marred the NP campaign, with matters coming to a head over a planned trip by F.W. de Klerk and Foreign Minister Botha to meet with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda. Maintaining that the visit had not been properly cleared, P.W. Botha announced his resignation in a live television address on 14 August. According to Boraine, this was after de Klerk and the cabinet had told him it was 'time to go' (Boraine, 1989: 60).

There is no publication which gives a perspective on the role of the verligtes. The split in the National Party is referred to in many books and articles by authors such as Hanlon (1986), Baker (1987-8), W. de Klerk (1989, 1990), Barber and Barratt (1989), Geldenhuys (1989), Tikhomirov (1989), Kempton (1990), Van Zyl Slabbert (1990), and Price (1991), among others. According to Willem de Klerk the enlightened movement deserves historical study since it was a continuous force which developed step by step in the context of cause and effect and was able to gradually shift National Party policy in the enlightened direction. There are differing opinions about the extent of influence which the verligte Afrikaners

exerted on the course of South African politics. While it was not the primary force, F.W. would never have been able to risk his quantum leap had the enlightened politics not prepared the way for his initiatives.

> What F.W. de Klerk did before and after February 2, 1990, had long been in preparation. He ventured a leap, but it was not a leap from zero to ten: a number of strides had already been taken along the way. (de Klerk, 1991: 98)

One of the most significant steps was taken in 1986 when the Federal Congress of the National Party adopted a resolution acknowledging that the only way to a political solution was through power sharing with Blacks. An anonymous Member of Parliament (MP), in an interview with Richard Humphries, maintained that the National Party had expressed a willingness to make fundamental policy changes as early as 1986. At the Federal Congress in Durban the National Party accepted the principles of one citizenship for all South Africans in an undivided South Africa.

The MP maintained that despite having accepted these new policy principles, the NP was unable to implement them to their logical conclusion. His reasons were that the party was internally divided, and that the state of emergency and an ageing State President were not conducive to allowing the NP to proceed with the new reform initiatives. He expressed the view that transition was possible because of the election of F.W. de Klerk, as party leader and later as State President following the resignation of P.W. Botha, and because the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe provided a different context within which the NP could launch the new reforms, which the 'New Nats' had earlier argued for. According to the Pretoria MP February 1990 saw the National Party providing "a moral commitment to the implications of already existing policy" (Humphries, 1990: 8).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis has been to investigate the extent to which the end of the Cold War made possible the dramatic policy changes of 2 February 1990. It has tried to show that of all the factors contributing to change in South Africa, the end of the Cold War was fundamental to the process of transition. The end of the Cold War is the common thread linking the international environment to the southern African region and ultimately South Africa's domestic policies. The sweeping changes introduced by Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and the democratisation of the Soviet Union fundamentally altered the face of international relations.

The demise of the Cold War led to a reassessment of regional conflicts, with the superpowers co-operating to secure their peaceful settlement. Gorbachev's 'new political thinking' reflected two fundamental changes in Soviet policy towards regional conflicts: the Soviet support for the American policy of 'linkage'; and its public endorsement of a preference for a negotiated political settlement in South Africa rather than an intensified and prolonged armed struggle to smash the apartheid system through force.

The USSR played a constructive role in the negotiations that led to the final agreement among Angola, Cuba and South Africa on 23 December 1988. Without co-operation between the US and Soviet Union and Soviet support of the American initiative it is unlikely that agreement would have been achieved. For South Africa, the collapse of communism removed the fear of a 'communist onslaught', while the positive role which Pretoria played

in the implementation of UNSCR 453 and the independence of Namibia underscored the untenability of majority rule at home.

During the latter half of the 1980s South Africa was in the grip of a major political and economic crisis. Amongst its symptoms were (i) unprecedented levels of violence as internal resistance to apartheid rule developed into a national uprising which was exacerbated by (ii) an economic recession. This was brought on by the refusal by international commercial banks to roll over South Africa's debt, followed by the passing by the United States Congress of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act which imposed a range of economic sanctions on South Africa. Further, the stagnant economy and fear of civil upheaval led to unprecedented levels of immigration, increased by compulsory military service for white males. The disparity in population figures and related urbanisation problems created by apartheid policies compounded the crisis and highlighted the need for reform.

Recognising that the domestic situation could not be solved without the involvement of the ANC, led to many prominent members of the white community consulting with the ANC's leadership in exile on South Africa's future. The ANC therefore was no longer seen as part of the problem, but part of the solution to South Africa's endemic crisis.

