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The Evolution of the ANC's Foreign Policy towards Southern Africa, 1960-1999

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A dissertation submitted in part-fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of PhD in History, University of Sheffield

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Abstract

This thesis explores the evolution of the foreign policy of the African National Congress (ANC) predominantly towards Southern Africa, 1960-1999. It addresses three periods in the ANC's historical trajectory. These are the formulation and implementation of the ANC's foreign policy in exile from 1960 until 1990; the search for a 'new' direction during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, 1990-1994; and the initial stages of democratic rule under the leadership of the ANC, until 1999. In doing so, this dissertation charts the important continuities and discontinuities in the formulation and implementation of the movement's foreign policy from exile to political power.

By tying together themes, previously treated in isolation, this thesis overcomes important limitations in the literature. In particular, by taking the entire forty year period as a whole, it develops new insights into not only the historic evolution of the ANC's foreign policy, but the very nature of the ANC as a liberation movement and political party. It is an approach that takes on particular significance when the defining events of foreign policy formulation during South Africa's transition, 1990-1994, are taken into account. This thesis argues that the transition period is a pivotal hinge and is informed as much by the trajectory of South Africa's, and the ANC's own histories, as the changing international world order of the early 1990s. The events and decisions of the transition era had significant effects on the formation of a 'new' foreign policy for South Africa. These under-researched years are crucial to understanding the future shape and direction of South African foreign policy under the ANC-led government after 1994. By establishing historic continuities, by emphasising the pivotal moment of the transition, and by disaggregating 'the' ANC, this thesis suggests new ways of interpreting the ANC's foreign policy.

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Special mention must go to the generous financial contributions from a variety of institutions and charities, which have supported my research over the last three years. I greatly appreciate the University of Sheffield's Doctoral Fees Scholarship, without which, I would not have even been able to begin my research. In addition, the generous financial backing from the Middlemore Educational Foundation, the William Piddock Foundation, and the Sir Richard Stapley Trust, has been of immense assistance. Furthermore, thanks must also go to all the institutions that provided awards enabling me to conduct two research trips across South Africa. They are the Petrie Watson Exhibition, the Royal Historical Society, the Gilchrist Educational Trust, the University of Sheffield History Department Research Travel

Award and the University of Sheffield Learned Society Fund. To all of these contributors I am extremely grateful.

I have been very fortunate to visit South Africa twice during the course of my PhD, which was immensely beneficial to my research, but also allowed me to widely explore and experience this amazingly diverse and vibrant country. During both research trips, I was helped immeasurably by a number of people, who extended to me great kindness and generosity; this included driving me hundreds of kilometres across the country and offering me places to stay. Each trip would not have been so enjoyable or stimulating without them. I would need another chapter to detail all the kind things that everyone did for me, but thanks must go to Lyndsay and Peter Walker, Ian and Olive, Joanna Tyler, Cathy and William, Alice and Pat Ashwell, Ivy Kinnear, Lize Kriel, Neil Morris, Andy Cohen, Liesel, Cornelis, Marijke Vermaak, and Shonagh and Graham Lowe.

Thanks are due to the archivists at the Liberation Archive, University of Fort Hare; Historical Papers and the South African History Archive, University of Witwatersrand; the Foreign Affairs Archive in Pretoria; the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London; and the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

I must also express my gratitude to Abdul Bemath for all of his support towards my research. I greatly appreciate that Abdul has, without prompting, generously sent me vast quantities of references, articles and reports, as well as the contact details for a number of important people. Furthermore, I wish to express thanks to all the people who agreed to an interview, taking the time to answer my seemingly endless questions. They have added a deeper understanding to the rich tapestry of this topic.

Sheffield has been my home for seven of the last eight years, and I have loved every minute in this fantastic, yet hugely underrated city. Whilst living here, I have met many wonderful people and they have helped make the city such a great place to live and study. The 'History Massive' deserves a special mention for their enduring friendship and for being present on the first stages of my academic adventure. Kate Law has been a great friend, and she deserves particular thanks for keeping me sane during the writing of my PhD. The post-graduate community at the Department of History is diverse and friendly, and there are too many people to list

who deserve mentioning. My housemates Pete and Kenny have provided me with intellectual stimulation and ensured that away from my research, life has never been dull or stressful, and I am extremely grateful for that. Furthermore, I must mention all the people who I have played football with whilst in Sheffield; a pastime which I have devoted far too much of my time to over the last few years. I also wish to thank all my friends, too many to mention individually, but nevertheless incredibly important.

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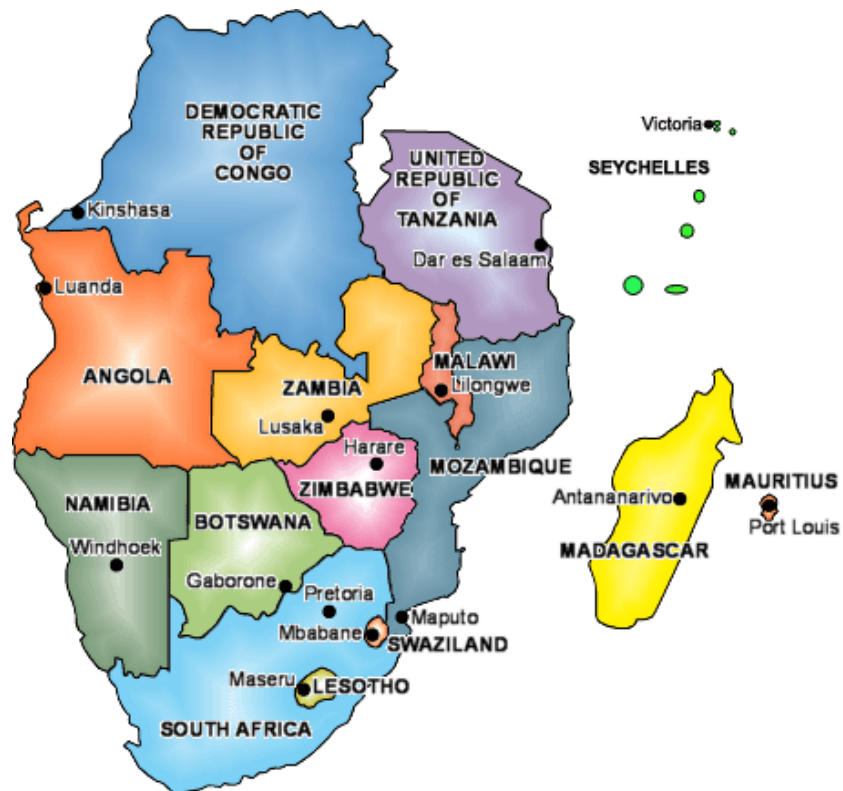
Acronyms

AAM	Anti-Apartheid Movement
AAPSO	Afro-Asian Peoples` Solidarity Organization
ANC	African National Congress
ARMSCOR	Armaments Corporation of South Africa
AU	African Union
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BNP	Basotho National Party
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DA	Democratic Alliance
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs (South Africa)
DP	Democratic Party
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
FLS	Frontline States
FRELIMO	Liberation Front of Mozambique
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GNU	Government of National Unity
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDASA	Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IMF	International Monetary Fund

MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
MPLA	People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MPNP	Multi Party Negotiating Process
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NCACC	South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee
NCC	National Consultative Conference
NEC	National Executive Committee
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO's	Non-government Organisations
NP	National Party
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PAFMECA	Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement
PCFA	Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
POLISARIO	Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro
PRC	People's Republic of China
RCD	Congolese Rally for Democracy
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance Movement

ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAAF	South African Air Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SASOL	South African Coal and Oil Ltd
SAUF	South Africa United Front
SCFA	Sub Council on Foreign Affairs
SCOPA	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
SWANU	South West African National Union
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TEC	Transitional Executive Council
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

Map of Southern Africa



Adapted from http://www.infosa.org.za/images/sadc_map1.gif (14/11/11).

Chapter One

Introduction

Since its inception in 1912, the African National Congress (ANC), a movement created initially to campaign for increased rights for black South Africans, has had an international dimension to its activities. Although the ANC's early attempts at petitioning the international community (specifically the British Empire) were unsuccessful, these initial international activities began a long and important series of interactions with external actors. The movement's focus on the international community as an agent of change became more urgent after 1948 when the new National Party (NP) government set about extending and furthering institutionalised racial segregation in the country through the system known as apartheid. In April 1960, following the Sharpeville Massacre, the ANC was banned by the NP government, a decision which forced the movement into exile. The ANC's inability to operate legally in South Africa meant that its interactions and links with external actors, chiefly the Soviet Union and independent Southern African states, took on an added significance in the 1960s. Indeed, they became imperative for the movement's very survival. External assistance provided by these countries had a significant influence on the ANC's perceptions of the world, and came to shape the course of the movement's exile based struggle.

Yet, once the ANC was unbanned by South African President F. W. De Klerk, in February 1990, the role of the (by now western-dominated) international community during the country's transition had an enormous influence on the subsequent direction and content of the movement's and, ultimately, South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy. Once in government, the ANC leadership of course became deeply involved in foreign policy activities, as South Africa reintegrated itself into the wider world. In many respects it is therefore impossible to separate the historic activities of the ANC as an exiled liberation movement, from the ANC as the ruling political party of South Africa, from its interactions with, and the influences of, Southern Africa and the wider international community. It is these interactions and influences which this thesis sets out to investigate. Because of the vital international dimension to the history of the ANC, this thesis seeks to provide a greater

understanding of the evolution of the movement's foreign policy, beginning with its exile from South Africa in 1960, through to the end of Nelson Mandela's presidency in 1999.¹ Although the focus of this study is primarily on the ANC's interactions with Southern Africa, this is at certain times broadened out to look at its relations with other nations and regions, where international influences crucially shaped its foreign policies.

The significance of this study is three fold. Where the history of the ANC has been examined, there is a tendency in the literature to separate into three distinct periods the ANC in exile; South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy; and the ANC in government. Although this periodisation is eminently sensible for practical reasons, representing distinct periods of ANC history, it creates an artificial division in the movement's experience. The result is that important continuities and discontinuities in the ANC's foreign policy perspectives and activities are frequently overlooked in the historiography. By taking a 'long-view', this thesis can more effectively chart the evolution of the ANC's foreign policy, providing greater insights into how and why it pursued particular international activities during each of the three phases. For instance, it is difficult to fully understand and explain the policies of the ANC in government after 1994, without prior knowledge of the events and decisions which took place during the exile period and particularly the transition, both of which had a significant impact on the movement's foreign policy. Such an approach allows for an in-depth historical analysis of the ANC's foreign policy.

The existing literature's periodisation of ANC foreign policy has meant that both the legacy of the exile period and the impact of vital decisions made during the transition have been diminished or even neglected. By breaking with the pattern of past historiographical approaches and connecting seemingly disjointed themes together, this thesis overcomes some of the limitations in the literature. Of particular importance to this study is South Africa's negotiated transition from apartheid to democracy. There is a remarkable absence of studies in the current literature which assess foreign policy formulation during South Africa's transition and as a consequence, the neglect of this pivotal moment has undoubted implications for the historiography. Chapters Four and Five demonstrate how first, the ANC began the

¹ The concept of how the ANC's international activities can be said to constitute a 'foreign policy' will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

process of formulating its own foreign policy vision after returning from exile, and secondly, the ways in which the international community and the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) manipulated the unfolding events to tie the new government into a foreign policy acceptable to the west. These two neglected and potentially contradictory developments had serious implications for foreign policy in the initial years of democratic rule in South Africa. By focusing on events and decisions taken during the transition, this thesis provides a clearer interpretation and new explanation of some of the ANC's policies in government after 1994. The ANC-led government's foreign policy has subsequently been criticised as lacking coherence or being haphazardly implemented. By providing a broader analytical approach and utilising newly available archival documents, Chapters Six and Seven illustrate how contradictory pressures, predominantly emanating from the transition, affected the ANC-led government's foreign policy. A primary purpose of this thesis therefore, is to re-evaluate certain aspects of post-apartheid South Africa's foreign policies in the context of decisions made between 1990 and 1994. This has significant implications for the analysis of South Africa's foreign policy since 1994.

Finally, this thesis takes a different approach from the dominant trends in the literature, arguing that the ANC, as an exiled liberation movement, had a foreign policy. Although undoubtedly the ANC as a governing political party had a significant role in conducting and shaping South African foreign policy after 1994, for the exile period it is less clear cut. There is a substantial literature covering many aspects of the ANC in exile, but given the context of its international activities, there is remarkably little written about the movement's 'foreign policy'. Indeed, in the limited number of studies that do focus on the ANC's international activities, the term foreign policy is almost never used (see below).² Therefore, in contrast to this

² For studies which focus on the ANC's 'foreign policy' in exile see: A. Lissoni, 'The South African Liberation Movements in Exile, c. 1945-1970', PhD., (University of London, 2008); A. Lissoni, 'Transformations in the ANC external mission and Umkhonto we Sizwe, c.1960-9,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Special Issue: Liberation Struggles, Exile and International Solidarity, 35 (2009), pp. 287-301; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC's Diplomacy and International Relations', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, 2006), pp. 615-667; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC in exile, 1960-1970', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 411-478; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC and the World, 1960-1970', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 541-571; R. Pfister, 'Gateway to international victory: the diplomacy of the African National Congress in Africa, 1960-1994', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1 (2003), pp. 51-73; V. Shubin, *The ANC: A View from Moscow* (Cape Town, 1999); S. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation: The Foreign Relations of the ANC since 1960* (London, 1996).

prevailing theme in the literature, this thesis uniquely contends that the ANC's international activities in exile constituted a foreign policy.

It is obvious that the ANC conducted the vast majority of its activities in an international setting due to its banning within South Africa. However, the question is, are these best understood as a foreign policy? On the face of it, the strategies employed by the ANC appear to closely resemble what could be described as a foreign policy. Many of its activities bear close comparison to the characteristics of foreign policies employed by states, including an over-riding focus on security, international diplomacy and the forging of alliances. Of course, by a strict definition, and with specific reference to international relations theory, the ANC could not have had a 'foreign policy' in exile. Traditionally, foreign policy is considered to be the sole preserve of the state, particularly under the Realist or Statist schools of thought. Andrew Linklater states that 'only sovereign states can be members of international society (and not individuals or business corporations)'.³ Foreign policy is thus understood to consist of the official interactions between states in the pursuit of specific goals, predominantly to secure particular national interests, defined overall in terms of power.⁴ Therefore, according to such an interpretation, the ANC as a movement could not have had a foreign policy. Nevertheless, in the modern globalised world, foreign policy is far more complex than the rather static, Realist notions of unitary state actors in the international system. Thus, it would be difficult to argue that states are not influenced by the actions of external actors such as multinational corporations and international organisations. The Liberal school of thought has accepted that there can be input from external influences, and this allows for a far more fluid concept of foreign policy, conceding that there is a degree of plurality in state actions. Therefore the Liberal premise holds that the foreign policy of the state can be influenced by a multitude of non-state actors.⁵ Although Liberalism provides space for the input of non-state actors such as liberation movements, the underlying assumption is still that foreign policy remains the prerogative of the state.

³ A. Linklater, 'The English School', in S. Burchill (eds.), *Theories of International Relations* (Fourth Edition, Basingstoke, 2009), p. 93.

⁴ H. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York, 1985), p. 4-17.

⁵ K. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations* (New York, 1999), pp. 69, 138-39.

But can a strict international relations approach adequately explain the nature of the ANC's international activities from 1960? Arguably an inflexible adherence to such theories does not adequately help define or explain the ANC's international actions during the exile period. Likewise, in trying to solve this dilemma the current literature on the ANC in exile is deficient in conceptualisation and content. The vast majority of studies do not provide any attempt to define or explain the nature or significance of the ANC's international activities. More often than not, the issue is simply neglected or merely taken for granted. For example, Vladimir Shubin's authoritative book on the ANC in exile does not even discuss the issue of foreign policy, simply referring to the movement as having 'direct links' with several African nations.⁶ Only Scott Thomas, in his PhD thesis and subsequent book, attempts to tackle the issue in any depth. In his thesis, Thomas argues that the ANC's activities must be understood as the political stance it chose to pursue in the international system in order to advance its stated objectives.⁷ The result is that Thomas describes the ANC's international activities in exile as 'diplomatic'.⁸ Yet his book *The Diplomacy of Liberation* does not settle on a single term to explain the ANC activities, interchanging between 'diplomacy', 'foreign relations' and 'foreign policy'.⁹ Even high profile figures in the anti-apartheid struggle such as Enuga Reddy, the former Director of the United Nations (UN) Centre against Apartheid, are on record as describing the ANC as having both a 'foreign policy' and a 'foreign relations position'.¹⁰ What emerges is a general lack of consensus regarding how to depict the ANC's international activities.

For the purposes of this thesis the ANC will be described as having a foreign policy in exile. This author contends that in international society non-state actors can and do have foreign policies.¹¹ This notion is supported by the relatively new phenomenon in the study of international relations, paradiplomacy, which challenges the conventional idea of foreign policy being solely the preserve of states. Stefan Wolff defines paradiplomacy as the 'foreign policy capacity of sub-state entities,

⁶ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 70. When referring to the South African Communist Party's (SACP) links with the USSR, Shubin describes these as 'bilateral relations', p. 33.

⁷ S. Thomas, 'The Diplomacy of Liberation: The International Relations of the African National Congress of South Africa, 1920-1985', PhD., (LSE, 1989), p. 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁹ Thomas, *Diplomacy*.

¹⁰ Email correspondence with E.S. Reddy, 9 November - 1 December 2010.

¹¹ The author is grateful to Professor Peter Vale for clarifying this point, email correspondence, 6 January 2011.

their participation, independent of their metropolitan state, in the international arena in pursuit of their own specific international interests'.¹² While this refers predominantly to provinces and cities within a state, Deon Geldenhuys argues 'that there is no reason why one could not extend it to 'governments-in-waiting' or exiled or rebel movements contesting for power - they all engage in foreign relations'.¹³ The ANC clearly had an international political agenda, and while it may not have been as powerful or influential as a nation state, its actions ultimately sought to shape international relations in its favour. The ANC had an important role in influencing the foreign policies of states, especially the Soviet Union and several Southern African states; it achieved observer status at the UN and Organisation of African Unity (OAU); and was granted refuge in a variety of countries. It is important to stress this point, as the ANC was regarded and subsequently treated by some states and international organisations as the default representative (or even government-in-waiting) of the South African people. This success was achieved through persistence, skilful lobbying and, as Thomas argues, diplomacy. These all formed part of the ANC's foreign policy in exile. Well before the ANC had reached the height of its international prestige in the 1980s, *The African Communist* in 1974 claimed that 'the African National Congress and its allies have had a major impact on foreign policy'.¹⁴ The importance of adopting such an approach to the ANC's exile history is that it breaks away from the conventional historiography that separates the ANC as a movement from the ANC as a ruling party since 1994. This allows instructive comparisons to be made with the ANC's international relations as the government of South Africa (see Chapters Six and Seven). Through analysing the ANC's international activities in exile, this study provides a 'long-view' of the movement's foreign policy, which usefully points to the continuities and discontinuities of its approach to Southern Africa.

In order to understand fully the evolution of the ANC's foreign policy between 1960 and 1999, it is impossible to separate it from the nature, ideology and structure of the movement as a whole. Indeed, the character of the ANC, both as an exiled movement and governing political party, has had a significant effect on the

¹² S. Wolff, 'Paradiplomacy: Scope, Opportunities and Challenges', *Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*, 10 (2007), p. 141.

¹³ Email correspondence with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, 7 January 2011.

¹⁴ 'Domestic Crises and Foreign Affairs', *The African Communist*, 56 (1974), p. 119.

shape and direction of its foreign policy. After the ANC was forced into exile, its leaders repeatedly demanded that the movement maintain a monolithic unity in order to survive in its fight against the apartheid state, a practice which has continued into government.¹⁵ However, this practice of stressing external unity of purpose and direction masked the conflicted internal nature of the ANC. In reality, the ANC is a mass nationalist movement, one which harbours a range of ideological doctrines, encompassing anything from socialism to neo-liberalism. Yet, the ANC is also an elite-dominated organisation, a legacy from its exile struggle. In exile, the overall decision-making process was, due to matters of security, geography and ease of communication, confined to a relatively small number of people. This centralisation of power, which continued through the transition and into government, meant that the leaders' decisions went largely uncontested, with little opportunity for internal debate or dissent within the ANC. The opportunity for mass engagement in exile was severely limited; in thirty years the ANC held just two conferences: at Morogoro in Tanzania and Kabwe in Zambia (see Chapters Two and Three). Only after 1990, did it become possible for the ANC to convene regular congresses in South Africa to engage more widely with its supporters. The outcome was that the elite 'spoke' on behalf of the wider-movement.

But precisely because the nature of the movement and what it actually represents is not entirely clear given the divergence of opinions within its ranks, it is very difficult for the leaders to speak for 'the' ANC. The consequence is that behind the ANC's façade of unity there are underlying tensions not only amongst the movement's supporters but also its leadership. Many of these tensions found expression in the ANC's foreign policy between 1960 and 1999. Consequently, this thesis will address the ideological incoherence and structural composition of the movement, and analyse how this has shaped the direction and implementation of South African foreign policy under ANC stewardship (see Chapters Six and Seven). By taking a long-view this study allows for these tensions and contradictions to be developed in greater depth, illustrating how the conflicted and contradictory nature

¹⁵ For example, see: Speech by O.R. Tambo, Statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the ANC, 8 January, 1972, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2642> (9/8/11); *The New Age*, 17 June 2011.

of the ANC has had an important bearing on the evolution and implementation of its foreign policy.

Sources

In order to explore the evolution of the ANC's foreign policy from exile to government, this thesis utilises a wide range of sources, some of which are here placed in the public domain for the first time. Although this study seeks to overcome the constraints of periodisation, the sources available however are unavoidably split into distinctive, specific timeframes. For Chapters Two and Three, which explore the ANC in exile, the main sources utilised are archival. The vast majority of the ANC's official External Mission papers are to be found in the Liberation Archive at the University of Fort Hare, which contains a diverse and varied selection of information pertaining to almost every aspect of the movements period in exile. Furthermore, collections of information relevant to the ANC and the wider anti-apartheid struggle were accessed at the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape, and the South African History Archive at the University of Witwatersrand.¹⁶ These collections contain the most comprehensive selection of the ANC's reports, memorandums, speeches and internal documentation from its exile.¹⁷ In addition, depositories of material such as speeches, reports, posters and interview transcripts are at the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London, which have both provided many useful documents from individuals and organisations involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. Furthermore, these have been complimented by the extensive use of official ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) journals, such as *Sechaba*, *Mayibuye*, *Dawn* and the *African Communist*, which can be accessed via the Digital Innovation

¹⁶ For more information concerning the nature of the collections at these South African archives, see: M. Graham, 'Finding Foreign Policy: Researching in Five South African Archives', *History in Africa*, 37 (2010), pp. 379-387.

¹⁷ Although these are the most comprehensive depositories of information they are by no means complete. This stems from the fact that the ANC as a liberation movement is under no compulsion to release documents, with much of its private collection still housed at its headquarters, Shell House, in Johannesburg. The Liberation Archive in particular does not have complete series of documents, and according to many researchers has been 'weeded' of sensitive information. This pays true in a careful analysis of the documentary trail; for example a report on the political situation in Mozambique indicated that it was the forty-fourth in an ongoing series, but only one exists in the archive. See: University of Fort Hare (hereafter UFH), Liberation Archives, ANC Mozambique Mission, Box 10, File 63: Reports 1986-1988.

South Africa Project (DISA), and which were vital in finding the ‘voice’ of the ANC in exile.¹⁸ The official ANC website has also been of immense value to this thesis, as it contains a cross section of information about the movement from its exile through to the current day. This collection includes, but is not limited to, items such as the 1955 Freedom Charter, proceedings and resolutions from all of the ANC’s conferences, and a selection of its leaders’ speeches.¹⁹

The evolution and formulation of foreign policy throughout South Africa’s transition, which is covered in Chapters Four and Five, encompasses an array of sources from the depositories mentioned above. In addition it utilises a previously unused new documentary collection: the John Barratt Collection housed in the William Cullen Library, at the University of Witwatersrand. This collection contains a large selection of documents from the Sub Council on Foreign Affairs (SCFA), a part of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) that governed South Africa from November 1993 through until the country’s first democratic elections in April 1994. John Barratt, as the Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), was a member of the SCFA and the official documents he collected from the process illustrate the significant influence the sub-council had upon post-apartheid foreign policy. The John Barratt Collection provides a window into this largely unresearched history of South African foreign policy, offering many crucial insights. The importance of this collection is demonstrated by the fact that all the official government documents have still not been released by the Foreign Affairs Archive in Pretoria and will not be for some time. This collection of information was further complimented by an extensive interview with Tom Wheeler, former DFA liaison officer to the SCFA. The interview proved invaluable, as Wheeler offered his own in-depth perceptions on the SCFA process, the importance of the sub-council, the DFA’s role, as well as useful insights into its activities and members. He supplemented these insights by kindly allowing use of his own personal papers which included information from the SCFA, but also important documents from the DFA, which offered a different perspective on the process, helping to fill some of the gaps in the John Barratt Collection.

¹⁸ For the various digitalised journals available see: http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=73 (20/6/11).

¹⁹ For the ANC’s documents and publications online see: <http://www.anc.org.za/#> (20/6/11).

Chapters Six and Seven, which explore post-apartheid foreign policy during Mandela's presidency, employ a quite different selection of sources. Archival sources are largely unavailable for this very recent period, but a variety of different sources are available. For example, these two chapters utilise diverse media sources, ranging from newspaper articles from a number of South African and international publications, as well as international press agency reports, television and radio transcripts from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports service and cartoons by the satirist Zapiro.²⁰ Official speeches and statements by the leaders of the ANC such as President Nelson Mandela, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad offer a useful insight into the party's perspectives on foreign policy issues, particularly in their interactions with different international audiences.²¹ In addition, the ANC's own documents including conference resolutions and reports illustrate some of the factors shaping foreign policy decision-making under the Mandela presidency, but also demonstrate the aspirations of party leaders and members for South Africa's international relations. The ANC documents are used alongside official South African government and civil service sources, such as DFA discussion documents.²² Furthermore, the reports published by a number of NGOs which focus on a breadth of international matters, such as arms control, proved useful sources of information.²³ Lastly, every effort was made to interview a wide range of people, including former ANC politicians, a British High Commissioner, journalists and academics, all of whom helped complete an extensive insight into the foreign policy of the ANC.²⁴ Interviewees included, the former Africa editor of the *Financial Times* Michael Holman who provided many useful opinions on the ANC; and the former Oxford don and polemicist R.W. Johnson who offered many critical insights on post-apartheid South Africa.

²⁰ The vast majority of these media sources were located using the NewsBank newspaper database search tool, which also offers access to the FBIS, which is the USA's 'principal record of political and historical open source intelligence'.

²¹ Many of the speeches are available on the ANC's own website (<http://www.anc.org.za/#>), the South African government information website (<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/index.htm>), or via NewsBank and the FBIS.

²² For the location of official DFA documents see: <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DynamicAction?pageid=528> (20/6/11).

²³ Examples of reports from NGOs include those from the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) or the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

²⁴ For a full list of interviewees, refer to the bibliography.

It must be acknowledged that some of the sources used have obvious problems of potential and actual bias. To take just one example, official exile journals such as *Sechaba* were written in a highly ideological charged environment, acting as a propaganda tool for the ANC to spread news of its aspirations and successes to its worldwide supporters. However, despite this dimension, they provide a valuable insight into the ANC perspectives and activities during this thirty year period. Furthermore, important interviews were secured with former ANC MP's Andrew Feinstein and Raymond Suttner, both of whom were well placed insiders in the post-apartheid government, and whose perspectives on the internal culture of the ANC, its foreign policy-making process and South Africa's international direction proved invaluable. However, it must be noted that both figures have left the ANC and feel betrayed by the party leadership and the direction it has taken South Africa. Unfortunately attempts to secure interviews with currently high-ranking ANC officials were unsuccessful. Requests for interviews with other past and present ANC members were not returned.

Chapter Summary

In addition to explaining the structure of this thesis and some of the key definitions, the following section will act as a point of reference for each of the chapters. The six core chapters which make up this thesis are ordered chronologically, so that each chapter covers a distinct period, without losing sight of the central focus.