Despite an ideologically divided ruling elite and severe international and domestic pressure for reform, none of these pressures was so great so as to force the regime to capitulate. With the backing of the military P.W. Botha managed to suppress any opposition to his power and remain unyielding in the face of pressure. Had the state been drastically weakened by any of the pressures for reform there may have been a move to address them

as early as 1986. The impact of the end of the cold War was therefore decisive. It dramatically changed the context in which domestic policy decisions could be taken. K.W. de Klerk seized the opportunity for negotiation firm in the belief that the security of the state was not under any serious threat and that he held the initiative since the ANC was perceived to be a containable force.

A division within the white ruling elite was precipitated by the failure of repression and the realisation of the related infeasibility of an autarkic economic strategy. On the one side there were the securocrats - those within the government supportive of a continuation of militaristic solutions to South Africa's problems. This faction was associated with the vehicles for repression, namely the police and defence force. This perspective was expressed frequently in public statements by, for example, the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok. In March 1989 he stated "It is very clear, that radical activists and convinced revolutionaries and their collaborators are still extremely active." Therefore, he believed, if the state of emergency was not extended, "unrest and bloody violence would again engulf South Africa in immeasurable suffering". (Price, 276)

For the securocrats, movement away from repression towards political reform carried too much domestic risk. P.W. Botha, previously Minister of Defence, had a long and close association with the security apparatus for ten years before his election as Prime Minister. Although sometimes referred to as the "father of South African reform", he stood firmly with the securocrats. His 1987 opening address to parliament clearly indicates this:

> The continuing unrest and violence in some Black residential areas remained the cause of unnecessary suffering and loss of life in 1986. ...
> Although the internal security situation improved initially, the unrest began to assume more serious proportions towards the middle of 1986.

> Consequently, the Government was obliged to impose a nation-wide state of emergency. *The correctness of this course of action has been substantiated by the decline in the occurrence of incidents of unrest since then.* The revolutionary climate, however, necessitates the continued maintenance of theses measures of control. ...
> From ANC documents recently obtained by the Government, it appears beyond doubt that the ANC/Communist alliance is endeavouring to incite the Black communities, not only against one another, but also against the whites in South Africa. It is evident that the ANC/Communist alliance is encouraging racial violence - even though it could lead to bloodshed on a large scale. *This terrorist savagery must be resisted.*
> The point of view that a paradise on earth can be achieved by violent revolution is nothing but a dangerous and totally naive dream. *Those who wish to destroy the existing orderly system have not as yet come up with an answer that could provide South Africa with an improved dispensation. ...*
> Nobody should be misled by the fine phrases with which the ANC/Communist Party alliance has been seeking recognition and respectability at home and abroad in recent times. Discussions with the ANC are possible only if it servers ties with the and terminates its subservience to the Communist Party; abandons violence; and participates, as peaceful South African citizens, in constitutional processes in South Africa. ...
> At the same time I must warn those who have committed themselves irrevocably to the violent overthrow of the State and the disruption of society, that the Government will not for a moment hesitate to act decisively against them. The government would like to lift the state of emergency, but will maintain its basic responsibility to purposefully uphold law and order at all times. (Hansard, January 30, 1987 with author's emphasis)

In the other camp in the ruling power bloc were officials and senior government figures more aligned with the interests of enlightened capital and the foreign service establishment. Their position was upheld by those who sought reform and called for the abandonment of apartheid policies in order to solve South Africa's domestic and international problems. This faction's stance was reflected, for example, in Finance Minister Barend du Plessis's 1989 budget speech to Parliament:

> The answer for us clearly lies in the full-scale effort to break the isolation imposed on us, by dynamic expansion of our trade with the outside world and a restoration of our creditworthiness by means of the correct economic measures and political progress. (Weekly Mail, 1989: March 17 - 22)

A furore was also caused when Pik Botha, a recognised verligte, stated publicly that a black president for South Africa was a possibility. To the securocrats, this was unthinkable. When Pik failed to issue an acceptable correction through the press, P.W. Botha sharply reprimanded him in public. Within the governing party and cabinet and out of public sight F.W. de Klerk aligned himself with the verligte side of policy debate.

A powerful indication of the ascendancy of the verligtes over the securocrats in government occurred in regional, rather than domestic policy. The end of the Cold War created the political context for Pretoria's most ambitious foreign policy gambit - agreeing to the Angola/Namibia Accord in August 1988. South Africa's total national strategy was defined essentially in terms of the Cold War. The communist threat provided justification for Pretoria's regional policy of destabilisation and served as a guarantee for support form the West. It can be argued that the Accords were signed by Pretoria because destabilisation had achieved its main goals: (i) preventing cross-border incursions by the liberation movements, and (ii), forcing neighbouring countries into submission by weakening their political economies - and was therefore no longer needed. However, this perspective would deny the significance of Cuito Cuanavale.