Beginning with the movement's banning in 1960, **Chapter Two** examines the changing fortunes and difficulties of the ANC in exile until 1976, with a particular focus on its interactions in Southern Africa. The aim is to chart how the ANC initially responded to its exile from South Africa and to explain the ways in which the movement went about establishing relationships with independent Southern African states and the region's various national liberation movements. The chapter attempts to cut through the public rhetoric of both the ANC and its allies to uncover what their relations were like in practice. In doing so, it points towards some signs of strength in the ANC's foreign policy manoeuvres, yet also to the fragility of the movement's position in Southern Africa, especially at the end of the 1960s. Although the focus is on the immediate region, it is impossible to ignore the role of

the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc in relation to the ANC's struggle (and indeed its survival) and its undoubted influence on its foreign policy. Therefore the chapter will demonstrate the ways in which the communist bloc assisted the ANC, and the benefits this alliance subsequently brought. Furthermore, the chapter identifies how geo-political changes in Southern Africa in the 1970s such as Portuguese decolonisation, combined with domestic challenges in South Africa exemplified by the Soweto Uprising, drastically altered the international position of the ANC. The chapter assesses these challenges to the ANC, how it adapted to them, and the significant impact they had upon the course of its struggle.

Chapter Three explores how by 1976, the changed situation in Southern Africa enabled the ANC to exploit its new found opportunities to pursue a more proactive foreign policy, most notably by dramatically escalating its armed struggle. This chapter will analyse how the ANC attempted to secure its position in Southern Africa, the strategies it took to isolate and damage the apartheid regime, and the measures taken to publicise its cause to a global audience. The chapter will also seek to demonstrate the ways in which South Africa counter-acted these efforts, and the significant effect this had on not only the ANC, but also its hosts and allies in Southern Africa. Although the ANC in exile had been particularly active in the international arena, it had failed to fully articulate its foreign policy objectives and it was only by the mid-1980s that the movement set about rectifying this. This chapter will therefore assess the findings, recommendations and resolutions of the 1985 Kabwe Conference and use it to identify the ANC's foreign policy and the evolution that this process had undergone since 1960. The chapter will conclude by discussing the dramatic international changes that occurred in the late 1980s, and demonstrate the significant impact this had on Southern Africa, domestically within South Africa, and ultimately the end of the ANC's exile.

The collapse of global communism brought about vast changes internationally, undermining the central principles which had underpinned many aspects and assumptions of the ANC about international relations. In the context of these changes, President De Klerk in February 1990 announced the unbanning of the ANC, setting in motion South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. **Chapter Four** explores the various ways the NP government and the ANC competed, domestically and internationally, to gain legitimacy for their visions for post-

apartheid South Africa. It will assess how the ANC adapted to its new found legality, not only structurally, but also ideologically, and the impact this had upon foreign policy formulation. Using the resolutions and recommendations from two ANC conferences during this period, as well as a number of planning documents, this chapter examines how the ANC's foreign policy perspectives gradually evolved during the transition period. In doing so, it will highlight some of the debates which raged over South Africa's future foreign policy and the ways in which the final policies enshrined in 'Foreign Policy in a new Democratic South Africa' were established. Through such an analysis, the chapter explores a number of pertinent issues concerning the ANC as an organisation, and the ownership of its stated foreign policy, which had undoubted implications for post-apartheid South Africa. As Chapters Four and Five are closely related, they also demonstrate the ways in which the ANC's exile experiences influenced the movement's actions during the transition and the effect this had upon its foreign policy.

Chapter Five is closely linked to the previous chapter, which explores the previously understudied, yet important TEC and its composite sub-councils, most notably the activities of the SCFA. Through a range of examples, this chapter documents the SCFA's work and activities, pinpointing how the DFA manipulated the proceedings towards its favoured approach for South African foreign policy after 1994. Through these examples, it will illustrate that, despite the neglect in the literature, the SCFA's final recommendations had a significant impact on the shape and direction of post-apartheid foreign policy. In fact, as will be explored, when the events of Chapters' Four and Five converged in May 1994, the cumulative pressures of these quite different and incompatible influences became evident in South Africa's foreign policy immediately after 1994.

Chapter Six demonstrates how foreign policy formulation during its exile (see Chapters Two and Three) and the transition (see Chapters Four and Five) combined to influence how the movement acted as a governing party, while also constraining the ANC-led government's room for manoeuvre after it came to power in 1994. In the initial years of the Government of National Unity (GNU), these divergent visions clashed, resulting in a foreign policy riddled with numerous contradictions, which was widely criticised domestically and internationally. These criticisms will be analysed in light of the new evidence unearthed in Chapters Four

and Five in a bid to provide greater understanding based on the historical trajectory of the ANC's foreign policy. The chapter uses several pertinent examples to illustrate these contradictions at work, most notably exploring South Africa's initial policies towards and relationships with Africa, its handling of the Nigerian Crisis, the country's links to 'pariah' nations and, despite its ostensible commitment to a morally driven foreign policy its sale of weapons to dubious countries. South Africa's actions will be analysed to offer greater insight into the direction of the ANC's initial foreign policy up until 1996.

Chapter Seven examines the ANC and DFA's efforts at reviewing the country's international relations from 1996 onwards. The chapter explores this evolution by examining three core documents produced in this period: 'South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document'; 'Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy'; and the 'White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions'. Through these documents, the chapter identifies some of the contradictory, yet competing pressures on South African foreign policy formulation, the debates surrounding the direction of its foreign policy, the ways in which foreign policy decision-making was reached and the extent to which it was a democratic process. It also argues that due to significant changes within South Africa, the period saw the ANC leadership become much more assertive over foreign policy than previously, which had a major impact in later years, particularly under Mbeki's presidency. In addition, using the Southern African Development Community (SADC) proposal for an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security as a case-study, the chapter explores some of the ANC-led government's interactions with the region by charting its fluctuating relationships with its neighbours.

Chapter Eight consolidates the key arguments of this thesis, tying them together and offering conclusions about the ANC's foreign policy between 1960 and 1999. The concluding chapter elucidates the contribution this thesis makes to the history of the ANC's foreign policy, and its place in the existing literature.

Chapter Two

The ANC in Exile, 1960-1975

By the end of three decades of exile from South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) had become one of the world's most significant and respected national liberation movements. By 1990, the ANC had successfully mobilised global support and achieved international legitimacy in its bid to isolate the South African regime. Yet, the fact that it took the movement thirty years to force the apartheid government to the negotiating table, illustrates the immense difficulties it faced in exile. One observer analysing the ANC's record in exile in 1985, claimed perhaps cruelly, that it was 'the world's least effective liberation movement'.¹ The fortunes of the ANC certainly fluctuated, from being effectively moribund in the 1960s, to a widely feted international movement by the end of the 1980s. Such a dramatic transformation was in no way inevitable, and was achieved in part by the tireless efforts of the ANC's leaders to engage and garner support from a wide spectrum of international actors; and the generosity which was reciprocated to them in return, most notably by the Soviet Bloc, western-based campaigning organisations and independent African states. Without sustained support, for example, in areas such as military training, education, financial donations, and the provision of refuge, the ANC would not have been able to survive in exile, let alone wage such a comprehensive international campaign against apartheid. The importance of external support to the ANC was emphasised by the South African Communist Party (SACP) leader Joe Slovo, who claimed in 1986 that 'in this day and age there is no struggle which can be separated from the international context, but in the case of South Africa the international factor plays a unique role; because the evil of apartheid, like no other issue, cuts across the world ideological divide'.² Although internal opposition (such as the United Democratic Front or UDF) definitely played its part in bringing about the end of apartheid, a significant factor in its demise was the concerted efforts

¹ J. Lelyveld, *Move Your Shadow: South Africa Black and White* (London, 1985), p. 328.

² J. Slovo, 'SACP one of the Great Pillars of our Revolution', *The African Communist*, 107 (1986), p. 28.

of the ANC, and the global Anti-Apartheid Movement to internationalise the South African struggle from 1960.³

The ANC's thirty year exile began in April 1960, after a protest on the 21 March, organised by the rival Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), culminated in the Sharpeville Massacre, leaving sixty-nine people dead. The incident sparked a week of demonstrations and protests across South Africa, after which the National Party (NP) government declared a state of emergency, banning the ANC and PAC.⁴ Plans to form an external section of the ANC had been discussed in December 1959, 'to carry abroad the message of its vision and solicit support for the movement', but in the aftermath of Sharpeville this had to be brought forward.⁵ In the course of these discussions the ANC leadership had designated its Deputy President Oliver Tambo as the person to leave South Africa and form an External Mission to co-ordinate the ANC's international efforts. Tambo secretly left the country in April 1960, first making his way to the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland (now Botswana), and then on to Tanganyika (now Tanzania).⁶ He quickly set about the task of raising awareness and gaining support for the ANC by touring friendly states and fostering links with international backers, which enabled Tambo 'to establish ANC missions in Egypt, Ghana, Morocco and in London'.⁷ However, despite the South African government's banning of the ANC, there was no immediate exodus of its members; many remained in South Africa to carry out clandestine activities. Only after the arrest of the ANC's leaders at Rivonia in July 1963, and their subsequent imprisonment, did the organisation finally abandon its formal structures within South Africa.⁸ Until 1963, the ANC had managed to maintain an illegal presence in the country, albeit one that was severely limited by sustained repression and harassment

³ H. Sapiro, 'Liberation Movements, Exile, and International Solidarity: An introduction', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35 (2009), p. 273. For more on the internal struggle see, for example: A. Jeffery, *People's War: New Light on the Struggle for South Africa* (Johannesburg, 2009); A. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990* (Cape Town, 1992); J. Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991* (Cape Town, 2000); R. Suttner, *The ANC Underground in South Africa to 1976* (Auckland Park, 2008).

⁴ S. Johns, 'Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare – a South African Case Study', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 11 (1973), p. 271.

⁵ L. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Cape Town, 2004), p. 253.

⁶ Callinicos, *Tambo*, pp. 258-261.

⁷ The Anti-Apartheid Movement (hereafter AAM) Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 938, Death of Oliver Tambo, ANC Chairperson, April 1993, Memoriam O.R.Tambo Programme.

⁸ J. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century, a political history: in search of a nation state* (Oxford, 1999), p. 169.

by the state. Although the bulk of the leadership had remained, its ability to direct the struggle effectively was greatly diminished. The internal military and political structures of the ANC were thoroughly destroyed after the Rivonia Trial, and with its leaders in prison or in exile, control of the organisation shifted to the External Mission.⁹

As has been fully elucidated in the introduction, this thesis contends that the ANC did have a foreign policy in exile. However, as this chapter and Chapter Three will both illustrate, the ANC's foreign policy was by no means consistent or coherent. The very nature of being an exiled political movement meant that for practical purposes the ANC had to be relatively flexible in its approach to external actors, as world events unfolded over which it had little or no influence. Although the ANC espoused socialist ideals throughout its exile (which in turn were not always consistently expressed), the movement appealed to both western and communist nations for help; quite clearly a different message was required for these very different audiences. For the purposes of political expediency, a fluid approach to foreign policy was thus required. Additionally, as will be seen in this, and Chapter Three, the ANC did not produce many clear statements of what its foreign policy actually was. The two clearest examples were the Freedom Charter, written in 1955, before its exile, and the 'Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy' tabled at the Kabwe Conference held in 1985.¹⁰ While these two documents provide some insight into the ANC's priorities, they are quite limited documents, with a lack of information about its foreign policy ideals. Although this thesis ascribes the ANC as having a foreign policy in exile, it is important to take into account the limitations the ANC faced in developing an explicit and consistent policy.

The historiography concerning the ANC's experiences in exile is vast, spanning a diverse range of themes and approaches.¹¹ Because the vast majority of

⁹ University of Fort Hare (hereafter UFH), Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Additions (Mayibuye II), Box 36, File 1, Morogoro Conference Resolutions.

¹⁰ 'The Freedom Charter', adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, 26 June 1955, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=72> (25/11/09); 'Second National Consultative Conference: Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy, 17 June 1985, Kabwe, Zambia', UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Additions (Mayibuye II), Box 37, File 1, Conference Documents and reports.

¹¹ Some examples include: H. Barrel, *MK: The ANC's armed struggle* (Johannesburg, 1990); S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC & the South African Communist Party in exile* (London, 1992); S. Ellis, 'The ANC in Exile', *African Affairs*, 90 (1991), pp. 439-447; R. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: From undercover struggle to freedom* (London, 1998); M. Legassick, 'Myth and Reality in the Struggle Against Apartheid', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24 (1998), pp.

studies touch on, but do not elaborate upon the ANC's foreign policy activities, it is difficult to disregard the international dimensions of the struggle. Notable exceptions in the current historiography which focus predominantly on the ANC's foreign policy (although the term is never explicitly used, see Chapter One) include the works of Arianna Lissoni, Sifiso Ndlovu, Roger Pfister, Vladimir Shubin, and Scott Thomas.¹² The result is that the key events of the exile period such as the Morogoro Conference have been studied quite extensively. Therefore this chapter will not retrace every aspect of the ANC's international interactions; rather it will focus on the most important events in the chronological evolution of the ANC's foreign relations. These include: the impact of the 1969 Lusaka Manifesto; the formation of alliances with likeminded Soviet-sponsored liberation movements; the decolonisation of Portuguese Africa; and the 1985 Kabwe Conference.

The 1960s

The first decade of exile was a traumatic and turbulent experience for the ANC. The movement found itself ill prepared for its banning and subsequent life in exile.¹³ Major problems challenged the very existence of the ANC during the 1960s. Primarily, the ANC was left entirely dependent on the goodwill and benevolence of states such as Tanzania and Zambia for refuge, as well as the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc for financial and military support. Another key concern for the

443-458; T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (London, 1987); A. Marx, *Lessons of the Struggle: South African Internal Opposition 1960-1980* (Cape Town, 1992); N. Manghezi, *The Maputo Connection: ANC Life in the world of FRELIMO* (Auckland Park, 2009); D. Mckinley, *The ANC and the liberation struggle: A critical political biography* (London, 1997); F. Meli, *A History of the ANC: South Africa Belongs to Us* (Harare, 1988); S. Morrow, 'Dakawa Development Centre: An African National Congress Settlement in Tanzania, 1982-1992', *African Affairs*, 97 (1998), pp. 497-521; P. Trehwela, *Inside Quatro: Uncovering the exile history of the ANC and SWAPO* (Auckland Park, 2009).

¹² A. Lissoni, 'The South African Liberation Movements in Exile, c. 1945-1970', PhD., (University of London, 2008); A. Lissoni, 'Transformations in the ANC external mission and Umkhonto we Sizwe, c.1960-9,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Special Issue: Liberation Struggles, Exile and International Solidarity, 35 (2009), pp. 287-301; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC's Diplomacy and International Relations', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, 2006), pp. 615-667; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC in exile, 1960-1970', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 411-478; S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC and the World, 1960-1970', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 541-571; R. Pfister, 'Gateway to international victory: the diplomacy of the African National Congress in Africa, 1960-1994', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1 (2003), pp. 51-73; V. Shubin, *The ANC: A View From Moscow* (Cape Town, 1999); S. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation: The Foreign Relations of the ANC since 1960* (London, 1996).

¹³ Ellis, 'The ANC in Exile', p. 442.

movement was the co-ordination of its international efforts, as the ANC leadership was dispersed across Africa and Europe, almost completely cut off from its domestic support base.¹⁴ Additional crises faced the ANC including: unanticipated competition for African support and patronage from its rival movement the PAC;¹⁵ a mutiny amongst members of its armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (often referred to as MK)¹⁶ after the defeat of its guerrilla fighters during the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns of 1967-68;¹⁷ and expulsion from Tanzania in 1969 by the President Julius Nyerere.¹⁸ Despite these substantial difficulties, the 1960s was not as bleak for the ANC as it may first appear. The achievement of simply surviving as a (largely) unified movement in the first decade of exile should be viewed in itself as a major accomplishment. Furthermore, although the ANC became dependent on external aid, it was relatively successful in attracting international support for its cause; it began the process of forging alliances with Southern African liberation movements such as the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU); and was involved in the process leading to South Africa leaving the Commonwealth in 1961.

Although the ANC had envisaged that its exile from South Africa would only be temporary, the leadership realised the pressing importance of attracting external support. In 1960, the primary foreign policy goals of the External Mission were to isolate South Africa internationally and secure material and moral support for the cause. Initial efforts to win external backing and to isolate the apartheid regime were predominantly focused on Britain as the former colonial power, and international organisations such as the UN, which were thought capable of exercising influence over South Africa.¹⁹ However, the failure of western states (excluding Scandinavian countries) to back the ANC, or take effective action against apartheid,

¹⁴ R. Fatton Jr., 'The African National Congress of South Africa: The limitations of a revolutionary strategy', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 18 (1984), p. 598.

¹⁵ University of Western Cape (hereafter UWC), Mayibuye Centre Historical Papers (hereafter MCH) 70, Survey of the External Mission of the African National Congress of South Africa, February 1965.

¹⁶ On the 16 December 1961, a series of explosions across South Africa marked the formation of the guerrilla fighting force known as Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). After Sharpeville there had been a division of opinion within the ANC leadership about the turn to armed struggle, particularly in light of the ANC's historical commitment to non-violence. The result was that MK, a semi-autonomous group, was thus separate from ANC structures, but contained members from both the ANC and SACP under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo.

¹⁷ R. Moses Ralinala, J. Sithole, G. Houston and B. Magubane, 'The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 479-540.

¹⁸ G. Houston, 'International Solidarity: Introduction', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 3, International Solidarity* (Pretoria, 2008), p. 35.

¹⁹ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 2.

forced the movement to look towards communist states as an alternative base of support. The Eastern Bloc, led by the Soviet Union, but with important contributions from states such as Cuba and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), became a vital and consistent ally of the ANC throughout its exile. These states provided financial backing, military hardware and instruction, education, visas for travel and even temporary shelter to the ANC. However, this turn to the east further reinforced the west's negative perceptions of the ANC as a Soviet backed terrorist group. In the context of the Cold War, the white minority governments of Southern Africa were perceived by the west to be bulwarks against the spread of communism in Africa, and were thus supported economically and politically, at the expense of national liberation movements.

A major practical problem which dogged the ANC, particularly during the first few years of exile, was the geo-political climate of Southern Africa, as South Africa was buttressed by a series of white minority regimes.²⁰ The British Protectorates of Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) were the primary destinations for South Africans fleeing the country, but Pretoria exercised its economic and political leverage throughout Southern Africa to prevent the ANC from settling in these countries. After a wave of decolonisation and independence had swept the region by the mid-1960s, South Africa's dominance of its neighbours ensured that the ANC was still kept a considerable distance from its borders.²¹ Dr Hilgard Muller told the South African Parliament in June 1965 of the extensive 'administrative links, the interwoven economy of the region and the existing technological co-operation' particularly with Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland.²² Sifiso Ndlovu provides an example of how South Africa exercised its

²⁰ The countries buffering South Africa from 'black Africa' in 1960 included the annexed territory of South West Africa (Namibia), the British Protectorates of Bechuanaland (Botswana), Basutoland (Lesotho), Nyasaland (Malawi), Southern Rhodesia (Rhodesia), Swaziland, and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. Although Tanganyika was still officially a British Protectorate until its independence in December 1961, the country was granted internal self-government in 1960, after the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) had won the 1959 election. Its President Julius Nyerere became an active supporter of African independence and he allowed numerous liberation movements to settle in the country, predominantly in Dar es Salaam.

²¹ The Southern African States granted independence during the 1960s were: Tanganyika, 1961; Nyasaland, 1964; Northern Rhodesia, 1964; Bechuanaland, 1966; Basutoland, 1966; and Swaziland, 1968. Southern Rhodesia announced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965, renaming itself Rhodesia, which kept the country under white minority rule, closely allied to South Africa.

²² F. Nothling, 'Co-operation with Neighbouring States', in T. Wheeler (ed.), *History of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, 1927-1993* (Johannesburg, 2005), p. 279.

power in this region, and argued that as a consequence, ‘there is no doubt that the colonial government of Bechuanaland was unhappy with the presence of South African exiles in the territory’.²³ Likewise, Shubin provides, amongst others, evidence of British colonial authorities in Northern Rhodesia arresting and deporting ANC members back to South Africa for imprisonment.²⁴ Therefore, in 1960, the nearest safe haven for the ANC was Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, leaving the movement over 1,500 miles away from the borders of South Africa.²⁵ Only as other states, with amenable governments, such as Zambia (1964) gradually became independent, could the ANC begin to establish additional bases for the training of its guerrilla fighters and from which to pursue its diplomatic offensive. Although states such as Tanzania generously sustained the ANC in the 1960s, the movement often had strained relationships with the various host governments, finding itself beholden to their preferences and interests. This will be illustrated in greater depth in the course of this chapter.

The South Africa United Front and the Commonwealth, 1960-1962

An early and significant achievement in the struggle against apartheid was the mobilisation of international opinion against South Africa’s continued membership of the Commonwealth. This resulted in part from the activities of the short-lived South Africa United Front (SAUF), which was officially launched in September 1961 by the exiled representatives of the ANC, PAC, South African Indian Congress (SAIC), and South West African National Union (SWANU).²⁶ In a bid to isolate South Africa internationally, these organisations temporarily put aside their differences, allowing them to jointly raise funds and speak with one voice. Apparently formed as a result of pressure by African states such as Ghana, the SAUF established offices in London, New York, Accra and Cairo.²⁷ During its eighteen-month existence the SAUF published information about apartheid to mobilise

²³ Ndlovu, ‘The ANC in exile’, p. 414.

²⁴ Shubin, *Moscow*, pp. 29-30.

²⁵ T. Karis and G. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge: Volume 5 – Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Bloomington, 1997), p. 6.

²⁶ *The Guardian*, 24 September 1961.

²⁷ Lodge, Shubin and Thomas have argued that Ghana pressurised the ANC and PAC to unite, though Ndlovu refutes this, believing it was less clear cut. See: Lodge, *Black Politics*, p. 297; Ndlovu, ‘The ANC in Exile’, p. 429; Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 49; Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 35.

opinion and lobbied international organisations such as the UN to apply sanctions.²⁸ According to Yusuf Dadoo, the SAIC representative to the SAUF, ‘much was achieved in the early stage of the United Front’s existence... We succeeded in winning wide international support for our cause’.²⁹

The SAUF was fortunate that the South African government provided it with new grievances against which to campaign. In October 1960, at the request of President Hendrik Verwoerd, a whites-only referendum was held to decide whether South Africa should become a Republic. By a narrow margin of 52.14% to 47.42%, the majority voted in favour and it was announced that South Africa would become a Republic in May 1961.³⁰ The international consequence of the referendum was that it required South Africa to reapply for its Commonwealth membership.³¹ Although British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan was keen for South Africa to remain a member of the organisation, a groundswell of opposition from the British public and recently independent Afro-Asian nations developed against Pretoria’s reapplication. In the run-up to the Commonwealth meeting in London, representatives of the SAUF visited or wrote to member nations, to argue the case for South Africa’s expulsion.³² At the London Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in March 1961, pressure was put on Verwoerd to alter South Africa’s racial policies, particularly by Canada and the Afro-Asian block, but he proved immovable on the issue.³³ After protracted discussions broke down, an official communiqué announced ‘that in the light of the views expressed on behalf of other member Governments, and the indications of their future intentions regarding the racial policy of the Union Government, he [Verwoerd] had decided to withdraw his application for South

²⁸ For example see: O. R. Tambo, ‘Statement on behalf of the South Africa United Front’, New York, 20 October 1960, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4257> (6/2/11); AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, Mss Afr. S 1681, Box 209, File 2, ANC documents, AB 209/2, Item 11, ‘Press Statement by the African National Congress, Pan Africanist Congress and the South African Indian Congress’; Historical Papers Archive, William Cullen Library, Witwatersrand University, ANC AD2186, Box 4, Da9.

²⁹ Cited in Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 50.

³⁰ R. Davenport and C. Saunders, *South Africa: A modern history* (Fifth Edition, Basingstoke, 2000), p. 416.

³¹ J. Barber and J. Barratt, *South Africa’s Foreign Policy: the search for status and security, 1945-1998* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 81.

³² *The Guardian*, 16 January 1961.

³³ Barber and Barratt, *Foreign Policy*, p. 82; F. Nothling, ‘South Africa, Great Britain and the Commonwealth’, in T. Wheeler (ed.), *History of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, 1927-1993* (Johannesburg, 2005), pp. 248-251.

Africa's continuing membership of the Commonwealth'.³⁴ The SAUF heralded it as 'a significant victory for all opponents of Dr. Verwoerd's racial policies. It marks the point beyond which the world will not sit idly looking on while South Africa continues practising inhuman policies... this heralds the beginning of a rapid world movement towards the complete isolation of South Africa'.³⁵ James Barber and John Barratt later argued that 'while formally it was a 'withdrawal', in reality the Republic had been forced out'.³⁶

However, the success of the SAUF was fleeting. According to Jack Spence, South Africa's 'departure from the Commonwealth... did not have the damaging consequences' which had been predicted, with the links between South Africa and Britain remaining strong.³⁷ In addition, the unity between South African movements proved only temporary, and the incompatibility and mutual hostility of the ANC and PAC leaderships quickly came to the fore. A number of factors contributed to the collapse of the SAUF. These included regular attacks by the PAC, via the shared Voice of Africa radio station, against the ANC's communist links, and the complete breakdown in working relations during the Pietermaritzburg All-in Conference, in March 1961.³⁸ The result was that on 15 March 1962 the SAUF was formally disbanded.³⁹ The collapse of the SAUF had damaging consequences for the ANC's foreign policy in Africa, which will be explored further in this chapter. A contributing factor to the ANC's damaged international relations was that PAC propaganda led many African leaders to believe the ANC was overwhelmingly communist and controlled by whites. Ben Turok later observed that 'the PAC had persuaded Africa's leaders that the ANC's multiracialism was a mechanism for domination by white communists'.⁴⁰ According to Slovo, during the early 1960s the PAC successfully cultivated a 'myth' that it was 'more militant and more revolutionary movement' than the ANC, resulting in suspicions of the latter from nations such as Tanzania, which had closer links to the Peoples Republic of China

³⁴ *The Guardian*, 16 March 1961.

³⁵ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, Mss Afr. S 1681, Box 209, File 2, ANC documents, 'South Africa United Front, Newsletter. Press Statement, 16.3.61' (AB 209/2, item 10).

³⁶ Barber and Barratt, *Foreign Policy*, p. 82.

³⁷ J. Spence, 'South African Foreign Policy: The 'Outward Movement'', in C. Potholm and R. Dale, *Southern Africa in Perspective: Essays in Regional Politics* (New York, 1972), p. 47.

³⁸ Ndlovu, 'The ANC in exile', p. 432; Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 50.

³⁹ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ B. Turok, *Nothing but the Truth: Behind the ANC's Struggle Politics* (Jeppestown, 2003), p. 199.

than the Soviet Union.⁴¹ Although the PAC had considerable weaknesses, they were not wrong about the communist influences within the ANC, as both Slovo and Turok were also influential members of the SACP.

Mandela's 1962 Tour of Africa

In January 1962, Nelson Mandela secretly left South Africa to attend the Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) in Addis Ababa, after which he embarked on a tour of independent African states.⁴² Mandela's tour provided a means of fulfilling some of the ANC's foreign policy objectives, namely the isolation of South Africa, gaining international support for the movement and, more importantly since 1961, securing funds and training for its guerrilla fighters. This latter point was the primary purpose of his trip.

The ANC's decision to wage an armed struggle was one of the most significant events of the 1960s, and shaped the course of the entire exile period. The turn to violence was made by the remnants of the internal leadership in June 1961. Although the decision to adopt violent methods was officially announced in December 1961, the first group of cadres had already been sent to China for military training in early 1960, far in advance of the launch of MK.⁴³ However, it was not a unanimous decision, especially because of the ANC's long stated commitment to non-violence.⁴⁴ Mandela revealed that debates about the use of violence had been ongoing since 1960 but, sensitive to internal opposition, the new armed wing, MK, was kept separate from the political wing. It was only during the Lobatse Conference in 1962 that the ANC officially confirmed its ties to MK and the armed struggle.⁴⁵ Stephen Davis later argued that the conditions for armed struggle were unfavourable in 1961 and that it was 'an act of sheer policy desperation' from the ANC.⁴⁶ The official announcement in December 1961 came with a series of attacks against

⁴¹ J. Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography* (Melbourne, 1997), p. 178.

⁴² E. Feit, *Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960-1964: A case study* (Evanston, 1971), p. 232.

⁴³ Ndlovu, 'The ANC in Exile', p. 454.

⁴⁴ M. Benson, *Nelson Mandela: The Man and the Movement* (Harmondsworth, 1994), p. 89; N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London, 1995), pp. 321-24; A. Sampson, *Mandela: The authorised biography* (London, 2000), pp. 150-52.

⁴⁵ UFH, Liberation Archives, Oliver Tambo Papers, Box 81, File B 2.3.1, Political Report of the NEC to the consultative conference of the ANC, Morogoro, April 1969.

⁴⁶ S. Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels: Inside South Africa's hidden war* (New Haven, 1987), p. 14.

government installations throughout South Africa. However, the timing proved somewhat embarrassing for the ANC's foreign policy, as its President, Chief Albert Luthuli, received the Nobel Peace Prize the same month (although it had been awarded in 1960). The award angered the NP government, but it was forced to allow Luthuli to leave the country to accept it, wary of potential negative international publicity if it refused.⁴⁷ The award of the Nobel Peace Prize was highly symbolic and somewhat of a propaganda coup for the ANC in the west, though Mandela later acknowledged that it made launching the armed struggle somewhat awkward.⁴⁸ The consequence of this turn to violence was that from this moment on, the primary (but originally unintended) priority of the External Mission was to seek support for MK operations.

At the PAFMECA conference, Mandela grasped the chance to address the collected heads of state, in which he described to African leaders the situation in South Africa and stressed the vital importance of continental assistance to the ANC.⁴⁹ Mandela saw the conference as an 'opportunity to furnish important connections for the ANC... and [the] best chance for us to enlist support, money, and training for MK'.⁵⁰ Edward Feit observed that many of the conference delegates were united against apartheid, making them receptive to Mandela's message, and prompting a number of countries such as Algeria, Ethiopia, Morocco and Nigeria to pledge finances and military training to the ANC.⁵¹ The ANC had hoped that African unity and support for the struggle would materialise after PAFMECA, and the initial signs were positive. One outcome was that a number of MK cadres were sent for military training in the aforementioned nations over the following few years. After the conference in Ethiopia, Mandela embarked on an extensive tour of the continent (along with a brief stop in London) to meet leaders, ascertain their commitment to the ANC and to secure training for MK.⁵² During his visits to Morocco and Ethiopia,

⁴⁷ The National Archive (hereafter TNA), 'Commonwealth Relations Office Southern Africa Department', African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-African Congress 1961, Document 38, Discussion about Lutuli's prize, AR.4/9/50, DO 180/6.

⁴⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 338.

⁴⁹ N. Mandela, 'Address by Nelson Mandela to the Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa', Addis Ababa, 12 January 1962, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4297> (7/2/11).

⁵⁰ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 342.

⁵¹ Feit, *Urban Revolt*, p. 232.

⁵² Between January and June 1962, Mandela visited 12 African nations including Egypt, Morocco, Ghana, Nigeria and Sudan. For a full list of countries and map of his trips across the continent, see: N. Mandela, *Conversations with Myself* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 418-19.

Mandela met with several African liberation movements, including Algerian freedom fighters, giving him the chance to discuss tactics, as well as undergoing a course of basic military instruction.⁵³ Turok argued that Mandela was ‘highly successful at winning important commitments from many heads of state who received him as an equal’.⁵⁴ However, soon after his return to South Africa in August, Mandela, the NP government’s most wanted fugitive, was arrested.⁵⁵

As noted above, the dissemination of propaganda by the PAC had a negative impact on the ANC’s effectiveness and relations during and after the PAFMECA conference, something which Mandela and Tambo fought hard to counteract. The ANC found that its multi-racial character and close links with the SACP compromised its nationalist credentials.⁵⁶ Many delegates, particularly from countries such as Ghana with strong pan-Africanist ideals, were hostile to the involvement of whites in the ANC. For example, during Mandela’s stop in Ghana, the President Kwame Nkrumah declined to meet him, and he also endured hostility from some government officials who were closer to the PAC.⁵⁷ Kenneth Kaunda, the leader of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) and future President of Zambia, similarly expressed his apprehension about the ANC’s links to communism.⁵⁸ In his autobiography Mandela articulates his growing concern as ‘one African leader after another had questioned our relations with white and Indian communists, sometimes suggesting that they controlled the ANC... In the rest of Africa, most African leaders could understand the views of the PAC better’.⁵⁹ It was an early indication of the fractious and insecure nature of the ANC’s relations with the rest of Africa.

In May 1963, at the Conference of Independent African States in Addis Ababa, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established, providing enormous symbolic assistance to remaining African liberation movements.⁶⁰ In order to accelerate the decolonisation process, distribute funds, and to co-ordinate the

⁵³ Mandela, *Conversations*, pp. 93-103; Mandela, *Long Walk*, pp. 354-364; Sampson, *Mandela*, pp. 166, 169-70.

⁵⁴ Turok, *Truth*, p. 124.

⁵⁵ *The Guardian*, 9 August 1962.

⁵⁶ Johns, ‘Obstacles’, p. 277.

⁵⁷ Sampson, *Mandela*, p. 167.

⁵⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 352.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

⁶⁰ Y. Tandon, ‘The Organisation of African Unity and the Liberation of Southern Africa’, in C. Potholm and R. Dale, *Southern Africa in Perspective: Essays in Regional Politics* (New York, 1972), p. 245.

activities of liberation movements, the OAU created the Liberation Committee. The OAU acted as a beacon against white minority rule until the 1990s, although the removal of apartheid was not its priority until the 1980s. The explanation for this was encapsulated in the ‘domino theory’; this suggested that if the weakest remaining white/colonial regime succumbed to majority rule, it would spark off a chain reaction and others would fall in succession. This policy meant that in Southern Africa, the Liberation Committee’s priority was the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, followed by Zimbabwe, Namibia and finally South Africa, with the level of support provided to each liberation movement corresponding to its position in this chain. Therefore, the ANC (and PAC) were last in the queue, and consequently received relatively little assistance from the OAU. It was a strategy which displeased the ANC, but its protests were ignored. It quickly became apparent that, although the OAU stood as a beacon for liberation in Africa, it was predominantly a rhetorical, rather than a practical vehicle. Roger Pfister argues that ‘the OAU’s ability to provide financial aid to African liberation movements was limited’, a factor arising because ‘member states themselves could ill afford to be generous’.⁶¹ Furthermore, Yashpal Tandon observed in 1972 that there was ‘a wide discrepancy between what is promised to these movements and what they finally receive’.⁶² Tandon added that ‘the extent that the movements secure financial aid from sources other than the OAU [meant], they are free to flaunt its decisions, particularly if their respective strategies of operation conflict’.⁶³ The consequence was that movements like the ANC were forced to seek assistance from elsewhere to ensure their capacity to wage its guerrilla conflict.

As illustrated above, there was some consternation across Africa about the ANC’s close links with the SACP, yet it was to be an alliance which proved extremely beneficial to the movement. Shubin minutely details how the ANC, through members of the SACP, established close working contacts with the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc.⁶⁴ The extent of communist assistance to the struggle in the early 1960s (and the ANC’s gratitude for it) is reinforced by Mac Maharaj who was posted to the GDR, and by Ronnie Kasrils who was sent for military training in

⁶¹ Pfister, ‘Gateway’, p. 61.

⁶² Tandon, ‘Organisation of African Unity’, p. 255.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁶⁴ Shubin, *Moscow*, pp. 10-53.

the Soviet Union.⁶⁵ Although the ANC could count numerous communists within its leadership who had close ideological affiliation to the Soviet Bloc and its geopolitical goals (something which would later affect the characteristics and actions of the ANC in exile), the decision to court communist assistance was not primarily ideological. The lack of meaningful western and African support ensured that the only logical ally was the Soviet Bloc. In discussions concerning whether to seek Soviet support, one ANC leader, Joe Matthews, later recalled that ‘it’s not a question of ideology, it’s a question of practicality... We knew that the African states, generally speaking, were too weak’.⁶⁶ The alliance enabled the ANC to sustain itself, train its fighters and (in the long-run) brought it closer to other Soviet-sponsored liberation movements such as the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO). Callinicos rightly argues ‘that the steady widening of the composition of the movement, bringing with it a spread of ideological tendencies... [was to be] the turning point for the ANC [and] was to have profound repercussions in the movement’s international... relations for decades to come’.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Thomas stated that the ANC’s relations with the Soviet Union should be seen in the context of the movement’s broader approach to foreign relations – seeking the diplomatic isolation of South Africa and the military training of guerrilla fighters – and arose because of its disillusionment with the failure of the UN, OAU and the west to effectively support these aims.⁶⁸ The lack of OAU support for the ANC’s foreign policy aims, and the subsequent turn to the Soviet Union, was according to Tom Lodge, ‘to be rather more valuable than pan-African support’.⁶⁹

However, despite negative African perceptions about the ANC’s ties to the Soviets, the movement had, by 1962, successfully established offices in Algiers, Rabat, Cairo, Dar es Salaam, Lusaka and London, with all its African offices supporting its military activities.⁷⁰ These offices became more important after the Rivonia raids in 1963 had dismantled the internal structures of the ANC, leaving the

⁶⁵ Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous*, pp. 83-92; P. O’Malley, *Shades of Difference: Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa* (New York, 2007), pp. 88-89.

⁶⁶ Interview with Joe Matthews cited in Ndlovu, ‘The ANC and the World’, p. 547.

⁶⁷ Callinicos, *Tambo*, p. 278.

⁶⁸ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 231.

⁶⁹ Lodge, *Black Politics*, p. 298.

⁷⁰ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 42.

External Mission in control of the struggle.⁷¹ By 1963, the ANC's provisional headquarters was located in Tanzania, the closest available point to South Africa. The establishment of the liberation movements' headquarters in Dar es Salaam was actively encouraged by Julius Nyerere, who willingly provided facilities for all 'credible' movements, giving the ANC opportunities to develop closer links with likeminded regional movements.⁷² However, relations were not always good. For example, only a year after establishing headquarters in Dar es Salaam, the ANC was forced to move to Morogoro because, Nyerere decreed in November 1964, that only four representatives from each liberation movement could reside in the capital.⁷³ Shubin argues this was particularly damaging to ANC foreign policy activities, because Morogoro was a provincial town 'far from any international activity'.⁷⁴ Turok observed that Nyerere and his government sent conflicting signals to the ANC; on the one hand it offered protection to the movement, yet on the other, Tanzanian ministers would regularly and openly criticise it.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Turok argued that 'conditions in Tanzania were unfavourable for the ANC since important elements within the government, including the head of the OAU's Liberation Committee, favoured the PAC'.⁷⁶ A similar situation arose in Zambia after its independence in 1964, following which President Kenneth Kaunda allowed the ANC to settle in Lusaka. Although the ANC had a presence in Lusaka from 1964, it was not until 1967 that the military headquarters and its President's office moved to the city.⁷⁷ Kaunda walked a delicate tightrope because Zambia was more directly exposed to potential South African, Rhodesian and Portuguese military actions than Tanzania. The ANC had wanted to locate itself in Zambia because it was closer to South Africa, but the very nature of hosting the movement meant that Zambia was open to potential reprisals for the ANC's activities. Regardless of the fact that the ANC were

⁷¹ The notion that the ANC was destroyed internally after Rivonia is the accepted view in the historiography, but this has been dismissed by Raymond Suttner as incorrect. Suttner has argued that the ANC's internal underground was, although dormant in the late 1960s, still active, and 'despite heavy repression by the state, underground work continued'. However, the reasons for the lack of publicity about the ANC's activity in South Africa is because its structures were not uniform across the country, it was difficult to communicate between cells, and those still operational were understandably kept secret due to the security threat. See: Suttner, *Underground*, pp. 59-83.

⁷² Callinicos, *Tambo*, p. 307.

⁷³ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 70.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷⁵ Turok, *Truth*, p. 202-3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁷⁷ H. Macmillan, 'The African National Congress of South Africa in Zambia: The Culture of Exile and the Changing Relationship with Home, 1964-1990', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35 (2009), p. 308.

present in Zambia, the official policy was that Zambia did not encourage or provide facilities for its guerrillas. In a bid to maintain this mirage, any guerrillas entering the country were forced to surrender weapons to the government, allowing Zambia to exert some control over the foreign fighters in its territory.⁷⁸ It also meant that the ANC leadership could maintain discipline within the country, preventing the possibility of mutiny amongst its cadres. However, despite the official restrictions on military activity in Zambia, the government in practice provided the bases for joint ANC-ZAPU incursions into Rhodesia (see below).

The ZAPU alliance and the Wankie Campaign

By the mid-1960s, although the ANC had managed to survive and successfully establish international ties with numerous backers, demoralisation was setting in amongst its cadres. The ANC was scattered across Africa, South Africa remained largely unaffected by its posturing, and MK fighters were left frustrated in camps across Tanzania, with little prospect of engaging with the enemy. This latter point was to become a recurring problem throughout the ANC's exile history. By 1966, the ANC had organised training for MK cadres in China, Ethiopia and the USSR, but these fighters remained redundant, thousands of miles from South Africa. These guerrillas had of course joined MK in order to fight the apartheid state, yet several years later they languished in their bases, with no immediate prospect of doing so. A key obstacle to their return was the lack of underground structures in South Africa and the inaccessibility of the border from their current locations.⁷⁹

MK cadres became increasingly frustrated by the lack of action and the poor conditions in the camps, prompting one group in Tanzania in 1966 to commandeer a truck in an attempt to express their grievances to the leadership at Morogoro. However, the group was intercepted and arrested by the Tanzanian army before they reached Morogoro, accused of being deserters.⁸⁰ The interception of the group by the Tanzanian army was a significant incident, of a type repeated throughout the period

⁷⁸ Tandon, 'Organisation of African Unity', p. 250.

⁷⁹ 'Review of the State of Organisation of the Liberation Movement', 1966, [http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=mem19660000.032.009.013\(4/5/11\)](http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=mem19660000.032.009.013(4/5/11)).

⁸⁰ Ralinala, 'Wankie', p. 483.

of the ANC's exile. It was one example amongst many of a friendly African government utilising its armed forces to assist the ANC leadership in suppressing dissent within the movement. It demonstrates that the ANC leadership had developed sufficiently close working relationships with its hosts to persuade them to assist in this manner.⁸¹ Similar incidents will be explored later in this and the following chapter. Although no disciplinary action was taken, it prompted the leadership to seriously explore the possibilities of accelerating the infiltration of MK fighters into South Africa. But it was not just the ANC's cadres that were getting impatient. Callinicos argues that 'the OAU was growing impatient with the lack of progress by the liberation movements... the armed struggle seemed to have been a deplorable failure'.⁸² The ANC found that its African benefactors were increasingly frustrated by the lack of practical activity, with the Tanzanian and Zambian governments, along with the OAU, applying pressure upon the leadership to act.

The embarrassing fact that the ANC had been in exile for seven years, during which it had failed to send a single guerrilla back to South Africa, was made more acute by the impressive guerrilla activities of FRELIMO in Mozambique.⁸³ Due to these internal and external pressures on the ANC, the leadership sought to act on its rhetorical claims of engaging militarily with South Africa. In October 1967, the ANC and ZAPU announced an historic alliance between the two liberation movements.⁸⁴ The communiqué marked an important stage in the ANC's foreign policy, in that it strengthened the process of cementing enduring alliances with likeminded liberation movements in Southern Africa. Tambo described at the time how the alliance with ZAPU developed:

We have had close political relations with ZAPU and these developed into relations at the military level until we were in a position to fight together. We are facing a common enemy, fighting for a common purpose, hence a combined force for a common onslaught against the enemy at every point of our encounter as we march down for the liberation of our respective countries.⁸⁵

⁸¹ The suppression of ANC dissenters was also in the interest of the host governments, as they did not want such actions to act as inspiration to its own populations, and neither did it want bands of armed fighters at loose within its territory.

⁸² Callinicos, *Tambo*, p. 327.

⁸³ FRELIMO had begun its independence war in September 1964: J. Cabrita, *Mozambique: The tortuous road to democracy* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 29.

⁸⁴ 'ANC-ZAPU alliance', *Sechaba*, 1, 10 (October, 1967), p. 3.

⁸⁵ *Morning Star*, 23 November 1967, cited in Ralinala, 'Wankie', p. 488.

The ANC and ZAPU planned to infiltrate their forces into Rhodesia, with MK hoping to create a 'Ho Chi Minh trail' to the South African border.⁸⁶ In August 1967, the first unit, known as the Luthuli Detachment, crossed into Rhodesia, and initiated the Wankie Campaign.⁸⁷ The guerrilla incursion was however, quickly spotted by Rhodesian security forces, which according to ANC sources, were initially shocked by the ferocity of the attack by MK.⁸⁸ This prompted *Sechaba* to claim somewhat dramatically that 'the enemy has suffered untold casualties'.⁸⁹ However, the better armed Rhodesians, aided by South African reinforcements, regrouped. They forced some guerrillas to flee into neighbouring Botswana, capturing or killing the others.⁹⁰ Those who retreated to Botswana, including the detachment's Political Commissar and future MK Commander Chris Hani, were arrested, given lengthy prison sentences, and subsequently deported to Zambia in 1968.⁹¹ In late 1967 and early 1968 further incursions (the 'Sipolilo Campaign') were launched, with similar results. The ANC attempted to claim victory, but it was obvious that its forces had been defeated.⁹² The defeats of 1967-68 exposed the limitations of the ANC's military strategy; its forces had not even come close to South Africa's borders.

These failures were nevertheless a turning point for the ANC and marked the true beginnings of the ANC's armed struggle. They demonstrated that the ANC was prepared to engage militarily with South Africa, proving to its detractors that it was willing to take action. The military activities were also an attempt to quell discontent within the movement, and re-establish its credentials in the eyes of its international supporters as a revolutionary movement. The campaigns created the movement's first martyrs for the armed struggle and provided symbolic evidence of resistance to apartheid. Although unsuccessful, the Wankie Campaign provided the ANC with propaganda opportunities; because 'the movement was largely in the doldrums, it had to be presented as being engaged in armed struggle in the same way as FRELIMO [Liberation Front of Mozambique], MPLA [People's Movement for the

⁸⁶ Barrell, *MK*, p. 20. The 'Ho Chi Minh Trail' was an intricate system of support, weaving through several countries, which acted as a strategic supply route for the North Vietnamese guerrillas during the Vietnam War.

⁸⁷ 'Victory or Death', *Dawn Souvenir Issue* (December, 1986), pp. 2-3.

⁸⁸ For an alternative view on the Wankie Campaign, see: K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia's CIO Chief on Record* (London, 1987).

⁸⁹ 'ANC-ZAPU alliance', *Sechaba*, 1, 10 (October, 1967), p. 3.

⁹⁰ Johns, 'Obstacles', p. 283.

⁹¹ 'The Wankie Campaign', *Dawn Souvenir Issue* (December, 1986), p. 37.

⁹² Barber and Barratt, *Foreign Policy*, p. 141.

Liberation of Angola] and PAIGC [African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde]’.⁹³ It also apparently boosted confidence in the ANC and raised the political consciousness of the masses. As Fatton argues, ‘the alliance [with ZAPU] and the ensuing armed clashes were in this sense a stimulus to increased and improved political mobilisation’.⁹⁴ Yet the defeats also prompted a bout of soul searching within the ANC. The desired boost to morale did not materialise and dissatisfaction remained widespread. Eventually, in April 1969, in a bid to stem mounting criticism from the rank and file, the ANC leadership convened the Morogoro Conference so that grievances could be aired and tactics formulated for the next stage of the struggle.

1969: A year of upheaval

For the ANC, 1969 was in many respects a year of upheaval, but also one which afforded several opportunities to advance its foreign policy. During 1969 the ANC enhanced and cemented alliances with Soviet-sponsored Southern African liberation movements at the Khartoum Conference and its own conference at Morogoro. However, the ANC was also expelled from Tanzania, and was negatively affected by the signing of the Lusaka Manifesto by many of its African state allies, which adopted a relatively conciliatory stance towards South Africa.

The Khartoum Conference

In January 1969, the first International Conference of Solidarity with the Peoples of Southern Africa and the Portuguese Colonies was held in the Sudanese capital Khartoum. It was attended by six liberation movements, namely the PAIGC (Guinea and Cape Verde), MPLA (Angola), FRELIMO (Mozambique), ZAPU (Zimbabwe), the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) (Namibia) and the ANC (South Africa).⁹⁵ The Khartoum Conference was sponsored by the Soviet Union, organised jointly by the Afro-Asian Peoples` Solidarity Organization

⁹³ Turok, *Truth*, p. 223.

⁹⁴ Fatton, ‘Limitations’, p. 600.

⁹⁵ R. Resha, ‘Statement by Robert Resha, member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC before the Special Committee against Apartheid’, 18 March, 1969, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4781> (15/2/11).

(AAPSO) and the World Council for Peace, and was attended by delegates from over fifty countries and international organisations.⁹⁶ The conference called upon all democratic and progressive governments and organisations to offer greater moral and material support for the liberation movements. However, it was the decision to extend exclusive recognition to the six invited liberation movements which was to have a significant impact on the ANC's foreign policy through to the current day. The result was the formation of the Khartoum Alliance, a bloc of 'legitimate' or 'authentic' liberation movements, backed by the Soviet Union and united by a common political and ideological association.⁹⁷ Thus, the conference defined the ANC's 'natural allies' in the region, providing a degree of international legitimacy to its struggle. Additionally, the alliance created a network of solidarity and cooperation in the region, endorsing the ANC's foreign policy; the six movements subsequently combined to lobby as a bloc at international organisations such as the UN and OAU.⁹⁸ The full impact of the Khartoum Alliance was not however felt until after 1975, with Portuguese decolonisation from Angola and Mozambique. As will be discussed later, members of the Khartoum Alliance came to power in both countries and opened up their territories for the ANC to establish diplomatic and military bases closer to South Africa. However, the alliance also created splits in the regional struggles as it challenged the authority of the OAU. In addition, the 'non-authentic' movements sponsored by China such as the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and the PAC were excluded.⁹⁹ In the case of Zimbabwe, after its independence in 1980, relations between President Robert Mugabe and the ANC were extremely frosty as a result, reflecting the latter's close affiliation with Mugabe's bitter rival ZAPU.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ T. Sellestrom, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Solidarity and assistance 1970-1994* (Stockholm, 2002), p. 31.

⁹⁸ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, pp. 21-22.

⁹⁹ TNA/FCO 45/69, Commonwealth Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Liberation Movements 1968 Document 8 - Khartoum Conference, Jan 1969.

The Morogoro Conference

While the Khartoum Conference was taking place, Chris Hani was being deported from Botswana to Zambia. According to Hugh Macmillan, Hani, on his return from prison, was shocked to find the poor organisational state of the ANC in Zambia and identified its failure to learn from the lessons of the disastrous Wankie Campaign as a major cause for concern.¹⁰⁰ Accusations were made that Wankie was poorly planned and rushed forward by the movement's leadership, and (more worryingly) that it had provided a means of having dissenters eliminated. As a way of expressing their dissatisfaction and grievances to the ANC leadership, Hani and six others wrote, what became known as, the Hani Memorandum in early 1969.¹⁰¹ The Memorandum unsettled a leadership unused to being criticised, as it aired grievances about some of the ANC's leaders (particularly MK Commander-in-Chief Joe Modise) and publicly exposed the malaise within the movement as a whole. The document laid bare criticisms including: the absence of a debriefing after the Wankie Campaign; accusations that the ANC leadership in exile was 'careerist' and 'divorced from the situation in South Africa'; that MK and the ANC were run separately from each other with no co-ordinated strategy; and that the Security Department of the ANC was internally focused, handing out brutal punishments to cadres in the camps without fair trials.¹⁰² For having the temerity to criticise the leadership, Hani and the other signatories were expelled from the movement by a tribunal (they were later reinstated), and were apparently sentenced to death, but saved only by the vigorous appeals of Mzwai Piliso.¹⁰³ The Memorandum was a reflection of the immense dissatisfaction amongst the rank and file of the ANC about the state of the movement and the lack of progress after nearly a decade in exile. There was also a realisation that the struggle until this point had largely failed. According to the ANC journal *Mayibuye*, it had become 'clear that the External Mission as then constituted was not organizationally geared to undertake the urgent task of undertaking this role'.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ H. Macmillan, 'The 'Hani Memorandum' – introduced and annotated', *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 69 (2009), pp. 107-109.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-109.

¹⁰² Full Hani Memorandum cited in *ibid.*, pp. 114-121.

¹⁰³ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴ *Mayibuye*, 10 (May, 1969), p. 2.

Acutely aware of the extent of discontent within the movement, the leadership was forced to urgently resolve the situation, and in April 1969 it announced that a National Consultative Conference would be held at Morogoro. The conference provided an opportunity for all cadres in the movement to participate, if not in person, then through written submissions. The conference was presented with fifty-three documents, nineteen of which originated from various units of the ANC, and thirty-four of which were individual contributions, covering a wide range of subjects, criticisms and opinions.¹⁰⁵ An example of such a submission was Turok's scathing memorandum entitled 'What is Wrong?', which illustrated some of the criticisms of the ANC.¹⁰⁶ Over seventy delegates attended the conference, which according to the ANC, initiated a rare process of self-reflection 'in an atmosphere of complete frankness'.¹⁰⁷

One of the most important documents tabled at the conference, largely written by Slovo, was 'Strategy and Tactics', which outlined the situation the movement found itself in and the direction it should embark upon.¹⁰⁸ It was at this moment that the ANC fully committed itself to a revolutionary strategy of a People's War and this document explicitly advocated this approach. The document argued that the revolutionary struggle was 'the only method left open' to achieve freedom in South Africa, emphasising the centrality of the armed wing in achieving this.¹⁰⁹ However, it also struck a note of caution, arguing that the ANC 'must reject all manifestations of militarism that separate armed people's struggle from its political context'.¹¹⁰ The document recognised that without the politicisation and active participation of the masses, the armed struggle could not hope to succeed. Yet, this warning was not heeded, and the ANC consistently failed to act upon this message. Throughout its exile, the ANC was unable to establish 'liberated areas' or cells within South Africa with the capability to shelter or supply infiltrating guerrillas.

¹⁰⁵ 'Close Ranks!', *Sechaba*, 7 (July, 1969), p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Document 13, 'What is Wrong?' Memorandum by Ben Turok before the ANC's Morogoro Conference, April 1969, in Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir*, pp. 383-387.

¹⁰⁷ 'Close Ranks!', *Sechaba*, 7 (July, 1969), p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ 'Strategy and Tactics of the ANC', adopted by the Morogoro Conference of the ANC, Tanzania, 25 April – 1 May 1969,

<http://www.ancyl.org.za/docs/political/1969/Morogoro%20Strategy%20and%20Tacticsg.pdf> (16/2/11).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

This scenario meant that guerrillas that did manage to enter South Africa were largely isolated, leaving them more susceptible to arrest (see Chapter Three).

A significant outcome of the conference was the decision to officially allow non-Africans to be part of the ANC; this had not hitherto been permitted, despite the non-racial approach adopted in the Freedom Charter. Paradoxically, several leading members of the SACP and MK, such as Dadoo, Slovo and Kasrils were non-African and, despite living in exile and sharing the principles and goals of the ANC, they had been prevented from becoming members.¹¹¹ ‘Strategy and Tactics’ declared that ‘those belonging to the other oppressed groups and those few White revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common cause with our aspirations, must be fully integrated on the basis of individual equality’.¹¹² The decision allowed the ANC to coherently fulfil its pledge to a non-racial approach to the struggle originally outlined in the Freedom Charter. Although non-Africans were admitted for the first time, they were still prevented from joining the highest structure of the movement, the National Executive Committee (NEC), perhaps due to lingering suspicions amongst ‘Africanists’.

Following considerable criticism of the leadership in the run-up to Morogoro, the conference provided an important opportunity for the ANC to restructure and streamline the External Mission in order to create a more dynamic movement, and to bring the military and political wings together under an umbrella structure. A Presidential Council and a (multi-racial) Revolutionary Council were established ‘to improve efficiency and decision making’.¹¹³ Johns argued that the creation of the Revolutionary Council was ‘an expression of the hope that greater effectiveness could be achieved if the direction and oversight of the armed struggle were made the responsibility of a specialised body free from other tasks’.¹¹⁴ Additionally, the NEC, which had been regarded as unwieldy due to the number of representatives, was

¹¹¹ An agreement amongst the former Congress alliance in 1960 had ensured that the ANC would be the only one represented abroad. The decision left the allied Indians, Coloureds and whites in exile without official organisational representation.

¹¹² Strategy and Tactics of the ANC’, adopted by the Morogoro Conference of the ANC, Tanzania, 25 April – 1 May 1969, <http://www.ancyl.org.za/docs/political/1969/Morogoro%20Strategy%20and%20Tacticsg.pdf> (16/2/11).