When, in early 1988 South Africa sought to capitalise on its defeat of enemy forces at Mavinga and push through to Angola's southern strategic town, Cuito Cuanavale, Cuba responded by moving in crack troops and sophisticated air and radar systems, thereby upping the ante for continued military involvement in Angola. A military deadlock ensued. Advanced Cuban and Soviet aircraft capable of overflying northern Namibia, and with Cuban troops present in force at the border of Namibia, the South African military posture in

Angola was counterbalanced.

The changed situation in southern Angola highlighted the failures of the security strategy:

* The arms embargoes had produced technological inefficiencies, especially in the areas of weapons and equipment. The SAAF was unable to penetrate Angolan and Cuban radar/missile defences in Cuito Cuanavale. Also, faced with modern Soviet equipment brought to the frontline for the Cubans, the SADF rapidly lost air superiority, a feature it had previously counted on.
* Its inability to provide the basis for sustained economic growth undermined the states capacity the sustain the military dimension of regional hegemony. By mid-1988 the Angolan war was already costing the state some R4 billion a year. Righting the situation at Cuito Cuanavale would have required the commitment of major new military, therefore, financial resources. This would have been in addition to the cost of the administration of Namibia, which was a drain on the South African treasury.

More importantly, the international dimensions of the regional conflict made negotiation more attractive and resolution possible.

This course of events had its origins at the October 1986 Reykjavik Summit between President Reagan and Secretary General Gorbachev. Here it was agreed that within southern Africa the Soviet Union would suspend backing diplomacy with force, leaving the United States as the major power in the region. One of the consequences of the rapprochement between the superpowers was the changing significance of what they perceived to be regional conflicts - a shift which led to the a different approach to the conflicts in Afghanistan, the

Middle East, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa (Van Zyl Slabbert, 1990: 77). Superpower detente and a cessation of hostilities in favour of a peaceful negotiated process to conflict resolution fundamentally altered the regional climate.

It led to the successful completion of the quadripartite negotiations on Namibia and the implementation of UNSCR 435. Also, the organisation of a joint monitoring commission comprising the Angolan, South African and Cuban governments with the US and USSR acting as observers stimulated contact between South African and Soviet officials. Simultaneously it offered the verligtes significant leverage in their effort to push aside the securocrats. F.W. de Klerk's February 1990 speech expresses the dramatic impact which the end of the end of the Cold War had regionally and domestically.

> The government is aware of the important part the world at large has to play in the realisation of our country's national interests.
> Without contact and co-operation with the rest of the world we cannot promote the well-being and security of our citizens. The dynamic developments in international politics have created new opportunities for South Africa as well.... In Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union itself, political and economic upheaval surged forward in an unstoppable tide.... The year 1989 will go down in history as the year in which Stalinist Communism expired. These developments will entail unpredictable consequences for Europe, but they will also be of decisive importance to Africa.... The collapse, particularly of the Marxist economic system in Eastern Europe, also serves as a warning to those who insist on persisting with it in Africa.... The new situation in Eastern Europe also shows that foreign intervention is no recipe for domestic change. It never succeeds regardless of its ideological motivation....
> The countries on Southern Africa are faced with a particular challenge: Southern Africa now has a historical opportunity to set aside its conflicts and ideological differences and draw up a joint programme of reconstruction.... Hostile postures have to be replaced by co-operative ones; confrontation by contact; disengagement by engagement; slogans by deliberate debate. (de Klerk, 1991: 130)

The Angola/Namibia Accord introduced a new regional posture of diplomacy and compromise for the Republic, presenting an opportunity to break out of international isolation. Pretoria was able to capitalise on the new spirit of international optimism and

goodwill that followed the successful completion of the Angola/Namibia negotiations. This optimism embraced not just Western democracies, but the Soviet Union, Cuba and countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Within two months of signing the Accord, South African diplomatic personnel and high-level officials were travelling to Europe to reinforce Pretoria's commitment to peace, negotiation and compromise. Within the region both Pik Botha and F.W. de Klerk travelled to Mozambique, Zaire and Zambia to discuss regional issues.