¹¹³ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 53.

¹¹⁴ Johns, *Obstacles*, p. 287.

reduced in size, with the aforementioned structures made accountable to this body.¹¹⁵ In a bid to appease the ANC's cadres about the unaccountable nature of the leadership, new officials were appointed, and Oliver Tambo stepped down as Acting President General at the start of the conference, only to be unanimously reinstated.¹¹⁶

The Morogoro Conference was predominantly focused on internal organisational restructuring and strategies for the future, so the international dimension of the struggle was not explicitly discussed. The key decision to escalate the armed struggle did however have an important impact on the ANC's foreign policy. The conference reiterated that the task of the External Mission was to ensure the success of the armed struggle and the promotion of internal mass activism. However, these two separate, yet intertwined aspects of foreign policy were never effectively linked. According to Barrell, 'ANC strategy continued as if armed activity was the primary politicising agent'.¹¹⁷ The only other international issues discussed, outlined in the Political Report of the National Executive Committee and reported in *Sechaba*, revolved around the nature of the ANC's alliances in Southern Africa, the opposition forces that it faced in the region, and the desire for greater unity and solidarity amongst all revolutionaries.¹¹⁸

The Lusaka Manifesto

In early April, immediately before the Morogoro conference, the Fifth Conference of East and Central African Heads of State convened in Lusaka to discuss the situation in Southern Africa. During the summit the delegates from fourteen states produced a landmark document known as the Lusaka Manifesto.¹¹⁹ The Lusaka Manifesto is, in general, perceived as a significant step forward in African, and more specifically Southern African state's support for the liberation struggles of the region. The Manifesto publicly committed Southern Africa to

¹¹⁵ Shubin, *Moscow*, pp. 91-92.

¹¹⁶ 'Close Ranks!', *Sechaba*, 7 (July, 1969), p. 2.

¹¹⁷ H. Barrell, 'The Turn to the Masses: The African National Congress' Strategic Review of 1978-79', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18 (1992), p. 71.

¹¹⁸ 'Close Ranks!', *Sechaba*, 7 (July, 1969), p. 3; 'Extracts from the Political Report of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress', April 1969, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=143> (16/2/11).

¹¹⁹ The Lusaka Manifesto, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4836&t=Organisation+of+African+Unity> (16/2/11).

opposing the racist regimes in the region, which on the face of it offered greater opportunities to the liberation movements. However, the Manifesto also affirmed that the region's struggles had to be dealt with one by one, in line with the OAU's domino theory (see above). The document also explicitly distinguished the illegal regimes of Rhodesia and Portuguese colonialism from the legitimate state of South Africa. The Manifesto was therefore to have a significant and negative effect upon the ANC's standing in the region.

The Manifesto began by condemning racial subjugation in Southern Africa, and called for the self-determination of its people.¹²⁰ Ironically, since Tanzania and Zambia had exerted pressure on the ANC to engage in military activities in 1967, the document adopted a conciliatory and peaceful tone towards South Africa. This was a serious problem, because only weeks later at Morogoro, the ANC advocated the intensification of its armed struggle. Some of the signatories of the Manifesto were amongst the ANC's closest allies, which had knowingly allowed the movement to locate and launch guerrilla fighters from its territory. These governments were now expressing an unwillingness to support this approach to the South African regime in favour of a negotiated outcome. The Manifesto was subsequently endorsed by the OAU and the UN as the preferred course of action for the region.

The second pertinent issue for the ANC was that it had always maintained that the South African regime was illegal according to international law. However, the Manifesto challenged this assumption by arguing that 'South Africa is itself an independent sovereign State and a Member of the United Nations... On every legal basis its internal affairs are a matter exclusively for the people of South Africa'.¹²¹ Effectively, Frontline States were claiming they could not interfere with, or alter the policies of the apartheid government. The heads of state not only recognised South Africa's legitimacy, they openly stated they would not interfere in what they hoped would be a peaceful transition. It meant that any changes would have to be the prerogative of the South African government. Even if this was a partly tactical retreat, in line with the domino theory, it had a negative consequence for the ANC's policy.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

To make matters worse, none of the liberation movements had been invited to the conference, or been consulted on a declaration which was to have drastic repercussions for them. The Lusaka Conference was in stark contrast to the Khartoum Conference in which the six Marxist-inspired Southern African movements had actively participated. The SACP's *African Communist* wryly observed that in contrast to Khartoum 'unfortunately and conspicuously-none from the fourteen states... were represented at Lusaka'.¹²² The journal scathingly condemned the heads of state for 'their failure to speak out unequivocally [which] can only arouse lively apprehensions of a real, and not merely a verbal sell-out'.¹²³ Its most damning observation was that the independent African states that endorsed the Manifesto had gained their independence relatively easily, and the Lusaka Manifesto was thus 'insufferably patronising and even arrogant'.¹²⁴

The consequence was that the ANC found itself unsure of its standing in the region. Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart argued that the Manifesto meant that 'now even the continued support by Tanzania and Zambia and, in general, the solidarity of African states with the liberation struggle appeared shaky'.¹²⁵ The movement depended on the benevolence of these nations, so could not afford to be overly critical, yet privately it was furious at what it interpreted as a betrayal. The Manifesto was a warning to the ANC about its tenuous position. Shubin argued that by the time of the Lusaka Manifesto, 'ANC activities in African countries were faltering... Umkhonto [MK] lost its capacity to operate from Zambian territory'.¹²⁶ The Manifesto also coincided with South African attempts at the end of the decade to establish closer links with Africa, known as the 'Dialogue' process.¹²⁷ This development posed a serious threat to the ANC, and will be examined further in the section discussing the 1970s.

¹²² 'A Disturbing Manifesto', *African Communist*, 40 (First Quarter, 1970), p. 9. The remark about the fourteen states denotes the independent African countries which signed the Lusaka Manifesto.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²⁵ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir*, p. 35.

¹²⁶ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 97.

¹²⁷ The processes of Dialogue and Détente should not be confused as these are two separate attempts by South Africa to break its isolation on the continent. Pretoria's initial efforts, primarily focused on economic links, were labelled as Dialogue, and were relatively well received by conservative governments such as the Ivory Coast and Malawi. After Dialogue publically broke down at the OAU meeting in June 1971, overt efforts at wooing Africa ceased. However, Vorster was not deterred, and his efforts to initiate an 'outward policy' was renewed in 1974, when he offered Africa 'the way of peace'; the ensuing attempts became known as Détente.

The ANC's expulsion from Tanzania

If the Lusaka Manifesto was damaging to the ANC, its expulsion from Tanzania was even more devastating. By the end of the 1960s Tanzania and Zambia were increasingly under pressure from the white minority ruled states and although they were never targeted to the extent of other Southern African states, Rhodesia and South Africa had threatened them with military action.¹²⁸ For example, Vorster had threatened in 1967 to 'hit Zambia so hard that she would never forget it'.¹²⁹ Both governments were therefore increasingly vigilant in the wake of sabotage attempts against key infrastructure including the oil pipeline between the two countries.¹³⁰ These countries could not compete militarily with the white regimes, and 'many (including Zambia) for solely economic reasons needed or wanted to trade' with South Africa.¹³¹ The fact that the host countries were suffering because of the liberation movements meant that official attitudes hardened towards their guests. Immediately before the Tanzanian expulsion, Kaunda had ordered the complete withdrawal of all MK members from Zambia, and although the threat was not carried out, it demonstrates the rising tensions at this time and the uncertainty surrounding the ANC's position.¹³² Furthermore, in September 1969, Kaunda ordered all the liberation movements resident in Lusaka to provide lists of their members in Zambia, insisting that no military personnel could stay in the country. One additional factor contributing to the ANC's expulsion from Tanzania was its leaders' refusal to testify in the treason trial of former Foreign Minister Oscar Kambona. Tambo insisted that the ANC should remain neutral in the affairs of other countries, to which Nyerere and other Tanzanian officials took exception.¹³³ Conversely, it appears that only the South African movements (the ANC and PAC) were made examples of by Tanzania over this incident, as other regional liberation movements remained in the country at this time.¹³⁴

¹²⁸ Records of the Africa Bureau and related organisations, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS Afr. S 1681, Box 70, File 8, ff 1-29, AB 70/8 Item 1, The Simonstown Agreements 1970, The Simonstown Agreements: Britain's Defence and the Sale of arms to South Africa, by M.J. Christie, published by The Africa Bureau, Sept. 1970 (pamphlet).

¹²⁹ Quoted in: 'Dialogue – South Africa's Imperialist Mask', *Sechaba*, 5, 8 (August, 1971), p. 3.

¹³⁰ Ndlovu, 'ANC and the world', p. 566.

¹³¹ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir*, p. 7.

¹³² Macmillan, 'Culture', p. 313.

¹³³ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p. 59.

¹³⁴ Information obtained from email correspondence with Dr. James Brennan, 30 March 2011.

The consequence was that in July 1969, the ANC was ordered to vacate the military camp at Kongwa within fourteen days, officially because MK was deemed a security risk.¹³⁵ The announcement by Nyerere sparked panic amongst the ANC leadership, as there was no possibility that MK could infiltrate its guerrillas into South Africa in such a short period of time, and no other African state was willing to host its fighters. The longstanding alliance with the Soviet Union paid dividends once again, as it provided an airlift, en masse, of all its cadres from Dar es Salaam. It was an immense undertaking for the Soviet Union, physically and financially, as it now had to sustain the whole of the ANC's fighting force.¹³⁶ The ANC's expulsion from Tanzania marked an inglorious finale to the decade, with its forces now located further from South Africa than ever before.

The Early 1970s

After a decade of exile, the ANC's position in Africa was arguably weaker than it had been in 1960. The armed struggle had not progressed in the manner expected, discontent was rife within the movement, and its expulsion from Tanzania and relocation to the Soviet Union was a serious setback to its position within Southern Africa. Additionally, the publication of the Lusaka Manifesto demonstrated the increasing willingness of African states to treat South Africa as a legitimate state, which was a blow to a key tenet of ANC foreign policy – the isolation of the apartheid regime. The ANC's malaise continued during the early 1970s, as numerous African nations began to put the Manifesto into practice, initiating a period of closer links to apartheid South Africa. During this Dialogue Process, South Africa attempted to break its international isolation by establishing political and economic relations with amenable African states.¹³⁷ Dialogue infuriated the ANC, but there was little it could do to influence the governments involved, particularly in the light of its then precarious standing in Africa.¹³⁸ According to Jack Simons, during this

¹³⁵ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 99.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹³⁷ 'Dialogue: The viewpoint of the people of South Africa', *Sechaba*, 5, 10 (October, 1971), p. 4.

¹³⁸ For example, Tambo wrote a letter to the Mauritius government criticising its foreign policy towards South Africa; the response from the Prime Minister was terse and concise, arguing that although the government was behind the ANC, it was still going to trade with South Africa. 'Mauritius Collaboration', *Sechaba*, 5, 1 (January, 1971), p. 7; and 'Dialogue is Betrayal', *Sechaba*, 5, 7 (July, 1971), p. 7.

period 'the ANC was stagnant in the frontline areas, had undergone a loss of purpose, made little contact with people in South Africa, and was suffering from arrested development'.¹³⁹ It was not until 1975 that the ANC's fortunes changed. Decolonisation in Angola and Mozambique acted as a catalyst for African liberation in Southern Africa; two 'authentic' movements of the Khartoum Alliance had taken power, opening up new opportunities for military-bases and the infiltration of guerrillas into Rhodesia and South Africa. After Portugal's retreat from Africa, the ANC's vibrancy and viability was further boosted by the Soweto Uprising in 1976, which resulted in a new wave of young, militant South Africans fleeing the country and joining the ANC; although this eventuality did also generate some conflict within the movement. This section will examine how these events affected the ANC's foreign policy during this stage of the struggle.

The Dialogue Process

It would be no exaggeration to argue that the Dialogue Process threatened the ANC's relations with a number of African countries. Before Dialogue began in earnest, Malawi's President Hastings Banda had been the first African leader to establish official economic and political relations with South Africa in 1967.¹⁴⁰ Banda's decision incurred the wrath of the ANC, whose mouthpiece *Sechaba* repeatedly condemned the activities of Malawi, labelling the President as an 'African Judas' committing acts of 'brazen treachery'.¹⁴¹ Banda further claimed that African states which criticised him were hypocrites: 'while they are criticising me for trading with South Africa openly, they themselves are trading with South Africa secretly'.¹⁴² Banda's statement provides an indication of the double standards of some African nations and their increasingly close ties to South Africa. Following the Lusaka Manifesto's conciliatory tone towards South Africa, and aided by his success with Malawi, Vorster accelerated the process of pragmatically reaching out to receptive

¹³⁹ Cited in Turok, *Truth*, p. 230.

¹⁴⁰ 'Banda's Treachery', *Sechaba*, 1, 5 (May, 1967), p. i.

¹⁴¹ 'Banda belly-crawls to Vorster', *Sechaba*, 5, 10 (October, 1971), p. 2.

¹⁴² Cited in J. Barratt, 'South Africa's Outward Policy: From isolation to Dialogue', in N. Rhodie (ed.), *South African Dialogue: Contrasts in South African Thinking on Basic Race Issues* (Johannesburg, 1972), p. 554.

African states.¹⁴³ As a result, a number of African leaders grudgingly accepted the apartheid regime and expressed privately a desire to forge closer ties.¹⁴⁴ If the Lusaka Manifesto was a setback to the ANC's foreign policy, the Dialogue Process posed an even graver threat. Its hard work of establishing diplomatic and military links with independent Africa was rapidly being undone by the overtures of South Africa. In spite of revolutionary rhetoric and claims of overt support, some African states were increasingly seduced by the economic advantages of relations with Pretoria. The irony is that a similar approach was later replicated by the ANC in government, when it established ties with 'pariah' nations in return for economic benefits (see Chapters Six and Seven). The standard-bearers of the Dialogue Process were Presidents Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast and Banda, who were joined by countries such as Ghana, Gabon, and Madagascar.¹⁴⁵ They justified Dialogue by both their expressed desire for peaceful coexistence in Africa and by economic factors. The Prime Minister of Ghana criticised the ANC's armed struggle as 'sending a few people to slaughter', and Houphouet-Boigny argued that, instead of violence, diplomats should peacefully invade South Africa.¹⁴⁶ Although only a minority of African countries made public statements about rapprochement with Pretoria, by mid-1971 it looked increasingly likely that South Africa's efforts at attracting African support were being successful.

The ANC was alarmed and incensed by this dramatic shift in African attitudes. However, there was very little it could do to alter continental opinion. The movement initially denounced all African states which embraced Dialogue, accusing them of damaging African unity, betraying the struggle when it was most in need of support, and succumbing to the forces of racism and fascism. *Sechaba* asserted that Dialogue was 'a slap in the face... for those men of vision who held such high hopes in the sixties... what a retreat from the ideal of African freedom... as espoused by the founders of the institutions of African Unity'.¹⁴⁷ The ANC even went so far as to question whether the pro-Dialogue governments had been persuaded by western

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 554.

¹⁴⁴ It must be noted that the vast majority of African governments did not publicise their links to South Africa during this period. Although a number of conservative countries such as Malawi did openly express their ties with Pretoria, most Southern African nations, including the closest allies of the ANC, kept their links with the apartheid regime secret.

¹⁴⁵ Ndlovu, 'Diplomacy', p. 619.

¹⁴⁶ 'Beware the Temptor', *Sechaba*, 5, 1 (January, 1971), pp. 2-3.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3; 'Dialogue is Betrayal', *Sechaba*, 5, 2 (February, 1971), p. 2; 'The battle for the middle ground', *Sechaba*, 5, 7 (July, 1971), pp. 9-13.

governments to reappraise their stance towards South Africa.¹⁴⁸ The Dialogue controversy rumbled on, but was not properly considered by African leaders until the 17th Session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, in June 1971. At this meeting, despite the inroads made by Vorster, backed by the vocal bloc of pro-Dialogue nations in the OAU, the majority of the Council accepted the ANC's incessant protests, rejecting the idea, and 'emphatically declar[ing] that there exists no basis for a meaningful dialogue' with South Africa.¹⁴⁹ An additional important outcome of the meeting was that the OAU decided that from this point forward it should consult more with the liberation movements. After the divisiveness of the Dialogue debate, the OAU felt the need to reaffirm its unconditional commitment to the struggle.¹⁵⁰ The OAU's announcement came as an enormous relief to the ANC, providing a modicum of security that had been previously lacking. This rejection of Dialogue blunted South Africa's attempts at breaking its isolation, but it did not prevent interstate relations between Pretoria and some Southern African states from continuing, albeit covertly. Following the failure of Dialogue, South Africa's outward looking policy was not deterred, and it soon heralded a new period known as *Détente*, after Vorster had offered Africa 'the way of peace' in 1974.¹⁵¹ It was a message well received by some African leaders, such as Kaunda who described it as 'the voice of reason'. However, *Détente's* constructive diplomatic potential was severely undermined by South Africa's invasion of Angola in 1975-1976.¹⁵² Yet, in reality, what really mattered to the ANC was the practical stance of Southern African states, such as Tanzania and Zambia since they were in a position to provide refuge and support to the ANC.

The Internal and External Situation of the ANC in the early 1970s

By the early 1970s the ANC had begun to diversify its international sources of financial and material aid. The Soviet Union remained by far its most important ally, but the ANC did successfully reach out to Scandinavian countries. In 1973, it

¹⁴⁸ 'Beware the Temptor', *Sechaba*, 5, 1, (January, 1971), p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ 'OAU declaration on Dialogue', *Sechaba*, 5, 10 (October, 1971), p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ D. Hirschmann, 'Southern Africa: *Détente*?', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 14 (1976), p. 107; J. Spence, 'Detente in Southern Africa: An Interim Judgment', *International Affairs*, 53 (1977), p. 1.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 4-7.

received its first direct aid from Sweden, marking the beginning of a long and close relationship, with this assistance officially earmarked for non-violent activities such as administration, education and living expenses.¹⁵³ The ANC was also granted observer status at the UN General Assembly and its Special Committee against Apartheid in 1974. This development provided the ANC with a platform from which to better project its goals and ideals internationally. This resulted in successfully denying South Africa the right to participate in meetings of the General Assembly in 1974.¹⁵⁴

Although the ANC was largely isolated from the internal political undercurrents in South Africa, there was some limited evidence of activity within the country. Its pamphlets and journals were smuggled in from abroad and distributed, sometimes spectacularly via explosions, in a bid to keep the ANC in the public consciousness.¹⁵⁵ In addition, from the late 1960s, the ANC's Radio Freedom had been broadcasting from Zambia (it later also transmitted from Angola, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Tanzania) into South Africa, and it appears the station influenced some future members of the ANC.¹⁵⁶ Also, the trials of several activists, including Winnie Mandela, demonstrated that there was still some internal political dissent against the apartheid regime.¹⁵⁷ Such activity, was however, conducted haphazardly and, with few security precautions, often led to the swift arrest and detention of activists. It would thus be incorrect to extrapolate from these isolated events that the ANC was particularly active inside South Africa in this period. The underground structures had not recovered after being dismantled in the mid-1960s, and the South African security forces continued to successfully subdue dissent.

After the Morogoro Conference, the ANC leadership had planned to fulfil its resolve to escalate the armed struggle in South Africa and reverse the internal situation. Having failed to infiltrate guerrillas by land, a new plan was developed in 1971 to land an invading force by sea. Based on the experience of the Cuban revolution, the plan, known as 'Operation J', was to sail from Somalia and land

¹⁵³ Houston, *Introduction*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁴ Pfister, 'Gateway', p. 63.

¹⁵⁵ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir*, p. 52; Shubin, *Moscow*, pp. 101-2; Suttner, *Underground*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁶ Suttner, *Underground*, p. 68. For more information on Radio Freedom in the struggle, see S. Davis, 'The African National Congress, its Radio, its Allies and Exile', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35 (2009), pp. 349-373.

¹⁵⁷ Suttner, *Underground*, pp. 65-66.

approximately forty-five cadres on the South African coast.¹⁵⁸ According to Joe Matthews, the ANC had been discussing such plans with Soviet officials for some time, but during a visit to Moscow in 1970, they were warned of being too hasty, especially because ‘without a proper and secure machinery which could receive and sustain guerrillas at home, any plan was doomed to failure’.¹⁵⁹ Whereas the ANC was confident because of the success of Castro’s revolution, the Soviets ‘considered the success of the Cuban revolution as a fluke... and should not be repeated’.¹⁶⁰ Despite the lack of effective internal structures and Soviet warnings, the ANC pressed ahead. The ANC procured a ship in the Mediterranean and put the selected guerrillas through intensive training, including a period in the Soviet Union.¹⁶¹ The plan was however scuppered, not by South African interception, but by the failure of equipment on two separate occasions, prompting Slovo to consider whether saboteurs were to blame.¹⁶² In the end ‘Operation J’ never went ahead, and instead the guerrillas were flown to Botswana and Swaziland to infiltrate into South Africa, but they were intercepted by South African security forces and put on trial.¹⁶³ Slovo later admitted that from 1971-1976, the ANC repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempted to infiltrate guerrillas. However, he argued that these failures had raised public awareness, as ‘here was a committed and dedicated group which was just going to continue knocking their heads against this wall until somehow there was a crack in it. I think this was a very important side-product of the efforts’.¹⁶⁴

However, the ANC was further weakened in the early 1970s by a split within its leadership; after years of simmering discontent, eight members led by Tennyson Makiwane accused the movement of having been hijacked by communists.¹⁶⁵ The so-called ‘Gang of Eight’ were branded as dissidents, intent on destabilising the movement, and were promptly expelled in 1975.¹⁶⁶ Unable to return home and with the leadership on the verge of fragmenting, Davis argues that the ANC at this time was anaemic and lacked the strength to move forward.¹⁶⁷ Karis and Gerhart agree

¹⁵⁸ ‘The Second Stage: Attempts to get back’, *Dawn Souvenir Issue* (December, 1986), p. 33.

¹⁵⁹ Joe Matthews interview cited in, Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir*, p. 51.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁶¹ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 104.

¹⁶² ‘The Second Stage: Attempts to get back’, *Dawn Souvenir Issue* (December, 1986), p. 34.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 34; ‘The Adventurer Episode’, *Dawn Souvenir Issue* (December, 1986), p. 44.

¹⁶⁴ ‘The Second Stage: Attempts to get back’, *Dawn Souvenir Issue* (December, 1986), p. 34.

¹⁶⁵ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p. 64.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Conspirators Expelled’, *Sechaba*, 10 (April, 1976), p. 40.

¹⁶⁷ Davis, ‘Radio’, p. 363.

that ‘despite minor advances, the liberation struggle seemed stagnant and on the defensive’.¹⁶⁸

The Decolonisation of Angola and Mozambique, 1974-1976

There is not sufficient space here to fully examine the events surrounding Portugal’s retreat from Southern Africa, but it was arguably the most significant event to befall the region during the exile period of the ANC. In 1974, a coup initiated by dissatisfied military officers, overthrew the fascist rule of Marcelo Caetano; the military officers who took power pledged immediately to withdraw Portugal from its African colonies.¹⁶⁹ The coup shaped the subsequent course of history in the region, directly bringing the Cold War to Southern African territory. The Portuguese withdrawal from Angola and Mozambique in 1975 resulted in two Marxist governments taking power which both directly supported African liberation. It also led to a bitter civil war in Angola between competing ideological parties, and prompted South Africa to take a more assertive stance in the region, including the destabilisation of neighbouring states and repeated incursions into Angola.¹⁷⁰ Without the events in Portugal, there is little doubt that the advancement of black emancipation from white minority rule would have been further delayed across Southern Africa. Portuguese withdrawal came as a major surprise, with neither the regional liberation movements nor the white minority regimes anticipating this eventuality. The outcome was that two of the ANC’s staunchest allies, members of the Khartoum Alliance, took power, providing practical support to its activities. The nature of this support will be analysed further in Chapter Three.

¹⁶⁸ Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir*, p. 55.

¹⁶⁹ T. Bruneau, ‘The Portuguese Coup: causes and probable consequences’, *The World Today*, 30 (1974), p. 277.

¹⁷⁰ For more information about the Angolan Civil War, the different protagonists, and its consequences see: G. Baines and P. Vale (eds.), *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on Southern Africa’s Late-Cold War Conflicts* (Pretoria, 2008); C. Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making peace in a rough neighbourhood* (New York, 1992); N. Davis, ‘The Angola Decision of 1975: A Personal Memoir’, *Foreign Affairs*, 57 (1978), pp. 109-124; P. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions* (London, 2002); M. Graham, ‘Covert Collusion? American and South African relations in the Angolan Civil War, 1974-1976’, *African Historical Review*, 43 (2011), pp. 28-47; F. Guimaraes, *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War* (Basingstoke, 2001); J. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Volume II - Exile politics and guerrilla warfare (1962-1976)* (Cambridge, 1978); W. Steenkamp, *South African Border Wars: 1966-1989* (Gibraltar, 1989); J. Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies* (London, 1979).

The Soweto Uprising, 1976

Despite these welcome developments, the ANC remained largely isolated from the masses in South Africa, and was thus out of touch with the undercurrents of a new political awakening in the country. Although the ANC claimed to speak for the masses, it was in reality a small, centralised exile movement, disconnected from the people it was supposed to represent. This is reinforced by Ivan Pillay, who asserted that in 1971-72 the ANC only had around 100 members living in exile in Lusaka.¹⁷¹ In the ANC's absence internal leadership had passed to the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), led by Steve Biko and supported by militant, disaffected youth.¹⁷² On 16 June 1976, an estimated 14,000 school students gathered to protest in Soweto about the introduction of the Afrikaans language as the medium of education.¹⁷³ The police fired upon the protestors, killing twenty-three people and sparking unprecedented nationwide unrest. Soweto became a national and international symbol of apartheid repression, and provided a powerful propaganda tool for the ANC. However, the ANC had no direct role in the uprising, despite subsequent claims by some activists.¹⁷⁴ Many of the students had little or no knowledge of the ANC or PAC, and certainly had no association with the established liberation movements.¹⁷⁵ Many Soweto era students fled South Africa, and subsequently joined the ANC in exile. However, Kasrils expressed his shock about these new exiles, who were 'in a sense, blank about the history of the struggle, the role of the ANC, of MK in the earlier period... what struck me was the extent to which that generation had really grown up with the absence of that kind of political culture'.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, Ellis and Sechaba argue that at this time the ANC had risked losing all contact with events in South Africa, and was in grave danger of becoming irrelevant in the face of the new wave of activism.¹⁷⁷ Barrell agrees that the Soweto

¹⁷¹ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS. Afr. S 2151 2/2 pp.683-921, 'Interview with Ivan Pillay, Conducted by Howard Barrell, 20 & 23 July 1989, Lusaka', p. 776-7.

¹⁷² Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, pp. 70-74.

¹⁷³ Barber, *South Africa*, p. 212.

¹⁷⁴ Anthony Marx describes claims of ANC involvement in Soweto as being greatly exaggerated and that 'those who see increased ANC involvement are based on a strong dose of retrospective wishful thinking or pro-ANC bias': Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁷⁵ Barber, *South Africa*, p. 215; Davis, *Rebels*, pp. 28-29; Marx, *Struggle*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁷⁶ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AFR. S. 2151 1/2 pp. 151-334, 'First Interview with Ronnie Kasrils, Conducted by Howard Barrell, Lusaka, August 19 1989', p. 250.

¹⁷⁷ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p. 66.

Uprising caught the ANC unprepared, with the leadership unable to offer political guidance to the protesters, which he believes damaged the movement's credibility.¹⁷⁸ An indication of the ANC's isolation from the South African milieu was later provided by the future UDF leader Murphy Morobe, who recalled: 'we thought we were the first people to fight the government. We did not know about the Defiance Campaign and the school boycotts in the 1950s'.¹⁷⁹ Looking back at Soweto in the mid-1980s, Tambo candidly admitted:

it was however true that in 1976-77 we had not recovered sufficiently to take full advantage of the situation that crystallised from the first events of June 16, 1976. Organisationally, in political and military terms, we were too weak to take advantage of the situation created by the uprising. We had very few active ANC units inside the country. We had no military presence to speak of. The communication links between ourselves outside the country and the masses of our people were still too slow and weak to meet the situation such as was posed by the Soweto Uprising.¹⁸⁰

There was a very real danger that the ANC would be superseded by forces outside of its control. This danger was intensified by a major wave of industrial action across South Africa in August and September 1976.¹⁸¹ In the aftermath, Tambo realised that the ANC needed effective propaganda to attract South Africans to its cause, and relate to their immediate concerns. Tambo also recognised the need for increased attention to political mobilisation inside the country, arguing that without this groundwork the people of South Africa might be reluctant to support MK guerrillas. He warned: 'when will they ever understand that you cannot wage a liberation war just with the man and his guns. Who is going to receive them, who is going to feed them, who is going to hide them, why will those people receive them, why will those people feed them?'.¹⁸²

Yet, ANC cadres stationed in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland worked hard to capitalise on the unfolding situation to the movement's advantage. Facing state repression in the aftermath of the uprising, as many as 4,000 people fled persecution

¹⁷⁸ Barrell, *MK*, p. 31.

¹⁷⁹ Cited in Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p. 83.

¹⁸⁰ O. Tambo, 'Political report by Oliver Tambo on the National Executive Committee to the National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress', 17 June 1985, Kabwe, Zambia, <http://www.anc.org.za/4464> (3/3/11).

¹⁸¹ 'ANC report to the OAU Liberation Committee', *Sechaba*, 11 (July, 1977), p. 3.

¹⁸² Interview with Pallo Jordan, cited in Ndlovu, 'Diplomacy', p. 638.

in South Africa by 1977.¹⁸³ Acting as the first point of contact for many new exiles, the ANC in these forward areas assimilated the vast majority into its ranks, promising either military training or education. In reality many joined the ANC because it was the only option available to them; the PAC was effectively moribund by this stage. Marx argued that ‘the flow of exiles to the ANC is a notable example of how material resources, rather than ideas or prestige have determined opposition allegiances’.¹⁸⁴ Regardless of this, the wave of new young recruits was undeniably extremely beneficial to the ANC. However, the exodus also severely challenged the movement. First, it strained the ANC’s exile structures, as it needed to accommodate and maintain the large number of new recruits. This forced the movement to turn to the Soviet Union and sympathetic Southern African states for assistance.¹⁸⁵ Secondly, the ANC’s failure to maintain its internal influence from exile meant that the majority of the new arrivals were not particularly aware of the ideology, or experiences of the movement, or were wedded to the beliefs of the BCM. This led to incidents of indiscipline and frustration as the new cadres sought rapid action against the apartheid regime.¹⁸⁶ The Soweto generation of exiles nevertheless revitalised the ANC, as a new set of young, dynamic and militant people swelled its ranks.

Conclusion

By 1976, the ANC had made some considerable gains during its first sixteen-years in exile from South Africa. Indeed, the movement’s very survival during the 1960s was in itself an impressive achievement. The ANC’s cadres, spread across Africa and Europe, had worked hard to establish a global network of support for its struggle, assisted by newly independent and (largely) sympathetic Southern African states, such as Tanzania and Zambia. This international support was typified by its close and fruitful association with the Soviet Union. It was this relationship with the Soviet Bloc that had played a crucial role in the ANC establishing an alliance of likeminded Southern African liberation movements at the Khartoum Conference,

¹⁸³ Lodge, *Black Politics*, p. 339.

¹⁸⁴ Marx, *Struggle*, p. 93.

¹⁸⁵ Shubin, *Moscow*, pp. 172-174.

¹⁸⁶ O. Tambo, ‘Political report by Oliver Tambo on the National Executive Committee to the National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress’, 17 June 1985, Kabwe, Zambia, <http://www.anc.org.za/4464> (3/3/11).

which was to pay dividends after 1976 (see Chapter Three). Furthermore, the movement began its armed struggle, and successfully organised the Morogoro Conference, which had in part, set about planning for the future. However, some of the ANC's gains during this period were reversed by a number of political changes. The movement's relations with some of its hosts, most notably Tanzania, deteriorated to such an extent that it was expelled from its bases in the country, forcing it to relocate its guerrilla fighters to the Soviet Union. It was to leave the ANC even further from the borders of South Africa. Moreover, in the early 1970s, South Africa's diplomatic efforts to break its isolation through 'Dialogue' with Africa had a negative material and ideological effect on the ANC's ability to wage its struggle. These incidents served to highlight that, despite establishing its support network and having a close affiliation to a number of African states, the ANC's position in Southern Africa was extremely tenuous.

Yet, it was two events in Southern Africa, that the ANC had no control over, which significantly aided the struggle. Firstly, the Portuguese decolonisation of Angola and Mozambique changed the geo-political fabric of the region. Two members of the Khartoum Alliance came to power, establishing Marxist inspired states, who promised to support the ANC through any means possible (see Chapter Three). Secondly, the Soweto Uprising demonstrated a renewed militant opposition to apartheid within South Africa. Soweto was of immense symbolic value to the ANC, as international attitudes, particularly those of civil society such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), aligned with the movement's goals.¹⁸⁷ Soweto acted as the trigger for this shift of international opinion, prompting greater awareness about apartheid, reinforced by domestic campaigns to pressure countries such as Britain to boycott or apply sanctions against South Africa (though the majority of western governments ignored this upsurge). It is ironic then that two events over which the ANC had no control or influence, Portuguese decolonisation and the Soweto uprising, were the most important events that enabled the exile movement to pursue its foreign policy goals far more effectively after 1976.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 234.

Chapter Three

From Exile to Liberation, 1976-1990

The formation of Marxist regimes in Angola and Mozambique was certainly a major step forward for African liberation in Southern Africa. The Khartoum Alliance of the late 1960s (see Chapter Two) began to truly pay dividends, providing the ANC with a safe haven in the region, training camps for Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), infiltration routes from Mozambique, via Swaziland, into South Africa, as well as increased material and rhetorical support. The development opened up a new chapter in the ANC's liberation struggle. However, the support of these Marxist governments was tempered by the fact it brought greater western attention to Southern Africa. Observing the region through the prism of the Cold War, western governments tended to view the ANC as a Soviet-sponsored, communist movement, and thus took steps to halt its progress.¹ Western actions thereby provided South Africa with a degree of international legitimacy and manoeuvrability, framing Pretoria's subsequent foreign policy. In the late 1970s, the NP government depicted the country as facing a 'Total Onslaught' from communism and, using the Cold War as justification, acted with impunity against the ANC and the Marxist regimes of Angola and Mozambique. Using the carrot of economic ties and peaceful coexistence, and the stick of destabilisation and violence, the South African regime attempted to intimidate its neighbours into submission through its Total Strategy. As will be seen below, as a result of its support to the ANC, Angola and Mozambique bore the brunt of South African destabilisation. Indeed, ANC leader and National Executive Committee (NEC) member Matthews Phosa later acknowledged that 'the people of Mozambique paid a supreme price for the struggle of South Africa'.²

¹ It was not until the elections of Margaret Thatcher in Britain (1979) and Ronald Reagan in the USA (1981) that western governments became more openly hostile towards the ANC. Previously the Jimmy Carter administration, and the British Labour government in the 1970s had been far more sympathetic to African liberation.

² Cited in N. Manghezi, *The Maputo Connection: ANC Life in the world of FRELIMO* (Auckland Park, 2009), p. vi.

The ANC's improved position in Southern Africa

In the second half of the 1970s, Zambian state attitudes towards the ANC were very mixed. In 1978, Kasrils wrote that 'Zambia is not unaffected by the existence of revolutionary governments in Mozambique and Angola and is smack in the front line struggle against Rhodesia and Pretoria, giving us and ZAPU full support. Geo-politically this country is placed at the strategic crossroads of the battle to liberate southern Africa, and Kaunda is four-square behind us'.³ According to Hugh Macmillan, however, 'Zambian spokespeople continued to pay lip-service to the need for armed struggle while blowing hot and cold on the ANC'.⁴ Yet, during the course of the 1970s, the ANC in Lusaka had managed to transform itself from a beleaguered, disparate community in exile into what was effectively a government-in-waiting. With the consent of Kenneth Kaunda, the population and administration of the ANC rose rapidly, with around 800 non-combatants stationed in Zambia by 1980, supported largely by Scandinavian aid. However, Kaunda's government was not always amenable. The first problem was that Kaunda had been seeking détente with South Africa in 1976, and a political settlement in Rhodesia, and thus hosting the ANC complicated these discussions.⁵ Secondly, and far more problematic for the ANC, was Zambian support for Angolan nationalist movement the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The ANC's close ties to UNITA's rival the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) were met with hostility, prompting Zambian officials to demand lists of all its members in the country in 1975-76, which the movement suspected would be passed on to South African officials.⁶ Although there were problems in the official relationship, the ANC was at least tolerated in Zambia, and its relationship with the government improved significantly during the 1980s.

The ANC was also fortunate that the Portuguese withdrawal from Southern Africa and the fallout from the Soweto Uprising contributed to a sea-change in the region, allowing it to improve its relations with a number of sympathetic

³ R. Kasrils, *Armed and Dangerous: From undercover struggle to freedom* (London, 1998), pp. 181-182.

⁴ H. Macmillan, 'The African National Congress of South Africa in Zambia: The Culture of Exile and the Changing Relationship with Home, 1964-1990', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35 (2009), p. 317.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 317-319.

⁶ V. Shubin, *The ANC: A View From Moscow* (Cape Town, 1999), pp. 165-66.

governments and establish a formal presence in several countries such as Swaziland and Botswana (Malawi was the only country in Southern Africa with which it had no direct relations).⁷ For example, the international outlook of Lesotho's Prime Minister Chief Jonathan altered dramatically; according to the *African Communist*, Mozambican independence led him to demand 'an alignment with the anti-apartheid forces, namely the ANC'.⁸ The Basotho National Party (BNP) thus established 'closer political relations with the ANC' and 'Prime Minister Jonathan developed an astonishing personal rapport with ANC President Oliver Tambo'.⁹ These developments allowed South African refugees to remain in Lesotho and, although officially the ANC could not establish bases there, numerous cadres became active in the country. Furthermore, previously poor relations with Tanzania were overcome by 1978, when Julius Nyerere invited an ANC delegation led by Tambo to the country. Nyerere pledged to assist the ANC wherever possible, including accommodating guerrillas and using his influence in international forums.¹⁰

After Angolan independence, the MPLA was swift to honour the Khartoum Alliance, granting the ANC internal military facilities and training opportunities as early as 1976; a year later an ANC office was opened in Luanda.¹¹ The MPLA government demonstrated its close affiliation to the ANC by the fact that despite the continued threat of UNITA and South African military action in the country, it provided practical assistance to the struggle.¹² Five camps were established in the north of the country for military training, which was carried out by visiting East German, Cuban and Soviet instructors, with further specialist instruction carried out in the territories of the Soviet Union, Cuba, the German Democratic Republic (GDR),

⁷ F. Meli, *A History of the ANC: South Africa Belongs to Us* (Harare, 1988), p. 189; Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 179; O. Tambo, 'Political report by Oliver Tambo on the National Executive Committee to the National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress', 17 June 1985, Kabwe, Zambia, <http://www.anc.org.za/4464> (3/3/11).

⁸ 'Lesotho's Struggle to Safeguard Independence', *African Communist*, 102 (1985), p. 60.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁰ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 208.

¹¹ S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC's Diplomacy and International Relations', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, 2006), p. 658.

¹² After temporarily withdrawing from Angola by March 1976 after its involvement in the Civil War, South Africa renewed its offensive against the MPLA. An example is when the ANC camp at Novo Catengue was bombed by the South African air force. For a firsthand account see: Document 111, 'Diary of Jack Simons at Novo Catengue camp, Angola, January-March 1979 (abridged)', in T. Karis and G. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge: Volume 5 – Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* (Bloomington, 1997), pp. 707-715.

North Korea and Bulgaria.¹³ By 1978, there were according to Vladimir Shubin 1,167 MK fighters abroad, mainly based in Angola.¹⁴ Likewise, in Mozambique, the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) was eager to support the ANC and its government allowed numerous cadres to settle in the country after 1975. Although Mozambique offered a transit route for guerrillas through Swaziland into South Africa, the majority of ANC members in the country were not guerrilla fighters. Mozambique instead offered a platform for the ANC to create structures geographically close to South Africa to facilitate the movement of cadres and information. For example, various senior figures from the ANC including Joe Slovo lived in Mozambique, and others such as Albie Sachs made important contributions at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo.¹⁵ The ANC was provided with housing by FRELIMO, and the movement also worked hard to establish a network and infrastructure in Mozambique.¹⁶ As with its previous experiences elsewhere in Southern Africa, Nadja Maghezi observed that despite Mozambique not being primarily a military location, MK matters nevertheless took precedence over political activities there.¹⁷ She believes however that this may have occurred because Mozambique was ‘originally only meant for the underground; but because of the full support of the Mozambican government and people, what would in other areas have had to be hidden or semi-hidden activities could be openly displayed’.¹⁸ However (like Zambia and Tanzania in the late 1960s), the Mozambican government had to act carefully; because of its proximity to South Africa, it was targeted militarily by the apartheid regime throughout the 1980s.

The opening up of these new fronts in the late 1970s allowed MK to infiltrate guerrillas back into South Africa to carry out high profile attacks, known as ‘armed propaganda’, in a bid to stimulate a People’s War.¹⁹ According to *Dawn*, acts carried out in the late 1970s included the scattering of pamphlets throughout the country, the targeting of symbols of apartheid, sabotage of infrastructure and the sending of

¹³ Ndlovu, ‘Diplomacy’, pp. 658-59.

¹⁴ Shubin, *Moscow*, pp. 196-98.

¹⁵ Email correspondence with Dr. Gary Littlejohn, 24 June 2011.

¹⁶ Manghezi, *The Maputo Connection*, pp. 78-79.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁹ S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC & the South African Communist Party in exile* (London, 1992), p. 100.

parcel bombs.²⁰ This upsurge in the armed struggle was illustrated by the recording of 82 such incidents in South Africa between 1977 and 1980.²¹ Although, these did not seriously challenge the military supremacy of South Africa, they marked a new phase in the struggle. These activities proved symbolic, demonstrating domestically and internationally that the ANC was actively pressurising the apartheid regime. The ANC designated 1979 as the ‘Year of the Spear’ to represent this new stage in the struggle.²²

Meanwhile, the ANC stepped up its international diplomatic offensive against apartheid. This was illustrated in July 1977 when the NEC met at Morogoro to discuss the future after Soweto.²³ The final NEC report argued that the ANC’s international prestige and authority had grown, aided by Tambo’s address to the UN in October 1976, the conclusions reached at the Lisbon Conference of 1977 (which had recognised the ANC as sole representative of the South African people), and the regular attendance of its leaders at Frontline States (FLS) meetings and other important international events.²⁴ The document reveals that the key international objective of the ANC was winning exclusive recognition as the sole representative of the people, declaring that it would be “‘fully geared” for this task’.²⁵ The ANC also started to make useful inroads at the UN after Tambo’s speech in 1976. A mandatory arms embargo against South Africa was endorsed by western powers in October 1977, and a year later the UN declared an international year against apartheid.²⁶ An additional boost was official meetings organised between Tambo and leaders of various socialist countries including Cuba, the GDR and Vietnam.²⁷ In 1978, an ANC delegation visited Vietnam, to study and learn from its experiences of

²⁰ ‘The Battle for South Africa is on!’, *Dawn*, 2 (December, 1979), pp. 15-20.

²¹ D. McKinley, *The ANC and the liberation struggle: A critical political biography* (London, 1997), p. 49.

²² ‘The Year of the Spear’, *Sechaba* (April, 1979), p. 1.

²³ ‘The National Executive Council Meeting’, *Sechaba*, 12 (January, 1978), p. 1.

²⁴ Document 108, ‘report on meeting of the ANC National Executive Committee, Morogoro, July 15-24, 1977 (abridged)’, in Karis and Gerhart, *Nadir*, pp. 696-701.

²⁵ ‘The National Executive Council Meeting’, *Sechaba*, 12 (January, 1978), p. 1.

²⁶ J. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century, a political history: in search of a nation state* (Oxford, 1999), p. 217; ‘Year Against Apartheid’, *Sechaba* (June, 1979), pp. 21-23; The 1978 UN declaration against apartheid,

<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/db942872b9eae454852560f6005a76fb/d7340f04b82a2cb085256a9d006ba47a> (3/3/11).

²⁷ ‘Honecker meets Tambo’, *Sechaba* (May, 1979), pp. 12-13; ‘Statement by Comrade Oliver Tambo’, *Sechaba* (December, 1979), pp. 12-19.

successful guerrilla struggle.²⁸ According to Anthea Jeffery, the ANC learnt many lessons from this visit, which allowed the movement to reorganise itself towards achieving a 'People's War'.²⁹ These meetings provided an added impetus to the ANC's international strategy, as the links helped to further isolate South Africa in multilateral forums, and provided the movement with valuable assistance in a bid to escalate its struggle.

From a position of relative weakness in 1970, by the end of the decade the ANC's fortunes had successfully been reversed. Its foreign policy goals of isolating South Africa, intensifying the guerrilla struggle and garnering international support were all progressing, allowing the ANC 'to make important gains in the international arena'.³⁰ However, despite these successes, there were still many problems, and it was arguably no closer to overthrowing the apartheid regime. In fact, as the new decade dawned, the South African state remained relatively unaffected by the international and military activities of the ANC, powerful enough to resist the mounting pressure against it.

The 1980s

The events of the late 1970s had left the ANC in a far stronger position than ever before to escalate its international activities, ushering in a new found sense of optimism within the movement that the struggle would soon succeed. Throughout the 1980s, the ANC sought to build upon this platform, through a variety of international measures. Most notable was the upsurge in 'armed propaganda', which spectacularly targeted symbols of apartheid state power such as the Koeberg Nuclear facility.³¹ These attacks generated publicity for the ANC at home and abroad, demonstrating its continued opposition to apartheid rule and providing inspiration to the movement and

²⁸ O. Tambo, 'Political report by Oliver Tambo on the National Executive Committee to the National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress', 17 June 1985, Kabwe, Zambia, <http://www.anc.org.za/4464> (3/3/11); AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS Afr. S. 2151 2/3 pp.922-1063, 'First interview with Joe Slovo, Conducted by Howard Barrell, August 12-16 1989, Lusaka', p. 982.

²⁹ A. Jeffery, *People's War: New Light on the Struggle for South Africa* (Johannesburg, 2009), pp. 41-46.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³¹ For more on armed propaganda see: G. Houston, and B. Magubane, 'The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s' in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, 2006), p. 413.

its supporters. In addition, the ANC, in collaboration with the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), vigorously lobbied governments and multilateral forums for increased international measures to isolate South Africa, as well as taking steps to mobilise western public opinion against apartheid. These activities created a groundswell of international public opinion against apartheid, which ultimately forced several multinational companies and more importantly, major banks, to reconsider their ties with South Africa; the decision in 1985 by Chase Manhattan Bank to reduce its operations with South Africa was a major setback to the country's precarious economy. Furthermore, in this period the ANC was able to convene its second consultative conference at Kabwe in Zambia in 1985, at which it made several important decisions and made a tentative attempt to articulate its foreign policy objectives. Other factors which gave the ANC cause for optimism in the 1980s included the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, which significantly increased South Africa's exposure to 'black Africa'; the start of regular contact with white South African businessmen and intellectuals that set the tone for future negotiations; and international recognition of its preconditions for negotiations with Pretoria, set out in the Harare Declaration. The outcome was that by the end of the 1980s, the ANC had firmly established itself as a highly respected government-in-waiting.

However, despite this optimism, the ANC also endured some catastrophic reverses in its fortunes during the 1980s. The programme of 'armed propaganda' prompted a fierce and brutal retaliation from South Africa, whose strikes targeted not only the ANC but also its hosts in Southern Africa.³² These acts of destabilisation severely impinged upon the movement's operational capacity in the region, forcing host governments to seriously reconsider their support of the ANC. Both Mozambique and Swaziland succumbed to Pretoria's acts of aggression, and the consequence was that each eventually signed peace accords with South Africa which

³² To provide some context to the events of the 1980s in Southern Africa, there had been a shift to the right in the western international community, especially in the USA and Britain, after the elections of Reagan and Thatcher respectively. These leaders perceived the world through the lens of the Cold War and 'realpolitik' concerns, with their primary goal being to limit the power and influence of the Soviet Union. Both leaders were hostile to the ANC and its links to the Soviet Union; the movement had been branded by Thatcher as a 'terrorist organisation'. Although these countries did not condone South African destabilisation in the region, they turned a blind eye to its activities in a bid to prevent Marxist regimes taking power in Southern Africa. Indeed, the US was involved, in consort with South Africa, in the Angolan conflict, and had been supporting UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, against the MPLA government.

stipulated the expulsion of the ANC from their territory. Other governments simply resorted to paying lip service to the anti-apartheid struggle with rhetorical expressions of support for the ANC; the outcome was that the movement's relations with its Southern African allies declined from the mid-1980s. The cumulative effect was that the ANC's ability to escalate its struggle had significantly diminished by the end of the decade. By 1989, the ANC was militarily in retreat, as successive Southern African states expelled the movement, forcing it to relocate yet further away from South Africa.

The decade also saw the formation and rise to prominence of internal opposition groups such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and United Democratic Front (UDF) on the one hand, and the Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) on the other. The ANC had an ideological affiliation with the first set of movements, particularly the UDF, which adopted many of the ANC's symbols, and provided it with a foothold in South Africa.³³ However, it would be wrong to assume the ANC had direct control over these movements or the course of events internally; the emergence of such organisations raised the very real danger that it could be usurped by events outside of its influence or control.³⁴ According to Gerhart and Glaser, the ANC in the 1980s was a reactive force, 'deploring Pretoria's latest manoeuvres, condemning Western complicity in apartheid's evils, [and] applauding from the sidelines'.³⁵ The 1980s was thus defined by both significant gains and setbacks for the ANC, and although it was unbanned in February 1990, as this section will explore, that outcome was by no means inevitable.

The ANC escalates its 'armed propaganda'

In June 1980, the ANC signalled its new military intentions by spectacularly striking against the SASOL coal to oil facility at Sasolburg. The strike was its first major attack within South Africa since the onset of the armed struggle, and the

³³ G. Gerhart and C. Glaser, *From Protest to Challenge. Volume 6: Challenge and Victory, 1980-1990* (Bloomington, 2010), pp. 54-55, 67, 129-30; Jeffery, *People's War*, pp. 64-65.

³⁴ This is questioned by, Anthea Jeffery who argues that the formation of the UDF 'was carefully planned and then pushed and prodded into existence' by the ANC. Furthermore, 'the ANC welcomed the UDF's formation and claimed this as its most important achievement since 1961'. See: Jeffery, *People's War*, p. 61.

³⁵ Gerhart and Glaser, *Challenge*, p. 120.

destroyed facility was depicted afterwards by *Sechaba* as ‘a sea of flame, the fires of freedom’.³⁶ Joseph Hanlon rightly argued that the SASOL raid ‘marked the return to battle’ for the ANC.³⁷ It was a highly symbolic strike against the apartheid state, whose reliance on producing oil from coal was crucial to the economy; before the 1979 Iranian Revolution, 90% of South Africa’s oil had come from Iran, but Ayatollah Khomeini halted supplies.³⁸ The destruction of the SASOL facility was also an immense boost to the ANC’s propaganda efforts inside and outside of South Africa, demonstrating that apartheid was no longer infallible. The attack’s success marked the beginning of a new stage in ANC’s armed struggle. There was an increase in attacks within South Africa in the early 1980s, against economic infrastructure and police stations. Most noteworthy were: a rocket attack in August 1981 against Voortrekkerhoogte, the South African Defence Force (SADF) headquarters outside Pretoria; an audacious limpet mine strike against the Koeberg Nuclear facility, in December 1982; and a car bomb explosion in Pretoria outside the South African Air Force (SAAF) headquarters in May 1983, which killed seventeen and injured over 200.³⁹ The last of these was the first time the ANC had killed civilians during its struggle, marking a move away from simply targeting symbols and the infrastructure of the apartheid state. Although the death of civilians was against official ANC policy, it caused some international consternation (despite South Africa’s repeated and indiscriminate killing of civilians across Southern Africa), forcing Tambo to reiterate that the movement did all it could to prevent this eventuality from occurring.⁴⁰ The ANC’s escalation of the armed struggle had at last brought the guerrilla war home to South Africa, with 467 incidents recorded in the period 1980 – 1986.⁴¹ Tom Lodge argued that the movement’s guerrilla activities ‘succeeded in re-establishing the ANC as the predominant force in black politics’.⁴²

³⁶ ‘The Fires of Freedom’, *Sechaba* (August, 1980), p. 1.

³⁷ J. Hanlon, *Beggar your neighbours : apartheid power in Southern Africa* (London, 1986), p. 22.

³⁸ The Report of the Study Commission on U.S. policy Toward Southern Africa, *South Africa: Time Running Out* (Berkeley, 1981), p. 140.

³⁹ ‘Ball of Fire’, *Sechaba* (October, 1981), p. 12; ‘Koeberg – Power House for War’, *Sechaba* (February, 1983), p. 20; *The Guardian*, 22 and 23 May, 1983.

⁴⁰ *The Guardian*, 6 August 1983.

⁴¹ T. Lodge, ‘State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976-86’, in P. Frankel, N. Pines, and M. Swilling (eds.), *State, Resistance and Change in South Africa* (London, 1988), p. 230.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 230.

The sabotage activities were not only designed to dent the strength of the apartheid state, but also to publicise the ANC's capacity to turn its rhetoric of an armed seizure of power into reality. Senior NEC member Pallo Jordan argued that 'armed propaganda' had two purposes:

First of all, to register an armed presence and the capacity of the movement to respond to the regimes violence. And then also, apart from that, it was conceived of as being vital in terms of hitting strategic enemy installations, not only for demonstrative of that but in fact to deliver crippling blows against the enemy. But over and above that, there was the need to build up the confidence of the army we had trained.⁴³

Sue Rabkin, a member of the ANC underground, supports Jordan's view that 'armed propaganda' was 'seen as a way of agitating, of doing political work, and [showing] we were there. And that, just on its own, was absolutely crucial because that's what our people needed to hear. It was a very correct decision. It said we are around and capable of blowing up Sasol and Koeberg and wherever'. Furthermore Rabkin also thought that 'armed propaganda' was a means of coalescing regional support and persuading leaders of the ANC's seriousness: 'the OAU specifically... were impressed. I mean they had been getting pissed off with the ANC for years'.⁴⁴ Subsequently, the upturn in incidents of 'armed propaganda' allowed the ANC to portray itself as a 'credible' fighting force to its supporters. The upsurge in action also created a mystique around MK, with guerrillas killed in action venerated as heroes of the struggle.⁴⁵

However, as the decade wore on, incidents of 'armed propaganda' became less frequent. Infiltration into South Africa became ever more difficult for MK guerrillas, in part because of the shifting nature of Southern African support towards the ANC. The decrease in the ANC's armed activity coincided with South Africa's increasing political and military pressure directed against its neighbours. Although the 1980s did witness an upsurge in internal township unrest, called for by the ANC

⁴³ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS Afr. S. 2151 1/2 pp. 151-334, 'Interview with Pallo Jordan, conducted by Howard Barrell, Lusaka, 4 July 1989', p. 233.

⁴⁴ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS. Afr. S 2151 2/2 pp.683-921, 'First Interview with Sue Rabkin, Conducted by Howard Barrell, July, 7, 9 & 16 August 1989, Lusaka', pp. 809-10.

⁴⁵ For example, the ANC named its school in Morogoro, Tanzania, after the executed MK combatant Solomon Mahlangu.

from exile via Radio Freedom and its propaganda pamphlets, the violence was not under the direct control of the movement. The apartheid regime's regional aggression and internal oppression had successfully prevented the ANC from establishing a permanent foothold in the country. Shubin illustrates the ANC's problems, arguing that following attacks, its guerrillas 'had to vanish into thin air... [which] was not easy to do because there were no ANC bases inside the country'.⁴⁶ Estimates of guerrilla survival rates differ, but they all demonstrate the high price paid by MK operatives carrying out attacks in South Africa. According to Ivan Pillay, the average rate of survival for a guerrilla fighter was around five months; a casualty rate which he conceded was unacceptably high.⁴⁷ Garth Strachan depicted an even more depressing picture, asserting that from 1986 onwards, MK cadres operating out of Zimbabwe suffered nearly a '100 per cent casualty rate [defined as killed or arrested within twenty-four hours]'.⁴⁸ Mac Maharaj was equally critical of the ANC's inability to escalate the struggle, depicting attempted infiltrations from Mozambique and Zimbabwe, between 1981 and 1983 as 'military misadventure'.⁴⁹ These difficulties can be partly attributed to the ANC's inability to fully establish the internal political dimension of the struggle beyond its 'armed propaganda'. Despite the setbacks, the attacks of the early 1980s had nevertheless demonstrated the ANC's ability to strike at the heart of the apartheid state, which had an enormously positive effect on the psyche of the movement and its international supporters.