The 'diplomatists' within the political elite also understood that South Africa's overture to the world would have to be matched by dramatic domestic policy changes. Unlike the securocrats, they viewed the risks of not embarking on a new domestic initiative to be far greater than to do nothing at all. This view was expressed by F. W. de Klerk:

> We have decided to try and preserve [fundamental values] by taking the initiative — even if we have to take some risks in the process. ... when we follow new methods and strategies ... it does not mean that we have forsaken our quest to create a ... society in which minorities feel safe. But we must also create a South Africa that enjoys the loyalty of the majority of its people. Unless we achieve this, there is no hope for our children and grandchildren.... Do we want them to inherit a stagnant situation that has made no progress toward solution, where revolution continues to boil and bubble under the surface? Do we want them to inherit new sanctions and boycotts? (Price, 1991: 278)

In order for South Africa to regain acceptability within the world community, it needed to develop according to western democratic principles. The speech of 1990 identified democratisation as the objective, the normalisation of the political process the means of achieving it and a process of negotiation between the various political parties the method to be employed. The newly dominant faction within the ruling party, recognising that the entire global political environment was conducive to a fundamental political breakthrough, were able to focus on negotiations as a means to resolve South Africa's endemic crisis. The nature

of international relations had changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union away from confrontation to negotiation, strength therefore lay not (as in the past) in who was backed by which superpower.

By offering to negotiate de Klerk was able do so from a position of strength since this stance would get the recognition and support of both superpowers. Unlike the security regime, the verligtes accepted that without the participation of the ANC and other anti-apartheid organisations an internationally credible and viable political solution could not be reached. Statements to this effect were made in his February 1990 speech. Given events in Eastern Europe, de Klerk claimed that the ANC had become part of a failed system; its capacity had been reduced and "the risk that the ANC was being used as a Trojan Horse by a superpower had drastically diminished" (W. de Klerk, 1991: 27). The fact that the 'apartheid regime' had recognised and accommodated the ANC's claim to being the major opposition group in the country was confirmed in a later interview by F.W. de Klerk

> The ANC is a fairly important element with a solid power-base among the people. Negotiations with others, without the ANC, would be incomplete, and their legitimacy questionable. I do not doubt for a moment that the ANC is prepared to compromise on the major issues. We must get away from the situation where the government is perceived to be abusing its powers for part-political purposes, by suppressing the ANC's political views. (W. de Klerk, 1991: 54)

The collapse of Eastern Europe provided de Klerk with a strategic opportunity to precipitate a transition in South Africa and had a profound ideological and strategic effect on the ANC and SACP. Soviet retrenchment and withdrawal within the region and from the ANC/SACP had rendered a communist revolutionary overthrow impossible, paving the way for a negotiated settlement.

Thus, under the new leadership of de Klerk, Pretoria set out to negotiate with the very organisations and leaders the National Party had previously sought to destroy. P.W. Botha's resignation as leader of the National Party and as State President changed the balance of power within the power bloc and created the political space in which the view of the "New Nationalists" could emerge as dominant. The entire global political environment of the latter half of the 1980s was conducive to a fundamental political breakthrough. The collapse of the Cold War and realignment within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the peaceful resolution of the Angola/Namibia war opened up the opportunity for South Africa to become part of the global trend toward conflict resolution and democratisation.

The opening of Parliament on 2 February 1990 gave President F.W. de Klerk the opportunity to grasp the opportunity provided by the changed international climate, and reinforced by regional events, to give expression to a process which dated back to the mid-1980s.