South Africa's Destabilisation of Southern Africa

In the late 1970s, the South African government under President P.W. Botha believed that the combined threat of communism and Black Nationalism was growing on its borders, which was depicted as a 'Total Onslaught'. The mounting

⁴⁶ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 212.

⁴⁷ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS. Afr. S 2151 2/2 pp.683-921, 'Interview with Ivan Pillay, Conducted by Howard Barrell, 20 & 23 July 1989, Lusaka', p. 773.

⁴⁸ See: Historical Papers, University of Witwatersrand. Karis-Gerhart Collection, Folder 36, Part I. Howard Barrell interview with Garth Strachan, 28 December 1990, pp. 1, 199-200, 1,204, cited in T. Simpson, 'Toyoi-Toyi-ing to Freedom: The Endgame in the ANC's Armed Struggle, 1989-1990', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35 (2009), p. 509.

⁴⁹ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS Afr. S. 2151 1/3 pp.335-535, 'Third Interview with Mac Maharaj, Conducted by Howard Barrell, Johannesburg, November 30 1990', pp. 499-501.

fear amongst South African officials about the scale of this 'Total Onslaught' was reinforced by the election victory of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe in 1980. In order to prevent this onslaught of forces, the government devised a comprehensive 'Total Strategy' which utilised all possible political, economic and military resources of the state to defend the nation.⁵⁰ The implementation of the 'Total Strategy' as a key tenet of the apartheid regime's foreign policy initiated an intensely destructive period in Southern African history. Pretoria had initially envisaged the 'Total Strategy' as being a mechanism to persuade Southern African states to form a 'constellation of states' - an economic and political alliance of Southern African countries - encompassing South Africa, the 'independent' Bantustans (the pseudo-self governing homelands within South Africa, which were set aside for separate African development),⁵¹ and countries such as Botswana and Swaziland.⁵² However, Pretoria's plan was scuppered first by ZANU's election victory in 1980, and then by the subsequent decision of the six so-called Frontline States of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which were joined by Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi, in forming the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in April 1980.⁵³ The purpose of SADCC was to break the region's economic dependence on South Africa, and provide a platform for greater cooperation and development.⁵⁴ The formation of SADCC and the rejection of South Africa's overtures was regarded as an affront by Pretoria, doing little to diminish the perception of an impending Marxist onslaught.

In this context, the ANC's campaign of 'armed propaganda' in the early 1980s, seen as a central element of the 'Total Onslaught', sparked a vicious cycle of violent retaliation from South Africa against the movement and its hosts in Southern Africa. Under the premise of the 'Total Strategy' state sovereignty in the region was

⁵⁰ Hanlon, *Beggar*, p. 7.

⁵¹ The Bantustans or Homelands were ten areas within South Africa, set aside for the separate development of Africans. The four territories granted 'independence', were the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei (sometimes referred to as the TBVC states).

⁵² AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 932, ANC combatants and prisoner of war status Armed Resistance in South Africa by E. S. Reddy, Director, UN Centre against Apartheid, 6 Feb 1980, p. 4; R. Davies and D. O'Meara, 'Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An analysis of South African regional policy since 1978', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11 (1985), pp. 189-191; Hanlon, *Beggar*, pp. 14-15.

⁵³ S. Amin, D. Chitala, and I. Mandaza (eds.), *SADCC: Prospects for Disengagement and Development in Southern Africa* (London, 1987), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

ignored by South Africa, which targeted with impunity any country that hosted the ANC. According to a 1989 report Pretoria had, by 1981, already violated the sovereignty of seven independent countries.⁵⁵ Although the ANC's presence acted as the pretext for military aggression, destabilisation also enabled South Africa to manipulate and exploit the region's economic dependence on it, and thwart the aims and aspirations of SADCC.⁵⁶ The first major strike directed against the ANC occurred in January 1981, when South African commandos targeted its residencies in Matola, near Maputo, killing twelve people.⁵⁷ The ANC regarded this as the moment in which South Africa 'declared war on Africa'.⁵⁸ South Africa followed up this raid by invading Lesotho in January 1983, when over 100 commandos and helicopter gunships attacked twelve ANC locations in and around the capital Maseru, killing forty-two people.⁵⁹ Except for its ongoing military activities in Angola, the massacre in Lesotho was the biggest incursion by the SADF into another Southern African country.⁶⁰ Further raids against the Frontline States and the ANC were conducted throughout the 1980s in a bid to thwart the 'onslaught', such as an SADF commando raid into Botswana in 1985.⁶¹

However, it was not just overt military incursions by South Africa which had an effect on the ANC and Southern Africa in the 1980s. Pretoria also embarked on a series of kidnappings and assassinations across the region, such as the murders of Joe Gqabi in Harare in 1981 and Ruth First in Maputo in 1982.⁶² A major concern for the ANC was the fact that South African security officials were operating virtually unimpeded in Southern Africa.⁶³ These operations were sometimes carried out in cooperation with regional governments, which were increasingly succumbing to

⁵⁵ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 1027 Memorandum and Leaflets, South Africa's Record of International Terrorism, Tony Gifford, (SWAM/AAM Publication, London, 1981), p. 3.

⁵⁶ J. Barber and J. Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: the search for status and security, 1945-1998* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 268; Hanlon, *Beggar*, p. 22.

⁵⁷ 'S.A. declares war on Africa', *African Communist*, 85 (second quarter, 1981), pp. 5-6; 'Apartheid murder in Matola', *Sechaba* (March, 1981), p. 1.

⁵⁸ 'S.A. declares war on Africa', *African Communist*, 85 (second quarter, 1981), pp. 5-6.

⁵⁹ 'Racist South Africa invades Lesotho', *Sechaba* (January, 1983), pp. 4-7; 'The force of people power' and 'Victims of the Maseru Massacre', *Sechaba* (February, 1983), pp. 1-5.

⁶⁰ Hanlon, *Beggar*, p. 113.

⁶¹ Barber and Barratt, *Foreign Policy*, p. 315; *The Guardian*, 15 June 1985.

⁶² Gerhart and Glaser, *Challenge*, p. 131; 'Obituary: Comrade Ruth First', *Sechaba* (October, 1982), pp. 24-28.

⁶³ P. Stiff, *Warfare by Other Means: South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s* (Alberton, 2001), p. 117-118.

apartheid pressure; many employed their security forces against the ANC.⁶⁴ For example, both Botswana and Swaziland by the early 1980s had begun to monitor, arrest and expel ANC activists from their territory, which drastically impeded the movement's operational capacity.⁶⁵ After the Nkomati Accords were signed in 1984 (see below), Mozambique expelled the ANC, which had a significantly negative impact on its struggle. South Africa contributed further to regional instability by funding and training two military movements against governments sheltering the ANC: the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and UNITA. This is not the place to explore the impact of RENAMO and UNITA, but they significantly destabilised Angola and Mozambique, resulting in prolonged civil wars, immense infrastructural damage, and economic decline.⁶⁶ A further example of Pretoria's impact on the internal affairs of Southern African countries was in Lesotho. The Prime Minister of Lesotho, Chief Jonathan, had become increasingly vocal in his support for the ANC. His outspokenness increasingly exasperated South Africa, prompting Pretoria to close the border in 1986. South Africa implemented a total economic blockade of the tiny mountain kingdom, which led to a military coup; as a consequence, the military Junta which deposed Jonathan also expelled the ANC from Lesotho.⁶⁷

These counter-offensives by South Africa severely limited the ANC's room for manoeuvre in Southern Africa. Maharaj conceded that 'the enemy devised a strategy where at that moment in our thinking, they forced us off track; they removed this central focus on our thinking which was primarily offensive; they forced us into a mode of retreat and discontinuity of structures'.⁶⁸ Ellis and Sechaba argued that the effective counter-revolutionary strategy devised by South Africa 'added up to a

⁶⁴ There was however a distinction in Southern Africa between the states which were likely to cooperate with South Africa, against the ANC (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland), and those that were not (Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe).

⁶⁵ R. Jaster, 'Evolution of a Regional Conflict in 'war and diplomacy'', in R. Jaster (ed.), *Changing fortunes: war, diplomacy, and economics in Southern Africa* (New York, 1992), p. 30; Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 231.

⁶⁶ For more information on RENAMO and UNITA see: F. Bridgland, *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa* (Edinburgh, 1986); V. Brittain, *The Death of Dignity: Angola's Civil War* (London, 1998); J. Cabrita, *Mozambique: The tortuous road to democracy* (Basingstoke, 2000); W. Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: an inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique* (London, 1994).

⁶⁷ Barber and Barratt, *Foreign Policy*, p. 318; Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, pp. 165-168.

⁶⁸ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS Afr. S. 2151 1/3 pp.335-535, 'Third Interview with Mac Maharaj, Conducted by Howard Barrell, Johannesburg, November 30 1990', p. 456.

comprehensive defeat for Umkhonto we Sizwe and the strategy adopted by the ANC'.⁶⁹

The ANC's precarious position in Southern Africa

Although rhetorically Southern African leaders were firmly behind the ANC and united in their vocal opposition to apartheid, in practice their support for the movement was far more tenuous. As sustained destabilisation took its toll, African leaders had to make tough choices with regard to the ANC's status in their countries; those closest in proximity to South Africa having least choice in the matter. The result was a haphazard pattern of support across Southern Africa for the ANC; in 1983, Robert Cabelly, a former US State Department for African Affairs employee, reported 'that behind the united front of the frontline states, they were all very iffy about the ANC'.⁷⁰

Although a long term ally of the ANC, the relationship between the movement and Zambia was rather complex. Officially, the ANC and Zambia were extremely close, demonstrated by the fact that the movement had its main base of operations in Lusaka. The ANC had between 2,000 and 4,000 members in the country during the 1980s, which illustrates that Zambian officials were prepared to accept a large, overt presence.⁷¹ Kaunda's strict proviso that no military personnel were allowed to operate in the country was generally heeded by the ANC, although MK guerrillas were permitted to pass through Zambia on the way South. The ANC's position was strengthened further by the fact that Kaunda regularly lobbied internationally against apartheid in various multilateral forums. Yet, despite the very public anti-apartheid stance of Zambia, Kaunda maintained covert links with South Africa, with which he had kept unofficial relations with since the late 1960s.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p. 174.

⁷⁰ M. Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: The dream deferred* (Johannesburg, 2007), p. 488.

⁷¹ Macmillan, 'Culture', p. 318.

⁷² For example see: 'Minutes of a meeting between President Kenneth Kaunda and South African Representatives, Lusaka, 25 June 1984',

http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=min19840625.035.017.d1.1.8a; 'Meetings between Dr Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, and Ministers R F Botha, General M A de M Malan and the Administrator General Dr W A van Niekerk, April 1984',

http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=min19840425.035.017.d1.1.8; M. Larmer, '“We have to think for other people”: Zambia and South Africa', *Rethinking African Politics: A History of opposition in Post-Colonial Zambia* (forthcoming, 2011).

Kaunda had met with NP officials on several occasions since independence and secretly corresponded with Pretoria, reflecting the fact that it was imperative for Zambia to maintain trade links with the apartheid state.⁷³ Kaunda was nevertheless regarded as a dependable ally of the ANC, ensuring that Lusaka became a vital and secure base of operations for the movement. According to Macmillan, as the 1980s wore on, Zambia had become a home from home for many within the ANC, reinforced by the increasing numbers of cadres who relocated to Lusaka after their removal from other Frontline States.⁷⁴

There was also a close affinity between the ANC and the governments of Angola and Mozambique (due in part to the Khartoum Alliance), whose relationships with the movement had developed after both had gained their independence in 1975. In Angola, bases and offices had been established soon after independence, which provided the ANC an opportunity to receive military training from foreign instructors, and shelter its fighters in the relative security of the north of the country. Not much is known about official relations, as the current MPLA government is still reticent about opening up its archives, but they were clearly very good, as the following two examples will indicate. The close ANC-Angolan relations were demonstrated by joint operations in the civil war, with MK guerrillas tasked to fight alongside the Angolan army in its long running conflict with UNITA.⁷⁵ The ANC leadership would have either offered its services to its host, or have been asked by the MPLA to contribute its fighters to the civil war effort, but however the decision came about, the ANC committed itself militarily to the MPLA's struggle. The decision to fight alongside the Angolan army was not popular amongst MK's rank and file, who had become increasingly frustrated by the continuous training, poor conditions in the camps, the abuse of leadership, as well as the lack of military action against South Africa.⁷⁶ The ANC's decision to cooperate militarily with the MPLA triggered a

⁷³ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 1044 – Background, 'Roger Martin, Southern Africa: The price of apartheid. A Political risk analysis, The Economist Intelligence Unit, Special Report No. 1130, July 1988', p. 45-46; Larmer, *Rethinking*.

⁷⁴ Macmillan, 'Culture', p. 325.

⁷⁵ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p. 129-131; Lodge, 'State of exile', p. 235; Amnesty International, 'South Africa: Torture, ill-treatment and executions in African National Congress camps' (December 1992), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR53/027/1992/en/fba1e35c-ed9a-11dd-9ad7-350fb2522bdb/af530271992en.html> (2/4/11).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, (December 1992), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR53/027/1992/en/fba1e35c-ed9a-11dd-9ad7-350fb2522bdb/af530271992en.html> (2/4/11).

mutiny in 1984 amongst MK guerrillas.⁷⁷ The second example, which stemmed from the MK mutiny is that, not for the first time, an allied government had used its soldiers to help quell a popular uprising within the ANC.⁷⁸ The MPLA clearly collaborated with the ANC leadership and it was later reported that it had ‘played a very dishonest role [as]... they began to throttle this popular unrest... abort[ing] a drive to veer the ANC towards democracy’.⁷⁹ Despite the mutiny, the close alliance with the MPLA stood firm, demonstrated by the fact that MK cadres were still fighting in the war against UNITA in 1987.⁸⁰ These examples of mutual assistance would not have occurred without a significant degree of cooperation between the MPLA dominated Angolan state and the ANC.

From 1975, Mozambique had developed into a highly important sanctuary and staging post for the ANC. Permitted to operate with relative freedom in the country, and benefiting from its geographical proximity to South Africa, the ANC used Mozambique as a platform from which to escalate its struggle. Mozambique became a vital infiltration route for its guerrillas, via Swaziland, into South Africa, and it is no coincidence that the ANC’s freedom to operate there during the early 1980s, corresponded with its most high-profile acts of ‘armed propaganda’. The FRELIMO government was unable to offer much military or financial support to the ANC, but it turned a blind eye to some of the movement’s activities which was immensely beneficial.⁸¹ According to Ann Grant, FRELIMO ‘provided [the ANC] with a safe haven, accommodation?they saw that very much as part of their own struggle’.⁸² The ideological affiliation was close, with numerous expressions of their fraternal relationship publicised, and there was regular contact between the two leaders, for example, demonstrated by Mozambican President Samora Machel’s

⁷⁷ B. Ketelo, A. Maxongo, Z. Tshona, R. Masango and L. Mbengo, ‘A miscarriage of democracy: The ANC Security Department in the 1984 Mutiny in Umkhonto weSizwe’, in P. Trehela (ed.), *Inside Quatro: Uncovering the exile history of the ANC and SWAPO* (Auckland Park, 2009), p. 8.

⁷⁸ Amnesty International, ‘South Africa: Torture, ill-treatment and executions in African National Congress camps’ (December 1992), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR53/027/1992/en/fba1e35c-ed9a-11dd-9ad7-350fb2522bdb/afr530271992en.html> (2/4/11).

⁷⁹ Ketelo, Maxongo, Tshona, Masango and Mbengo, ‘Miscarriage’, pp. 22-23.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸¹ Email correspondence with Dr. Gary Littlejohn, 24 June 2011.

⁸² Telephone interview with Ann Grant former Consul and Head of Chancery at the British Embassy in Maputo, Mozambique from 1981-84 and British High Commissioner to South Africa, 2000-2005, 7 December 2009.

attendance of an ANC mass rally in Maputo alongside Tambo, in February 1981.⁸³ Rabkin recalled that ‘we [the ANC] loved FRELIMO and FRELIMO loved us’.⁸⁴ However, as the 1980s wore on, Mozambique increasingly suffered at the hands of South Africa. Deon Geldenhuys asserted:

in the case of Mozambique, I think the evidence is clear cut, that South Africa’s actions at subverting the regime, of Samora Machel, were of such magnitude, that the costs of maintaining the relationship that Mozambique had with the ANC was simply becoming unbearable, simply in terms of the punishment South Africa was meeting out.⁸⁵

The outcome of this ‘punishment’ was that in 1984, Mozambique and South Africa signed the Nkomati Accords, which will be discussed more fully in the next section. Although the ANC was aware of the negotiations, this was a serious setback to the ANC, as the Accords stipulated that the movement had to be expelled; its cadres were forced out of the country by the Mozambican military, and its structures were dismantled.⁸⁶ Although the cause of this expulsion was primarily South Africa’s devastating destabilisation, Rabkin believed that the ANC’s own actions had contributed: ‘there was almost, I’d say, an abuse of borders... there was no consideration at that stage... that this was other people’s country... we blatantly disregarded [government requests]... We were very arrogant. And we paid the price’.⁸⁷

Further problems for the ANC developed in its relationship with newly independent Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe’s relationship with the ANC was particularly ambivalent, in part due to the movement’s historic alliance with the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU). Very few within the ANC, with the exception of Thabo Mbeki, had approved of Mugabe’s election victory in 1980, which set the tone

⁸³ For example see: ‘We are ready to accept the challenge’, *Sechaba* (April, 1981), pp. 21-23; Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICS), PP.SA.ANC.56, ‘Hands off Mozambique’; ICS, PP.SA.ANC.259, ‘Statement by comrade Oliver Tambo at a mass rally, Bairro de Liberdade, Maputo, February 14 1982’.

⁸⁴ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS. Afr. S 2151 2/2 pp.683-921, ‘First Interview with Sue Rabkin, Conducted by Howard Barrell, July, 7, 9 & 16 August 1989, Lusaka’, p. 857-58.

⁸⁵ Interview with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Johannesburg, 29 March 2010.

⁸⁶ J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire* (London, 1990), p. 257; Email correspondence with Dr. Gary Littlejohn, 24 June 2011; Manghezi, *The Maputo Connection*, pp. 3-5; Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 256-7; *The Guardian*, 6 April 1984.

⁸⁷ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS. Afr. S 2151 2/2 pp.683-921, ‘First Interview with Sue Rabkin, Conducted by Howard Barrell, July, 7, 9 & 16 August 1989, Lusaka’, p. 857.

for its future relations with independent Zimbabwe.⁸⁸ The legacy of the Khartoum Alliance meant that Mugabe did not trust the ANC believing that, if there was a ZAPU uprising, the two would unite against his rule.⁸⁹ Mugabe's fears were partially justified when ZANU and ZAPU came into direct conflict in 1982; arms caches were found at ZAPU properties, along with a number of MK commanders.⁹⁰ As a result, relations all but collapsed between the ANC and ZANU. Mugabe ordered that the ANC's fledgling structures in Zimbabwe should begin to be dismantled, and the majority of its cadres removed.⁹¹ On several occasions the Zimbabwean state media openly criticised the ANC and its struggle, which did little to help relations.⁹² Yet rhetorically, ZANU remained a vocal opponent of the apartheid state; Mugabe still permitted the ANC to have an office in Harare, which was later targeted by a South African military raid in 1986.⁹³ Although it tolerated a limited ANC presence, Mark Ashurst asserts that ZANU made life difficult for the movement, because of the lingering suspicions about where the ANC's loyalties lay.⁹⁴ Geldenhuys similarly argued that, 'Zimbabwe had a fairly good understanding of where the proverbial line in the sand had been drawn... it had a fair amount of freedom of expression so to speak, lambasting South Africa... [but] stopped short of overtly supporting the ANC's military wing'.⁹⁵ The prevention of any MK activity in Zimbabwe, a potentially crucial infiltration point into South Africa due to its lengthy shared border, was enforced by the Zimbabwean army and this non-antagonistic position towards South Africa ensured that Zimbabwe did not experience the same levels of destabilisation compared to the rest of Southern Africa.⁹⁶

Swaziland had also served as a useful forward area for the ANC during the late 1970s and early 1980s, offering a safe haven for fleeing exiles, as well as providing an infiltration route into South Africa. The ANC's struggle was assisted by

⁸⁸ Gevisser, *Dream Deferred*, pp. 431-433.

⁸⁹ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p. 104.

⁹⁰ Gevisser, *Dream Deferred*, p. 437.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

⁹² *The Guardian*, 6 April 1984.

⁹³ S. Davis, *Apartheid's Rebels: Inside South Africa's hidden war* (New Haven, 1987), p. 68; UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Zimbabwe Mission, Zimbabwe Additions, Box 4, Folder 34, Correspondence and statements on raid of ANC offices Harare, 1986.

⁹⁴ Interview with Mark Ashurst, Director of the Africa Research Institute, London, 3 March 2010.

⁹⁵ Interview with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Johannesburg, 29 March 2010.

⁹⁶ Davis, *Rebels*, p. 127; AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 1044 – Background, 'Roger Martin, Southern Africa: The price of apartheid. A Political risk analysis, The Economist Intelligence Unit, Special Report No. 1130, July 1988', pp. 42-43.

its historic friendship with the Swazi royal family, which had been represented at the founding of the movement in 1912.⁹⁷ Kasrils observed that ‘the ANC’s Moses Mabhida often visited the King [Sobuza II] from Lusaka and Maputo to clarify our position and to influence Swazi foreign policy. Mabhida... was always well received’.⁹⁸ As elucidated previously, Swaziland had become an increasingly important military location for the ANC as its guerrillas entered the country from the north, allowing it to escalate its ‘armed propaganda’; Swaziland was labelled by South African Defence Minister Magnus Malan as part of a ‘second front’ against the country.⁹⁹ However, Swaziland’s precarious economic position worsened as South Africa increased the pressure against the tiny kingdom. In 1982, in a precursor to the Nkomati Accords, Swaziland signed a secret deal with South Africa, which formalised a political and security arrangement.¹⁰⁰ As an incentive to the Swazis, South Africa had offered a land exchange, promising to return to Swaziland the former parts of the Swazi kingdom, Kwanhgwane and Ingwauuma.¹⁰¹ This comprehensive deal stipulated that the ANC would not be permitted to use Swazi territory; South African security forces were however able to operate virtually unhindered in the country, for example kidnapping ANC activist Ebrahim Ebrahim in 1986.¹⁰² From 1982 onwards, the Swazi police (according to Kasrils), ‘zealously’ enforced the deal, rounding up and expelling ANC cadres, including key members such as Bafana Duma and Stanley Mabizela.¹⁰³ E.S Reddy believes that the ANC was infuriated by the deal but it had very few foreign policy options with which to achieve a change in Swazi policy.¹⁰⁴ The lack of political influence over Swaziland is illustrated by a number of letters, memorandums and statements sent by the ANC to the government, but its pleas were ignored.¹⁰⁵ One such memorandum, provides an

⁹⁷ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Mission 1923-1996, Box 149, Folder 44, Statements Kwanhgwane, Ingwauuma 1982.

⁹⁸ Kasrils, *Armed*, p. 201.

⁹⁹ *The Economist*, 21 January 1982, p. 6-7.

¹⁰⁰ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Mission 1923-1996, Box 136, Folder 303, Swaziland-SA land deal 1982-1983.

¹⁰¹ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 1044 – Background, ‘Roger Martin, Southern Africa: The price of apartheid. A Political risk analysis, The Economist Intelligence Unit, Special Report No. 1130, July 1988’, p. 40.

¹⁰² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Senegal Mission, Box 1, Folder 2 - ANC Campaigns 1986-89.

¹⁰³ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, pp. 199-120; Hanlon, *Beggar*, p. 111; Kasrils, *Armed*, p. 200; *The Guardian*, 3 July 1984.

¹⁰⁴ Email correspondence with E.S. Reddy, 9 November - 1 December 2010.

¹⁰⁵ For example, see: UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Mission 1923-1996, Box 136, Folder 303, Swaziland-SA land deal 1982-1983; AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 946 – Miscellaneous Papers, ‘Memorandum To the

insight into how the ANC regarded itself as the government-in-waiting; although deferential to the Swazi government, the document declares that it would 'have been an advantage both to Swaziland and ourselves, if the Government of Swaziland had sought the opinion of the ANC on the question under discussion before entering into negotiations with the Pretoria regime'.¹⁰⁶ The memorandum did little to change Swaziland's stance, but it is an important indication of the ways in which the ANC interacted with regional governments, the strategies it employed to alter their actions towards the movement and South Africa, and its own self-perceptions. At the Kabwe Conference in 1985, the ANC had claimed that it was not, nor had the capabilities to act as a government in exile, but did concede that 'the nature of our struggle calls upon us to exercise in appropriate forms, some of the functions of an embryonic state'.¹⁰⁷

Although the ANC was on cordial terms with all black-ruled Southern Africa nations, except Malawi, its official status in the region during the 1980s was precarious. The ANC's political aspirations were broadly supported by regional leaders, who provided it with their rhetorical backing the movement. However, destabilisation and South Africa's enforced pacts had taken its toll on the region, which significantly diminished the ANC's ability to operate in Southern Africa. The outcome was that the gains the ANC had made during the late 1970s and early 1980s were in danger of being reversed by Pretoria. The ANC discovered that once friendly governments were all too willing to dismantle its exile structures and expel its cadres. A limited number of cadres did remain in the Frontline States, but by the mid-1980s 'the best forward areas [were] reeling: Maputo [was] virtually over; Swaziland [was] cut off'.¹⁰⁸ Roger Southall believes that 'the ANC recognised the limitations which frontline states imposed on them, so there was a degree of pragmatism, but [they] were obviously disappointed... by some actions'.¹⁰⁹ E.S. Reddy agrees, arguing that

Government of Swaziland on the Agreement between Swaziland and the Pretoria regime on Ka-Ngwane and Ngwavuma'.

¹⁰⁶ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 946 – Miscellaneous Papers, 'Memorandum To the Government of Swaziland on the Agreement between Swaziland and the Pretoria regime on Ka-Ngwane and Ngwavuma', p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Second National Consultative Conference: Report of the commission on national structures, constitutional guidelines and codes of conduct, Kabwe Conference, June 1985, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=136> (4/4/11).

¹⁰⁸ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS Afr.S. 2151 1/3 pp.335-535, 'Third Interview with Mac Maharaj, Conducted by Howard Barrell, Johannesburg, November 30 1990', p. 496.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Professor Roger Southall, Johannesburg, 14 September 2009.

‘the ANC understood the difficulties of the host countries and did not complain... it appreciated that frontline states made enormous sacrifices’.¹¹⁰ While not in the scope of this thesis, this meant that during the 1980s the ANC was forced to rely heavily upon other sources of support and international assistance, such as the Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc, the non-Aligned Movement (NAM), AAM, the UN, and Scandinavia to fulfil its foreign policy goals of isolating and ultimately overthrowing apartheid.

The 1984 Nkomati Accord

Following sustained direct economic, political and military destabilisation by South Africa, with the latter backing RENAMO in a devastating civil war, Mozambique was, by 1984, crippled economically and politically. According to Hanlon, ‘it had been clear for some time that Mozambique could not continue to sustain South African pummelling at this level’.¹¹¹ The direct consequence was that in March 1984, Samora Machel and P.W. Botha met to sign an ‘agreement on non-aggression and good neighbourliness’ between Mozambique and South Africa, known as the Nkomati Accord.¹¹² The significance of the Accord was that the ANC was expelled from Mozambique (only ten cadres were allowed to remain in Maputo) in what the movement saw as a betrayal by FRELIMO. This sense of betrayal within the leadership perhaps stemmed in part from the fact that in the months before the Accord was signed, the ANC had wanted FRELIMO to adopt a more proactive stance towards Pretoria in support of its liberation struggle; this perhaps indicates a certain naivety and insensitivity on behalf of the ANC, as its very presence was the reason why Pretoria was aggressively targeting Mozambique.¹¹³ When the Nkomati Accord was officially announced there was a sense of shock within the ANC. Shubin rightly argued that the movement faced ‘a strategic retreat without any prospect of return. What upset them most was the absence of consultation between Frelimo and the ANC’.¹¹⁴ Slovo summed up the effect of Nkomati on the ANC: ‘it disastrously

¹¹⁰ Email correspondence with E.S. Reddy, 9 November - 1 December 2010.

¹¹¹ J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: The Revolution under Fire* (London, 1990), p. 255.

¹¹² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Zimbabwe Mission, Box 9, Folder 64, SA-Mozambican Relationship 1984.

¹¹³ *The Guardian*, 6 April 1984.

¹¹⁴ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 254.

impeded the prospects that had existed at the beginning of 1984 to raise our urban and rural combat presence... it is no secret... that Mozambique had been crucial to our ongoing efforts'.¹¹⁵

The ANC's sense of betrayal was reinforced by the fact that FRELIMO publicly portrayed the Accord as a victory for the Mozambican people.¹¹⁶ Relations between the ANC and FRELIMO deteriorated quickly after Nkomati; the movement's leadership was furious about the way the deal had been secretly signed without its consultation. Hanlon argued that the ANC's reacted to the Accord 'like a petulant, jilted lover'.¹¹⁷ In the wake of the Mozambican and Swazi agreements with South Africa, the emerging reality was that the ANC's foreign policy in Southern Africa was unable to influence even some of its smallest nations. Although South Africa swiftly reneged on the terms of the Accord, the ANC's relations with Mozambique only began to improve after the death of Moses Mabhida in March 1986, whose funeral renewed the ANC and FRELIMO's solidarity. FRELIMO held a full state funeral in Maputo, at which Machel spoke of 'the indestructible fraternity of the South African and Mozambican peoples, of the profound identity of our peoples struggle'.¹¹⁸ It provided an opportunity for the leaders to meet and re-establish their personal relationships, which represented a 'symbolic reconciliation'.¹¹⁹ Manghezi observed that the funeral involved the burial not only of a liberation hero, but also of the Nkomati Accord.¹²⁰ Although the ability of the ANC to operate in Mozambique never quite returned to the pre-Nkomati situation, it was able to establish a limited presence in the country.

The Kabwe Conference, 1985

In June 1985, the ANC held its Second National Consultative Conference in Kabwe, Zambia, the first such meeting since Morogoro sixteen years earlier. It enabled the most open debate the ANC had ever held, allowing its cadres to air

¹¹⁵ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, Mss Afr. S. 2151 2/3 pp.922-1063, 'First interview with Joe Slovo, Conducted by Howard Barrell, August 12-16 1989, Lusaka', pp. 999-1000.

¹¹⁶ Manghezi, *The Maputo Connection*, pp. 2-3

¹¹⁷ Hanlon, *Revolution*, p. 261.

¹¹⁸ 'Obituary: Hamba Kahle Comrade Moses Mabhida', *Sechaba* (May, 1986), pp. 27.

¹¹⁹ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 260.

¹²⁰ Manghezi, *The Maputo Connection*, p. 206.

grievances and offer suggestions on all aspects of the struggle. The conference was preceded by an eighteen-month preparatory stage which involved all the ANC's structures; documents were circulated worldwide, and eighty-two submissions were tabled for final deliberation at the conference.¹²¹ This remarkably open and democratic process was something that had been strikingly absent from the ANC in exile, and the conference was designed to rectify this. The decision to convene in Zambia reflected concerns in the context of ongoing destabilisation in Southern Africa, and the ANC's tenuous position in the region. It did also reflect the ANC's enduring good relations with Kaunda, who allocated a battalion of the army to defend the conference centre from potential South African attacks.¹²² *Sechaba* expressed the ANC's 'deeply felt appreciation of the role of Zambia, under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda, is playing in our struggle for national and social emancipation'.¹²³

At the Kabwe Conference, 250 delegates, representing every branch of the ANC, discussed the submitted documents and reports, planned for the future, and elected a new National Executive Committee (NEC).¹²⁴ During the conference, several key decisions were taken that would shape the struggle, including: the opening up of its membership to all racial groups; a reaffirmation of the Freedom Charter as an expression of the movement's ideals and aspirations; the dropping of the distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' targets; and the adoption of the slogan of a 'peoples war' to achieve a seizure of power.¹²⁵ All were important outcomes, but the predominant theme of the conference was preparing for a People's War and the revolutionary seizure of power.¹²⁶ The ANC had of course been pursuing this objective for some time, but Kabwe ensured that it had the full endorsement of the movement's delegates. However, this emphasis and focus on the armed struggle was

¹²¹ Gerhart and Glaser, *Challenge*, p. 136; For examples of documents see: UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka and London, ANC Lusaka Additions (Mayibuye II), Box 32, Folder 1, Contributions ANC units, discussion papers.

¹²² Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 279.

¹²³ 'We are Revolutionaries, Internationalists and Africans', *Sechaba* (August, 1985), p. 1.

¹²⁴ Callinicos, *Tambo*, pp. 552-554; 'We are Revolutionaries, Internationalists and Africans', *Sechaba* (August, 1985), pp. 1-3.

¹²⁵ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka and London, ANC Lusaka Additions (Mayibuye II), Box 38, Folder 1, ANC National Consultative Conference 1985, 'NEC (Secretary General's) Report'; 'We are Revolutionaries, Internationalists and Africans', *Sechaba* (August, 1985), pp. 1-3.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

arguably to have a negative effect on other aspects of the ANC's work, especially the crucial task of political mobilisation inside South Africa.

During the Kabwe Conference, the ANC took the important, yet previously unprecedented step of discussing what its foreign policy objectives were. The conference also discussed the 'international situation';¹²⁷ however, of far more significance was the publication of the 'Final Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy'.¹²⁸ What makes the 'Report' most remarkable is that it was the first instance, since the vague outlines of the Freedom Charter in 1955, that the ANC had even attempted to formalise its foreign policy position.¹²⁹ The 'Report' affirmed the objective of seizing power by force, emphasising that 'the ANC pursues the strategic goal of the seizure of political power by the revolutionary forces of our country'.¹³⁰ The 'Report' also set out three core objectives which the 'ANC should continue to relentlessly pursue':

1. The total isolation of the white minority regime in South Africa, leading to the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. The recognition and support of the ANC as the sole and authentic representative of the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa.
3. The establishment of bilateral and diplomatic relations between the ANC and governments, as well as with the international democratic forces committed to the establishment of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.¹³¹

In order to fulfil these three objectives, the document provided a list of goals which the ANC should pursue, including: exposing South African criminality; persuading the world to terminate international links with Pretoria; popularising the ANC; strengthening ties with African states, the OAU, Frontline States and 'authentic

¹²⁷ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka and London, ANC Lusaka Additions (Mayibuye II), Box 38, Folder 3 (b), ANC National Consultative Conference 1985, 'International Situation'.

¹²⁸ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 948 – Miscellaneous ANC, 'African National Congress National Consultative Conference June 1985: Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy'.

¹²⁹ A noteworthy feature is that the title of the 'Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy' points to the ANC publicly considering itself to have a foreign policy. What is most surprising is that the current literature on the topic neglects to acknowledge this point.

¹³⁰ AAM Archive, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford, MSS AAM 948 – Miscellaneous ANC, 'African National Congress National Consultative Conference June 1985: Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy'.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

liberation movements'; and consolidating support from both western and socialist nations.¹³² Although the ANC had to some extent been pursuing these objectives throughout its exile, the 'Report' was the first instance the movement had actually articulated its approach to foreign policy. As the 1980s progressed, the ANC was successful in partially achieving these objectives as the isolation of South Africa tightened and the movement established itself as effectively the government-in-waiting. The 'Report' was an important start for the ANC in thinking consciously about its foreign policy.

However, these objectives focused on the immediate future and there was little consideration given to a strategy for negotiations with Pretoria. Chapters Four and Five, which examine South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy between 1990 and 1994, demonstrate that the 'Final Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy' and the Freedom Charter formed the entire basis of the ANC's thinking on foreign policy, putting it at a distinct disadvantage in negotiations with the apartheid state. Howard Barrell scathingly criticised the Kabwe Conference, arguing that 'at the most crucial moment in its history, in the midst of the most serious uprisings in South Africa in which its name was being widely proclaimed as leader of a revolution, the ANC had held a conference and concluded it with no generally agreed formulation of strategy'.¹³³

The End of Exile

By 1985, white minority rule in South Africa faced mounting domestic and international pressure to dismantle apartheid. The South African government was confronted by the emergence of popular internal opposition led by new movements such as COSATU and the UDF; rising incidents of township rebellion, in part inspired by MK attacks and the ANC's call to make 'South Africa ungovernable'; rolling industrial action by militant unions; international boycotts and sanctions; and an ever worsening debt crisis.¹³⁴ As the crisis deepened, it was widely hoped that

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ H. Barrell, 'Conscripts to their age: African National Congress operational strategy, 1976-1986', D. Phil, (University of Oxford, 1993), p. 384.

¹³⁴ ANC NEC 1985, 'Take the Struggle to the White Areas Make the whole of South Africa ungovernable! Paralyse apartheid!', <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4677> (24/3/11); Gevisser,

Botha would initiate sweeping reforms to the system of apartheid to ease the mounting problems.¹³⁵ However, in his ‘Crossing the Rubicon’ speech in August 1985, Botha did the complete opposite, demonstrating his belligerence by castigating his critics at home and abroad.¹³⁶ Following the speech, the value of the Rand collapsed and the international community, having widely condemned South Africa, subsequently applied punitive sanctions against Pretoria.¹³⁷ It also sparked a renewed upsurge in international protest against apartheid, spearheaded by the AAM. The activities of both the ANC and AAM succeeded in pressurising multinational corporations, to cease links with South Africa. The mounting pressure and bad publicity against banks such as Chase Manhattan and Barclays forced them into rethinking their ties with South Africa. The result was that many recalled loans or refused to lend further to South Africa, deepening the isolation and economic crisis of the apartheid state.¹³⁸

The ANC, white South Africans, and the prospect of negotiations

Within South Africa there was a growing realisation, particularly in the white business community, that apartheid was bad for business. Botha’s speech was the tipping point for this community, prompting fears that capitalism might be destroyed in South Africa.¹³⁹ In September 1985, at Kaunda’s personal lodge in Zambia, a delegation of high-profile white South African businessmen and journalists, led by Anglo-American chairman Gavin Relly, met with Tambo, Thabo Mbeki, and other ANC leaders.¹⁴⁰ The meeting was not intended to act as a forum for negotiations, but rather to allow the two sides to become acquainted, to discuss the role of violence and the SACP in the ANC’s struggle, and to assess its economic policies for South

Dream Deferred, p. 505; Jeffery, *People’s War*, pp. 97-99; Meli, *South Africa*, pp. 192-93; Suttner, *Underground*, pp. 152-53.

¹³⁵ F.W. De Klerk, *The Last Trek: A new beginning. The Autobiography* (London, 1999), p. 105.

¹³⁶ *The Guardian*, 16 August 1985.

¹³⁷ *The Guardian*, 17 August 1985; *The Guardian*, 10 September 1985; ‘Pik Botha reacts to UK Sanctions decision’, *Johannesburg Domestic Service* (accessed via Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports), 25 September 1985.

¹³⁸ A. Sampson, *Black and Gold: Tycoons, revolutionaries and apartheid* (London, 1987), pp. 25, 29-30.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-25.

¹⁴⁰ *The Guardian*, 14 September 1985.

Africa's future.¹⁴¹ Although there was no tangible outcome from the meeting, it marked the beginning of increased white contact with the ANC in exile. For the ANC to be recognised by such an influential section of the white South African community was a major achievement. Tambo later argued that although business leaders were mainly acting in their own self-interest, their influence could serve as a useful political lever in South Africa.¹⁴² However, the initial optimism surrounding these talks began to rapidly dwindle; Botha was able to reinforce his authority in South Africa, the white businessmen were publicly castigated, and a wave of particularly violent MK attacks in the country hardened white public opinion.¹⁴³

Relly's delegation nevertheless encouraged other whites to visit the ANC in exile. The next key figure to visit the ANC in Lusaka was Fredrik van Zyl Slabbert, the leader of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), who was impressed by the movement and its vision for the future of South Africa; after the meeting he declared, 'a path away from violence can be negotiated'.¹⁴⁴ The most high-profile meeting with white South Africans occurred in Senegal, in July 1987. Drawn from academic, business and religious circles, sixty-one predominantly Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans attended the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) conference held in Dakar to meet with the ANC.¹⁴⁵ The delegates discussed the evolving situation in South Africa, the armed struggle, and the possibility of a negotiated settlement.¹⁴⁶ *Sechaba* reported that the Dakar meeting had caused nervousness amongst senior South African government officials, and described it as an important 'aspect of the struggle to isolate the apartheid regime'.¹⁴⁷ It was a major success for the ANC's international and domestic legitimacy, illustrating the growing sense that there could be no settlement without its involvement.

After several delegations of whites had met with the ANC in exile, the possibility of negotiations with Pretoria became increasingly imaginable. Some elements within the ANC leadership had accepted that the prospect of a negotiated settlement was ever more likely, although the movement was determined to enter any

¹⁴¹ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Mission 1923-1996, Box 148, Folder 27, Discussions between ANC and SA big business 1985.

¹⁴² Sampson, *Black and Gold*, p. 195.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-200.

¹⁴⁴ Shubin, Moscow, p. 296; *The Telegraph*, 16 May 2010.

¹⁴⁵ ICS, JQ2026 AFR fol, *The Dakar declaration*, July 12, 1987.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ 'Apartheid nervousness over the Dakar meeting', *Sechaba* (September, 1987), p. 1.

talks from a position of strength. However, the ANC was not particularly clear on its stance towards negotiations, oscillating between propagandistic calls for the military seizure of power, while privately expressing a desire to enter into talks with the South African government. The ANC had spent its long period in exile working on how best to overthrow apartheid, and not what would replace it. The consequence was that the Freedom Charter was its only clear vision for the future. A 1987 ANC intelligence report, argued that the ANC needed to alter its approach, concluding that ‘we need to move beyond slogans and propaganda and be clear about the society we are trying to build and how we will do it’.¹⁴⁸ There were however, elements within the ANC, predominantly around Chris Hanu, who remained wedded to their belief in the revolutionary seizure of power, and were stringently opposed to negotiations.¹⁴⁹ Such views were not surprising, given that the ANC had consistently proclaimed the necessity of the armed struggle to defeat apartheid. However, by the late 1980s, although such insurrectionary rhetoric continued, the ANC’s hopes of militarily overthrowing the apartheid regime were vastly diminished, partly because of its relative loss of support in Southern Africa. Rumours abounded about the leadership ‘selling out’; although discussions about negotiations were occurring secretly, the leadership had to try and publicly allay its supporter’s fears.¹⁵⁰ The only way that the ANC could ‘sell’ negotiations to its cadres was by ignoring the unfolding reality, and emphasising that any negotiations that did occur were ‘attributable to pressure imposed on [Pretoria] by the movement, above all through its armed struggle’.¹⁵¹ In September 1988, during a meeting at St Anthony’s College Oxford, representatives from the Soviet Union indicated for the first time to ANC leaders that the movement would have to begin the process of negotiating with the NP. Gary Littlejohn recalls that the four ANC delegates he spoke with afterwards were ‘clearly shocked by the meeting, and I was later told that this was the general feeling within the ANC. It was a deep shock to have to negotiate’.¹⁵² At the Kabwe Conference the ANC had conceded the prospect of negotiating with Pretoria, but thought it unlikely: ‘this issue has arisen at this time exactly because of our strength inside the country, the level of

¹⁴⁸ Document 136, ‘A few points on the current state of the struggle in S.A.’, ANC intelligence report, mid-1987, in Gerhart and Glaser, *Challenge*, p. 608.

¹⁴⁹ For example see: ‘Omelettes cannot be made without breaking eggs’, *Sechaba*, 23 (June, 1989), pp. 11-18.

¹⁵⁰ Gerhart and Glaser, *Challenge*, p. 147; Gevisser, *Dream Deferred*, pp. 526-554.

¹⁵¹ Simpson, ‘Toyi-Toyi-ing’, p. 512.

¹⁵² Email correspondence with Dr. Gary Littlejohn, 24 June 2011.

our struggle and the crisis confronting the Botha regime. The NEC is however convinced that this regime is not interested in a just solution of the South African question'.¹⁵³

Despite attempts to appease its more militant supporters, the ANC leadership and the South African government had established a clandestine channel of communication, which from 1988, involved a series of talks at Mells Park in England. Mbeki, whose own 'thoughts about [a negotiated] strategy had been up against the romantic juggernaut of 'Planning for People's War'', was the main driver of these discussions.¹⁵⁴ These talks were the moment when leaders from both sides realised that there was sufficient common ground to make a political settlement possible. Meanwhile, Mandela (while still in prison) in 1985, decided without the knowledge of the ANC leadership, to begin meeting secretly with NP officials to discuss the future; these meetings continued until his release in 1990.¹⁵⁵ These talks provided one of many building blocks to a peaceful transition to majority rule, demonstrating to the NP that they could do business with the ANC.

The New York Accords, Namibian Independence and the effect on the ANC

The ANC's foreign policy outside of the region, primarily towards western states, had proved increasingly successful in the late 1980s. Regular meetings with senior politicians, international organisations and journalists, helped spread its message to a wider audience and further isolate South Africa. The ANC thereby ensured that it retained the attention of the international community, firmly establishing its position as the government-in-waiting. However, in a scenario which had become depressingly familiar for the ANC, new and unexpected series of international events, over which the movement had no control or influence, decisively shaped the end of its exile.

In the early 1980s, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, had developed a 'linkage' policy to solve the on-going crisis in

¹⁵³ Political report by Oliver Tambo on the National Executive Committee to the National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, 17 June 1985, Kabwe, Zambia, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4464> (3/4/11).

¹⁵⁴ Gevisser, *Dream Deferred*, p. 531.

¹⁵⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London, 1995), pp. 625-27, 633-665.

Southern Africa. This policy tied South Africa's military withdrawal from Angola and Namibian independence, to Cuba's disengagement from the Angolan conflict.¹⁵⁶ The Crocker proposal provided the basis for talks between the governments of Angola, Cuba and South Africa in 1987. The negotiations culminated in the three sides signing the New York Accords in December 1988, which set a timetable for South African and Cuban troop withdrawals, and for Namibian independence.¹⁵⁷ In November 1989, Namibia held 'free and fair' democratic elections, which the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) won; the result paved the way for the nation's independence in March 1990.¹⁵⁸

These events had a significant impact on the ANC. One clause of the New York Accords stipulated that each signatory would prohibit the use of its territory for the perpetration of violence against others in Southern Africa; this meant that the MPLA was forced to cease its military assistance to the ANC.¹⁵⁹ In January 1989, with the assistance of the Soviet Air Force, all ANC Angolan camps were vacated and MK cadres were relocated to Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.¹⁶⁰ Although a limited number of operatives were sent to Zambia, the New York Accords struck a serious blow to the ANC's military capabilities, paralysing its activities in the region. The expulsion of MK from Angola also had a severe knock on effect for the ANC's foreign relations, particularly with Zambia. Thula Simpson identifies a series of incidents in which increasingly frustrated and ill-disciplined ANC and MK members had killed Zambian nationals, naturally infuriating the Zambian government.¹⁶¹ As on other previous occasions in Zambia and elsewhere, Kaunda deployed his security forces to help the ANC security department disarm its own fighters.¹⁶² Kaunda promptly gave the ANC an ultimatum to leave the country, permitting only a skeleton diplomatic mission to remain.¹⁶³ The expulsion from Zambia meant that MK guerrillas were yet again located further away from South Africa. Simpson

¹⁵⁶ C. Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making peace in a rough neighbourhood* (New York, 1992), pp. 67-70; C. Saunders, 'The Angola/Namibia crisis of 1988 and its resolution', in S. Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in Southern Africa: white power, black nationalism* (Abingdon, 2009), p. 227.

¹⁵⁷ Crocker, *High Noon*, pp. 392-400.

¹⁵⁸ *The Observer*, 19 November 1989; 'Simple Majority Celebrated', *Johannesburg SAPA* (accessed via FBIS Daily Reports), 14 November 1989.

¹⁵⁹ Crocker, *High Noon*, pp. 407, 441-42.

¹⁶⁰ Shubin, *Moscow*, p. 350; T. Simpson, 'Toyi-Toyi-ing', p. 508.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 508-9.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 509.

¹⁶³ *The Independent*, 19 August 1989.

argues that as a result ‘the infiltration of large numbers of guerrillas was no longer a feasible option... it was impossible under these circumstances for the ANC to intensify its armed struggle’.¹⁶⁴

With the armed struggle drastically curtailed, the ANC began to urgently explore avenues for formal negotiations with Pretoria. The accelerating shift towards negotiations reflected the fact that the ANC was not in control of the unfolding events in South Africa. There was a very real danger that the movement could lose its influence over the proceedings. During the Kabwe Conference, the ANC leadership, in discussing the possibility of negotiating with the apartheid regime, stated that ‘we cannot be seen to be rejecting a negotiated settlement in principle’, but it did however express the pre-condition that ‘no negotiations can take place or even be considered until all political prisoners are released’.¹⁶⁵ In the aftermath of the New York Accords, as the international climate drastically shifted, Tambo tasked the ANC to draft a position statement on negotiations which could be endorsed by the international community. The ANC’s thinking on negotiations is summarised by the resultant ‘Discussion paper on the issue of negotiations: June 1989’. This acknowledged that the changing geo-political climate was pushing the adversaries towards detente and settlement.¹⁶⁶ It set out the ANC’s preconditions for talks with South Africa, later known as the Harare Declaration, after it was endorsed by the OAU in August 1989.¹⁶⁷ The Harare Declaration confirmed the ANC’s willingness to embrace negotiations as a method of achieving change in South Africa. Importantly, the Harare Declaration appealed ‘to all people of goodwill throughout the world to support this Programme of Action as a necessary measure to secure the earliest liquidation of the apartheid system and the transformation of South Africa’.¹⁶⁸ The ANC’s appeal was answered by the development of a worldwide consensus in support of the Harare Declaration. This was a major boost for the ANC’s foreign policy and international credibility, as it was now regarded as a moderate and responsible engine of change.

¹⁶⁴ Simpson, ‘Toyi-Toyi-ing’, p. 511.

¹⁶⁵ Political report by Oliver Tambo on the National Executive Committee to the National Consultative Conference of the African National Congress, 17 June 1985, Kabwe, Zambia, <http://www.anc.org.za/4464> (25/3/11).

¹⁶⁶ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Mission 1923-1996, Box 9, Folder 33, Negotiations, 1989-1991.

¹⁶⁷ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Dar es Salaam Office, Box 20, File: Declarations 1969, 1989.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

While external forces were mounting against Pretoria, incremental internal change to apartheid was finally initiated, following F.W. De Klerk's accession to the South African Presidency in August 1989, following Botha's resignation. De Klerk signalled his willingness to begin implementing reforms, although these were initially limited, rather than fundamental changes. For example, in October 1989, he partially heeded the conditions of the Harare Declaration by unconditionally releasing eight political prisoners including Walter Sisulu.¹⁶⁹ This release provided a clear signal that the NP was prepared to begin negotiations with the ANC in a bid to resolve the crisis; like the ANC however, De Klerk was keen to do so only from a position of strength.¹⁷⁰ As discussed above, the success of the New York Accords had demonstrated an appetite for peaceful negotiations amongst the adversaries in the region. It was the seismic shift in international politics which finally persuaded the South Africans to begin the process of dismantling the system of apartheid.

The successful implementation of the New York Accords by the superpowers, and the subsequent Namibian elections, demonstrated a new international desire for peace in Southern Africa, and the possibility for an effective transition in South Africa. Most importantly, the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, announced in 1986 his desire to solve regional conflicts via peaceful political settlement, in order to extricate the Soviet Union from its foreign adventures. This prompted the Soviet Union to adopt the policy of perestroika, signalling a new approach in its foreign policy, and its diminished interest in supporting national liberation movements.¹⁷¹ The New York Accords demonstrated the rapid shift in Soviet thinking, as 'Gorbachev had almost lost interest in the problems of liberation movements... and concentrated on contacts with the West'.¹⁷² The subsequent collapse of communism meant that South Africa's external scapegoat, and ultimately its justification for maintaining apartheid, had been removed. In the wake of these developments,

¹⁶⁹ *The Guardian*, 11 October 1989.

¹⁷⁰ Jeffery, *People's War*, p. 233; *The Guardian*, 17 October 1989.

¹⁷¹ Although peaceful, negotiated solutions to regional conflicts was the preferred option of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's announcement did not start an immediate reappraisal of its relations with the ANC, and it continued to provide the movement with substantial assistance in a variety of fields throughout the 1980s. For example, the Soviet Union airlifted MK cadres from Angola as late as 1989, and more significantly had played a part in the planning for 'Operation Vula', the ANC's attempt to strengthen the underground in South Africa through the infiltration of guerrilla fighters. For more on Operation Vula see: P. O'Malley, *Shades of Difference: Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa* (New York, 2007), pp. 247-299; Shubin, *Moscow*, pp. 332-339.

¹⁷² V. Shubin, 'The Soviet Union/Russian Federation's relations with South Africa, with special reference to the period since 1980', *African Affairs*, 95 (1996), p. 19.

Pretoria began to forge surprisingly close ties with the Soviet Union/Russian Federation; this would have been unthinkable a matter of months earlier, and was regarded as a betrayal of the struggle by the ANC.¹⁷³ The rapid international changes and the demise of global communism naturally had a profound impact on the ANC. Not only did the ANC lose vital ideological and material support from the Eastern Bloc; it also found that as a consequence, its Southern African allies increasingly abandoned their previous adherence to a revolutionary path. As a further consequence, MK had ceased to be a genuine military threat, having been expelled from the Frontline States. Yet, despite the dramatic international changes De Klerk's decision to unban the ANC in February 1990 was by no means inevitable. It came as much as a surprise to many in the white establishment, as it was to the ANC.¹⁷⁴

As the decade came to a close, the ANC once again was in both a position of relative strength, but also of serious weakness. The ANC's foreign policy since 1980 had made huge strides in promoting the goals of the movement, firmly establishing itself as an internationally recognised and respected movement. Its preconditions for a negotiated settlement, defined by the Harare Declaration, had been widely endorsed by the international community, paving the way for talks with the South African government to begin. Through its incessant international lobbying, the pressure against Pretoria had reached new heights by the late 1980s. The ANC had thus manoeuvred itself into a position where it was regarded as the government-in-waiting, without which no political settlement in South Africa could be reached. Simultaneously however, the ANC was confronted with several major crises. Its forces were located further away from South Africa than ever before; its cadres were not united in support of negotiations; and its relations with its Southern Africa allies were in jeopardy. Even more serious was the loss of support from the Soviet Bloc, putting the organisational capacity of the ANC at risk. Internally, the movement remained hampered by its inability to effectively organise politically and militarily within South Africa. Despite its close ideological and personal affiliation with domestic movements such as the UDF, the ANC was by no means in control of unfolding events. Indeed, in 1989, the ANC's return to South Africa was still in doubt. Although the movement's organisational problems were increasingly serious,

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-30.

¹⁷⁴ S. Onslow, 'The Fall of the Berlin Wall and the End of Apartheid', *IDEAS Today*, 1 (2009), p. 19; Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

the ANC nevertheless maintained a public façade of power; for example, as late as January 1990, the ANC committed itself to greater internal mobilisation and proclaimed that ‘the armed struggle continues to be a critical and decisive component of our strategy... [and MK is] committed to the intensification of our armed offensive’.¹⁷⁵

Conclusion

During its thirty year exile the ANC had evolved beyond recognition from the movement that had first left South Africa in 1960. Yet, on the verge of its return to South Africa, many questions remained unanswered about the ANC in general and its foreign policy in particular. The context of the Cold War clearly overshadowed its relations with different liberation movements and newly independent countries, which were in turn shaped by South Africa’s aggressive response to those nations harbouring the ANC. All of the Frontline States were clearly opposed to apartheid, but this did not necessarily translate into full or enthusiastic support for the ANC. The revolutionary zeal of the 1960s was rapidly replaced by more practical economic and political concerns. The emergence of the ‘Dialogue Group’ in the early 1970s revealed the tensions and fissures in Southern African attitudes towards the ANC, which became more pronounced by the 1980s. The ANC had in thirty years failed to clarify its foreign policy, resulting in a lack of overall coherence for the movement. Its ideology was certainly influenced by the Soviet Union, which brought the ANC into close contact with the Eastern Bloc, and likeminded liberation movements. Without doubt these linkages were invaluable to the progress of the liberation struggle. However, the ANC was a broad church, encompassing many competing ideologies. On the one hand it relied heavily upon the communist bloc for its very survival, yet it strenuously appealed to the west for assistance. The divergence of opinion was starkly revealed during the shift towards negotiations, as the ANC was split between moderates led by Tambo and Mbeki, and the revolutionaries represented by Hani and Slovo. Although Tambo was the overall leader of the ANC, whose influence arguably kept the ANC united throughout exile, there were many

¹⁷⁵ ‘Statement of the National Executive Committee on the occasion of the 78th Anniversary of the ANC’, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=71> (28/3/11).

other important figures in the movement, pursuing ultimately different goals. For example, both Mandela and Mbeki, secretly and against the wishes of the majority of the ANC's cadres, initiated talks with the apartheid regime. This set an important precedent, as during their presidencies, both men frequently ignored the advice and reports of both their government advisors and the wishes of the ANC membership (see Chapters Six and Seven).