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APPENDIX

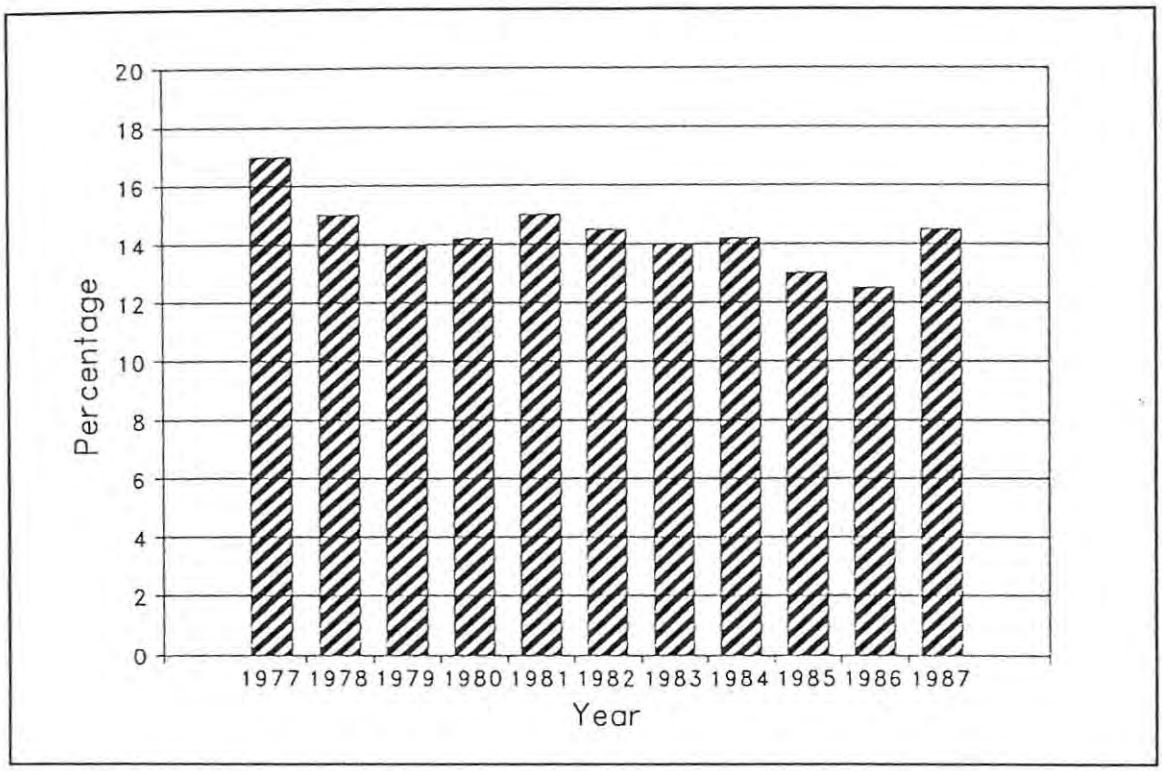

Figure 1 South African defence spending as a percentage of total budget, 1977 - 1987

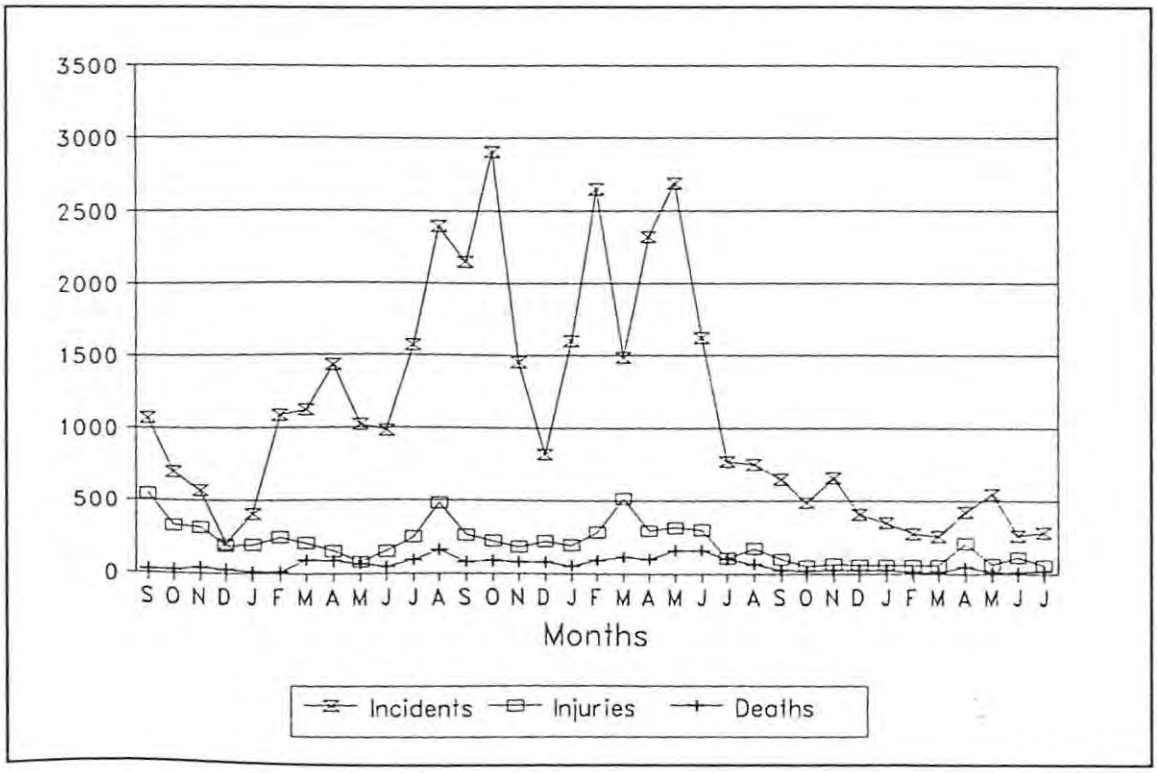

Figure 2 Incidents, Injuries and Deaths - September 1984 to July 1989