By 1989-1990, the apartheid state was under intense pressure from the liberation struggle, the continuing domestic uprising, and the mounting economic and international forces mounted against it. In the rapidly changing international environment which marked this period, De Klerk seized the initiative in an attempt to claim the moral high ground and to prevent the ANC dominating proceedings (and its reasoning behind maintaining the armed struggle). In February 1990, De Klerk's made the momentous, yet unexpected decision to release Nelson Mandela from prison, and unban all the liberation movements. The announcement allowed the ANC to formally return to South Africa after thirty years in exile, setting in motion the transition to majority rule. It is the transition, and the evolution of the ANC's foreign policy as a legal political party which Chapter Four will now examine.

Chapter Four

ANC Foreign Policy during South Africa's Transition: The Search for Direction, 1990-1994

Before analysing foreign policy formulation during the transition, it must be noted that this and the following two chapters are all closely intertwined. In turn, they examine the complex process of foreign policy formulation during South Africa's transition, and its implementation during the initial two years of ANC-led democratic rule. Against the context of evolving from a liberation movement into a political party, enormous international geo-political changes, and unexpected domestic challenges, this chapter will examine how the ANC strove to formulate its foreign policy during South Africa's transition. Chapter Five investigates concurrent to the events detailed below, how the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) process shaped post-apartheid South African foreign policy, which was 'captured' by the western-international community and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Chapter Six will then tie these themes together, illustrating how these competing forces converged during Mandela's presidency, resulting in what is often observed as a confused and contradictory period in South African foreign policy.

The beginning of the 1990s witnessed seismic global changes, triggered by the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. In the aftermath of this historic event, the Soviet Union began to disintegrate and communism as a viable world ideology collapsed, bringing the Cold War to an abrupt end. The effects of the Cold War's sudden demise sent shockwaves around the world. The underpinnings of the bipolar, superpower-dominated, international community, which had been the status quo since the end of World War II, had been removed. The west deemed it a victory for liberal democracy and capitalism, and US President George Bush (Senior) heralded the 'prospect of a new world order'.¹ The USA aimed to export the liberal democratic political model and its associated ideals around the world, through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), particularly focusing on former Marxist states.² It also marked a shift in thinking about international relations with a

¹ President G. H. Bush, Address before the Joint Session of Congress on the End of the Gulf War, 6 March 1991.

² J. Barber, *Mandela's World* (Oxford, 2004), p. 44.

move away from the old ideological underpinnings of the Cold War, towards a greater focus on multiparty democracy, human rights, and multilateralism.³

In Southern Africa, the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War had an enormous effect, where the campaign against white minority rule in the region had been played out against the spectre of superpower rivalry. As described in Chapter Three, change was already underway in the region before 1990. The ANC had engaged in secret talks with the apartheid government from the mid-1980s, and pressure from the superpowers resulted in the negotiated withdrawal of Cuban troops from the Angolan conflict in December 1988, which helped pave the way for Namibian independence in 1990.⁴ However, the speed at which the Cold War ended, over taking these gradual steps towards peace, came as a surprise to the main protagonists in South Africa, whose own international outlooks were heavily influenced by Cold War ideology.⁵ The sudden dissipation of the rhetorical and material support for both the ANC and the apartheid state deeply affected the thinking and decision-making capabilities of the protagonists during the transition.

Against the backdrop of these swiftly evolving events, South African President F. W. De Klerk seized the political and diplomatic initiative. In his speech to the opening of the second session of the ninth Parliament on 2 February 1990, the new President unexpectedly announced that, ‘the prohibition of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, the South African Communist Party and a number of subsidiary organisations is being rescinded’.⁶ De Klerk’s reforms heralded the beginning of a new era in South African politics. The white minority regime pledged to end apartheid, demonstrated a willingness to enter into negotiations with liberation movements such as the ANC, and attempted to re-engage with the international community to end its isolation. In fact, a sizeable proportion of this

³ A. du Pisani, ‘Post-apartheid South Africa and the region in the 1990’s’, paper prepared for BISA Annual Conference, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 17-19 December 1990, pp. 4-6.

⁴ T. Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life* (Oxford, 2006), p. 158; N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (London, 1995), pp. 625-665; A. Sampson, *Black and Gold: Tycoons, revolutionaries and apartheid* (London, 1987), pp. 195-200; C. Saunders, ‘The Angolan/Namibian crisis of 1988 and its resolution’, in S. Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation* (Abingdon, 2009), pp. 234-235.

⁵ Each side faced real difficulties in coming to terms with the enormous political changes during this period. The ANC struggled more than the NP, due to the loss of its main ideologically supporter; this was confounded by the challenges of having to adapt to becoming a legal political entity. The formulation of foreign policy against this backdrop was going to be an arduous process for the ANC.

⁶ Mr De Klerk’s speech at the opening of the South African Parliament, 2 February 1990, <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/1996/101348690.htm> (18/11/09).

groundbreaking speech was dedicated to the matter of foreign relations. De Klerk displayed an impressive understanding of the momentous changes occurring, and saw in them an opportunity for South Africa, and especially the white minority, to take advantage.⁷ Even Mandela was taken aback by De Klerk's initiative, describing it 'as a breathtaking moment, for in one sweeping action he had virtually normalised the situation in South Africa. Our world had changed overnight'.⁸

The unbanning of the liberation movements opened up the political landscape in South Africa, and negotiations about ending apartheid ensued. During the transition period from 1990-1994, various stages in the negotiations can be identified. The Groote Schuur Minute in May 1990 started proceedings, where the ANC and the South African government made a 'common commitment towards the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation... as well as a commitment to stability and to a peaceful process of negotiations'.⁹ This was followed by the Pretoria Minute in August, where the two parties reaffirmed their commitment to the Groote Schuur Minute, and where most notably, the ANC pledged to suspend its armed struggle.¹⁰ The negotiation process then went through two incarnations of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), and later the Multiparty Negotiating Process (MPNP), resulting in the TEC being formed in November 1993 which led the country through to the democratic elections of April 1994 (see Chapter Five). The detailed development of the negotiations will not be covered by this chapter, because there is already a substantial body of literature on the topic, and also because the constitutional process did not involve direct talks about foreign policy.¹¹ However, very little has been written about the development of foreign policy within the ANC (and for that matter within the NP) during the transitional period. Even

⁷ *Ibid.*, (18/11/09).

⁸ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 666-667.

⁹ 'The Groote Shuur Minute', <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/doc17-groote-schuur.htm> (2/6/11).

¹⁰ 'The Pretoria Minute', <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/constitution/doc18-pta-minute.htm> (2/6/11).

¹¹ Examples include: P. Bond, *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* (London, 2000); H. Adam and K. Moodley, *The Negotiated Revolution: Society and Politics in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1993); S. Friedman and D. Atkinson (eds.), *South African Review 7: The Small Miracle. South Africa's negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg, 1994); S. Friedman (ed.), *The Long Journey: South Africa's quest for a negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg, 1993); H. Marais, *South Africa: Limits to Change* (London, 2001); J. Rantete and H. Giliomee, 'Transition to Democracy through Transaction? Bilateral Negotiations between the ANC and NP in South Africa', *African Affairs*, 91 (1992), pp. 515-542; A. Sparks, *Tomorrow is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution* (London, 1996).

what little there is focuses disproportionately on the period 1990-1992. This literature focuses on discussions about what the central tenets of the 'new' South Africa's foreign policy would be, the country's potential attitudes towards the international community after the transition, deliberations over regional policy, and over future relations with various multilateral organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the UN.¹²

Before analysing the ANC's foreign policy during the transition, it should be emphasised that De Klerk and the NP were still firmly in control of government in South Africa after the unbanning of the liberation movements. They still controlled the formulation of foreign policy during the transition, as South Africa began the process of reintegrating itself with the international community. The ANC thereby found itself excluded from the main thrust of these deliberations until the latter stages of the transition period. The NP government's efforts were laid out by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Director General, Neil Van Heerden's 'New Diplomacy'; one of Van Heerden's key recommendations was for a greater focus on Southern Africa. This policy was partly put into practice through De Klerk's shuttle diplomacy across Africa, Europe and North America.¹³ This was a bid by the government to earn a degree of legitimacy for its reform efforts and an attempt to get international sanctions removed as a 'reward', so that the South African economy could benefit from much needed investment and trade opportunities. The importance of trade to South Africa was stressed by academic Andre du Pisani in a conference paper in 1990, in which he declared that 'the Department of Foreign Affairs' 'new diplomacy' is informed by the understanding that the flag will follow the trade'. Du Pisani went on to highlight the importance of Southern Africa to this new thinking.¹⁴ Yet, even at the time, the 'New Diplomacy' initiatives were criticised by some

¹² The Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) became SADC in August 1992, after the Heads of State and Government Summit in Windhoek. Examples of the literature on foreign policy during the transition include: C. Coker, 'Experiencing' Southern Africa in the twenty-first century', *International Affairs*, 67 (1991), pp. 281-292; G. Evans, 'Myths and realities in South Africa's future foreign policy', *International Affairs*, 67 (1991), pp. 709-721; G. Evans, 'South Africa in Remission: the Foreign Policy of an Altered State', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34 (1996), pp. 249-269; R. Evans, 'The Growing Importance of Cross-Border Liaison', in T. Manning (ed.), *Trends Transforming South Africa: Insights, Information and Ideas* (Cape Town, 1991); C. Landsberg, 'Directing from the stalls?: The international community and the South African negotiation forum', in S. Friedman and D. Atkinson (eds.), *South African Review 7: The Small Miracle. South Africa's negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg, 1994); P. Vale, 'The Search for Southern Africa's Security', *International Affairs*, 67 (1991), pp. 697-708.

¹³ Vale, 'Security', pp. 699-704.

¹⁴ Pisani, 'South Africa and the region', p.10.

commentators for being reactive and merely reflecting ‘a change in style rather than substance’.¹⁵

The ‘New Diplomacy’ initiative was just one example of the various tactics employed by the DFA, De Klerk, and the NP government to start the process of pre-determining South Africa’s future foreign policy and halting the ANC’s progress at home and abroad.¹⁶ These initiatives posed a threat to the ANC; it faced the very real possibility of post-apartheid South Africa’s international relations being pre-determined for them, leaving them with little room to manoeuvre. To make things worse, its main bargaining chip – sanctions – were being steadily eroded by a world far too rapidly embracing Pretoria for its liking. In light of this, the chapter will include an analysis of attempts by the NP government to distort and undermine the efforts of the ANC to establish its own independent perspectives on foreign policy.

This chapter primarily aims to chart the evolution of the ANC’s foreign policy during the transition period and to investigate what it envisaged South Africa’s future relations with other nations would be like. It will analyse how the ANC’s foreign policy developed, from its early pronouncements in various conference resolutions, through to the publication of its policy document ‘Foreign Policy in a new democratic South Africa’, issued shortly before it took power in May 1994 as head of a Government of National Unity (GNU). The development of the ANC’s foreign policy will also be scrutinised in the context of rapidly changing international and domestic political events.

Struggling to find its Feet in the New International Order: 1990-1992

In the immediate aftermath of De Klerk’s landmark speech, the ANC was left in organisational and political disarray. The turmoil the ANC faced after February 1990 resulted in the transition period being described as the ‘most difficult time in the history of the South African liberation movement’.¹⁷ Not only did it have to suddenly adjust from being a banned liberation movement to a legal political party, it had the arduous task of returning its exiled members from across the world to South

¹⁵ Evans, ‘Future Foreign Policy’, p. 712.

¹⁶ Vale, ‘Security’, pp. 704-706.

¹⁷ R.W. Johnson, *South Africa: The First Man, The Last Nation* (London, 2004), p. 200.

Africa, establishing an internal organisation within the country, negotiating a politically acceptable end to apartheid, whilst also combating the international diplomatic offensive being waged by the government, described above. Amongst these competing issues the question of international support and assistance to the negotiation process was a key priority during the initial stages of the transition. However, it was in the international arena, that the ANC faced fierce, yet unanticipated competition for support and legitimacy.

While in exile, the ANC's international diplomacy had achieved some considerable successes, especially during the 1980s (see Chapter Three). The movement was widely feted in international circles, had strong bilateral relations with some significant nations, including the Soviet Union and the countries of Scandinavia, regularly lobbied powerful multilateral organisations such as the UN and Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and was backed by the support network of the worldwide Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM). All of these had helped to bring about the political and economic isolation of South Africa. By 1990 the ANC had thirty four missions worldwide, of which fourteen were in Africa, which illustrates the ANC's global reach and influence.¹⁸

Despite this long running association with the international community the ANC still lacked a definite set of foreign policy positions. The prominent focus of the movement had been on the revolutionary capture of power through a People's War, rather than planning for what it was going to do when they had actually achieved it. James Barber believes that 'the ANC had been bound together more by what it opposed than a clear picture of what it proposed; it had broad aspirations rather than detailed plans'.¹⁹ In 1990, the main basis of its foreign policy remained the 1955 Freedom Charter and the 'Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy' adopted at the Kabwe Conference in 1985 (see Chapter Three).²⁰ These documents were far from a sufficient basis for the effective foreign policy of either a liberation movement or an aspiring party of government; they were merely a wish list of principles. For example, the Freedom Charter's international demands called for

¹⁸ University of Fort Hare (hereafter UFH), Liberation Archives, ANC Botswana Mission, Box 1, File 8, ANC Missions 1990.

¹⁹ J. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), p. 278.

²⁰ The ANC Freedom Charter, *Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, 26 June 1955*, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=72> (25/11/09); UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Lusaka Additions, Box 37, File 1, Conference Documents and Reports.

‘peace and friendship’ and for ‘independence and self government’ in Africa, which evidently did not constitute a basis for foreign policy.²¹ Both documents contained noble ideals, but there was nothing definitive to guide the movement through the transitional period and into power in a future, democratic South Africa. The lack of a concrete vision for the future would be a severe problem for the ANC during the initial stages of the transition.

In addition, another significant ANC document which had gained international recognition was created in 1989, in which the movement had set out its preconditions for negotiations with the NP. These conditions were adopted by the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa in August of that year, and became known as the Harare Declaration.²² They were subsequently endorsed by the UN General Assembly as a road-map for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The ANC sought the full implementation of these principles before talks could begin and it urged the international community to ensure the South African government acceded to them.

In order to press for the implementation of the objectives set out in the Harare Declaration, Mandela after his release from jail on 11 February 1990 began a hectic international schedule. By mid-1992, Mandela had made sixteen trips abroad and paid visits to forty-nine countries.²³ These visits enabled the ANC to exert political pressure on the west and Africa; one ANC demand was for sanctions to be maintained against South Africa, in order to force the pace and direction of change in the country. However, the ANC was at a severe disadvantage in these efforts, as it had no overall guiding foreign policy framework which could inform and direct its international efforts. Peter Vale argues that, after being unbanned, the ANC’s lack of a clear foreign policy direction meant that it initially struggled to adapt to the new international situation facing them. Furthermore, Vale believes these difficulties were accentuated by the fact that the movement’s capacity for theoretical analysis drastically diminished when the Cold War came to an end.²⁴

²¹ *Ibid.*, (25/11/09).

²² UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Dar es Salaam Office, Box 20, File: Declarations 1969, 1989.

²³ R. Pfister, ‘Gateway to international victory: the diplomacy of the African National Congress in Africa, 1960-1994’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1 (2003), p. 65.

²⁴ Interview with Professor Peter Vale, University of Rhodes, 31 August 2009.

The ANC's National Consultative Conference (NCC) in December 1990 was the first to be held in South Africa for thirty-one years, and it provided a vital occasion for the movement to reflect on the struggle and the work still to be done to overcome apartheid. The international community's role in South Africa's transition was high on the agenda. In the keynote address Mandela found time to thank Southern Africa for the support it had provided to the ANC's liberation struggle, declaring: 'the Frontline States bled in equal measure so that we might meet in this manner today. Words cannot express our profound appreciation for the solidarity, succour and support we received and continue to receive from the sister nations of Africa'.²⁵ He went on to condemn the NP's belligerence during the initial stages of the negotiations and stressed the importance of the international community to the process; he stated that the 'continuing pressure from the international community... remain[s] [a] key factor in compelling the government to honour the agreements reached. These must be maintained!'.²⁶ Furthermore, the ANC demanded continued international pressure in the form of sanctions against South Africa. The 1990 conference resolved that the ANC should be 'cognisant of the necessity to counteract the growing perception that De Klerk and his government should be rewarded for recent reforms...[and] we resolve the existing package [of sanctions] be maintained'. It also agreed to appeal 'to the EC, US Congress, EFTA and all other international bodies to postpone any consideration of the issue of sanctions against apartheid South Africa'.²⁷

These demands for continued international sanctions were however not universally supported within the ANC. In preparation for the conference, senior ANC leader Thabo Mbeki had written a document arguing for the phased withdrawal of international sanctions, but the militant atmosphere at the conference meant it could not even be discussed.²⁸ During his opening speech, President Oliver Tambo declared that 'it is no longer enough for us to repeat the tired slogans. We should, therefore, carefully re-evaluate the advisability of insisting on the retention of

²⁵ Keynote address of Comrade Nelson R Mandela, Deputy President of the ANC, to the ANC National Consultative Conference, 14-16 December 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=123> (22/11/09).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, (22/11/09).

²⁷ Conference Resolutions from the ANC National Consultative Conference, 14-16 December 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=120> (22/11/09).

²⁸ M. Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* (Johannesburg, 2007), p. 599.

sanctions, given the new developments in the country and abroad'.²⁹ According to Mandela, Tambo's proposal was met with indignation amongst the delegates. The conference subsequently resolved that sanctions remained in place.³⁰ In many ways the militant cadres were out of kilter with the rapidly changing international environment that was affecting the situation in South Africa. However, the ANC's cadres' position on sanctions is understandable. The enormous international changes which had shattered the status quo meant that there were real difficulties for many in coming to terms with what had occurred. As early as June 1990, six months before the ANC's conference, the EC (European Community) had already eased sanctions against Pretoria, and it was highly unlikely that they would have been re-introduced.³¹ It led one commentator to argue later that 'the ANC's arrogance, as much as its naiveté, blinded it to the fact that the scales were tipped heavily against it'.³² After decades of speaking on behalf of the oppressed masses (while in reality an elite movement in exile) the ANC had managed to swiftly establish itself in South Africa as a broad based party of the people, uniting under its umbrella structure, a wide cross-section of the population.³³ Due to this broad based nature, the ANC elite heeded the popular consensus of the conference, even if it went against the opinions of some of its leaders.

Immediately after the conference, the ANC held a mass rally at Soccer City. Tambo's speech did not explicitly mention the delicate issue of sanctions, but reiterated the importance of the international community and Southern Africa to the ANC and the future of South African democracy. He concluded:

One thing we should never forget and shall never forget is the role of the international community in our struggle. Countries far and apart will do everything to aid our struggle... But you should have seen the international response the last time Nelson toured the world, a journey he is yet to complete. Above all, we have enjoyed solid support from Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Nigeria. The failure of these countries in anything would have been our failure. They hold our ground, and we are grateful...

²⁹ O. R. Tambo, Opening address to the ANC National Consultative Conference, 14 December 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=104> (22/11/09).

³⁰ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 707.

³¹ *Financial Times (FT)*, 27 June 1990.

³² Quote from John Carlin cited in, Adam and Moodley, *Negotiated Revolution*, p. 51.

³³ For example, after 1990, the United Democratic Front (UDF) disbanded, with the majority of its leaders and supporters joining the ANC.

The international community have an equal duty, not to relax pressure until the apartheid crime against humanity has been ended.³⁴

This speech demonstrates how important the international community remained to the ANC's strategic thinking in late 1990. The leadership realised that its efforts to apply pressure on the South African government to reform in a manner acceptable to the ANC, still required international assistance. While there may not have been consensus on how best to harness this support, the ANC-leadership knew it was vital. Chris Landsberg agrees that the international community remained central to the ANC's strategy, arguing the leadership still 'regarded foreign intervention as a key source of influence over an unresponsive and powerful white government'.³⁵ Tambo's speech also hints at a sense of disquiet within the ANC hierarchy; without active and decisive support from external sources, it feared that it might get left behind in the negotiations process.

Meanwhile, the South African government had been increasingly successful in developing and renewing friendly links with Africa and the west. Both regions were eager to re-engage with South Africa to take advantage of the new economic opportunities available, and were therefore willing to accept at face value the NP's declared intentions to rapidly reform. The result was an easing of South Africa's isolation, which undermined many of the ANC's international strategies. Even while the NCC was in session, the EC lifted its ban on new investments in South Africa, although existing sanctions remained in place.³⁶ Landsberg argues that 'the nature of South Africa's diplomacy became captivating... the ANC was on the defensive, notably on its economic policy, sanctions, and the armed struggle'.³⁷ In 1989, an ANC document had explicitly warned that the movement 'cannot afford to tail behind the regime and allow ourselves to fall into a defensive posture, with the regime maintaining the offensive'.³⁸ This was however, exactly what was happening. Scott Thomas believes that the ANC's diplomacy had been completely disorientated by the pace and nature of De Klerk's initiatives; the latter had successfully wooed the

³⁴ O. R. Tambo, 'Speech to the ANC Rally at Soccer City, Johannesburg, December 16, 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=125> (22/11/09).

³⁵ Landsberg, 'Directing', p. 283.

³⁶ *Washington Post*, 16 December 1990.

³⁷ C. Landsberg, *The Quiet Diplomacy of Liberation: International politics and South Africa's transition* (Johannesburg, 2004), p. 88.

³⁸ UFH, Liberation Archives, ANC Swedish Mission, Box 88, File: Correspondence: ANC DIA (outgoing faxes, 1990-1992).

international community with his reforms, as he continued to display an impressive awareness of the impact of the rapid changes occurring in global politics.³⁹

The effectiveness of sanctions as a weapon for the ANC continued to decline in subsequent months. In February 1991, Mandela, angrily threatened to ‘turn South Africa upside down’ unless the EC maintained its sanctions programme.⁴⁰ However, his rhetorical denouncements were to no avail, as the EC unanimously renounced sanctions in April 1991.⁴¹ The US followed suit; President Bush lifted sanctions against South Africa in July.⁴² These events show the extent to which the ANC had been unable to convince the west of its point of view and how successful De Klerk had been in championing his alternative vision. The shift to an over-riding emphasis on economic considerations in the ‘new’ world order had caught the ANC off guard, leaving it outside the multilateral international consensus that had rapidly emerged. Janis Van der Westhuizen later argued that ‘the ANC seems to have been oblivious to the fact that the end of the Cold War did not so much herald the demise of the Soviet Union as it symbolised the triumph of neoliberalism. The ANC’s continued advocacy of sanctions... raised eyebrows’.⁴³

By July 1991, when the ANC’s 48th National Conference took place, the movement’s influence over international policy towards South Africa was severely limited; little progress had been made in the negotiations and rumblings of discontent were emerging amongst the ANC’s rank and file about the pace and direction of change. It forced Tambo to stress the need to maintain unity amongst the cadres in order to defeat apartheid. At the conference, the international situation was once again discussed. In the seven months since the NCC, the rhetorical demands of the ANC’s leadership regarding international support had apparently changed little. There were however signs that political attitudes were beginning to change within the leadership.

There are many similarities between the ANC’s NCC in 1990 and its 48th National Conference. In his opening address, Tambo declared that ‘as in the past, our

³⁹ S. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation: The Foreign Relations of the African National Congress Since 1960* (London, 1996), p. 220.

⁴⁰ *FT*, 9 February 1991.

⁴¹ *FT*, 16 April 1991.

⁴² *The Guardian*, 11 July 1991.

⁴³ J. van der Westhuizen, ‘South Africa’s emergence as a middle power’, *Third World Quarterly*, 19 (1998), pp. 449-51.

leadership should be exercised both here and abroad. This becomes even more important given the changing face of the international community. We must therefore refocus international attention on the need for continued support'.⁴⁴ This point was elaborated by Mandela, who stated: 'the continued support of the international community remains vital for the victory of our cause. We also need further to strengthen our links with the rest of the world'.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Mandela demanded that the ANC 'should find ways and means by which to arrest the process of the erosion of sanctions... [so] we do not lose this weapon'.⁴⁶ Although the ANC was evidently still seeking to preserve its external support, it was still wedded to the retention of sanctions as a mechanism for political change. The leadership clearly realised the importance of international assistance to the negotiations, but had little idea of how best to proceed in engaging external actors in the process. There was at this point, no clear direction or understanding of how best to implement its foreign policy objectives. The machinery of the NP government retained a distinct advantage over the ANC, which was still adapting to life as a legal political entity. There were real structural difficulties for the ANC in the initial stages of the transition, with foreign policy matters not fully discussed because there were more pressing concerns for the movement to consider.

The 1991 conference did however provide a forum in which the ANC could begin formulating a plan of action on foreign policy. Mandela pointed out that 'elaboration of policy cannot itself go on forever. We must begin to arrive at firm conclusions about what we would do with the country once we become the governing party'. Furthermore, he argued 'it would be important that we discuss the question of the possible role of the international community'.⁴⁷ Following the conference deliberations, a set of 'resolutions on foreign policy' were adopted. These resolutions reaffirmed and built upon the ANC's existing foreign policy statements: the Freedom Charter, the Kabwe Document, and the Harare Declaration.

The resolutions of the 48th National Conference was the first ANC foreign policy document that recognised the fundamental global changes that had occurred,

⁴⁴ O. R. Tambo, 'Opening address to the ANC 48th National Conference, Durban, 2 July 1991, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=104> (22/11/09).

⁴⁵ N. Mandela, 'opening address to the 48th National Conference of the ANC', <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=106> (22/11/09).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, (22/11/09).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, (22/11/09).

and the effect of these on the movement. The resolutions on foreign policy set out five areas of concern. The first section was sanctions and the need to utilise them as a form of pressure. The ANC recognised that it needed to discuss with its external allies how best to utilise sanctions in the changed environment, while insisting that ‘the international community should be urged to listen to the view of the democratic forces and not seek to reward the apartheid regime’.⁴⁸ The second and third areas covered the mobilisation of international anti-apartheid forces and the need for financial and material assistance. It highlighted the importance of the AAM, not only in providing moral and material assistance to the ANC, but also in continuing to pressurise the international community to fulfil its obligations towards South Africa. The conference resolved that ‘the world anti-apartheid movement should prepare adequately for an important post-apartheid role’, underlining the expectations and optimism the movement had regarding the extent of future external assistance.⁴⁹ The significance of regional and international cooperation were also identified; resolutions set out how the ANC hoped to actively promote human rights, democracy, African solidarity, and as the future government of South Africa its desire to gain admission into various multilateral organisations such as the OAU.⁵⁰ The final section of the resolutions called for the National Executive Committee (NEC) to ensure wider democratic participation in foreign policy discussions amongst the movement’s members and that sub-committees should be established to help guide these discussions.⁵¹

As the resolutions indicate, the ANC had begun to take the first tentative steps towards developing an overt framework for its foreign policy. Existing demands such as sanctions and international assistance had been elaborated upon, while dominant international discourses of the time, such as human rights and weapon controls, were incorporated into the document.

Whilst this process was unfolding, a diplomatic battle between the ANC and NP was occurring over relations with other African states. Throughout its exile, the ANC had relied heavily on African support in order to wage its struggle, and it

⁴⁸ Adopted Resolutions on Foreign Policy, ANC 48th National Conference, Durban, July 1991, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=113> (23/11/09).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, (23/11/09).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, (23/11/09).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, (23/11/09).

assumed that these relationships would endure. However, after 1990 its longstanding allies began to draw away from the movement. As noted in Chapter Three, the ANC had already been on the retreat in Southern Africa in the 1980s, as successive Frontline States were forced by South African pressure to expel its cadres and relations soured. To make matters worse, the ANC was shocked by the election defeat of its long standing ally and benefactor, Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, whose United National Independence Party (UNIP) lost to the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in November 1991 in the country's first multi-party elections since 1968.⁵² An ideological stalwart of the movement had been democratically voted out of office, and the ANC's ties with the Zambian state were effectively severed. It was a sign of wider political change on the continent; between 1990 and mid-1991, for the first time in post-colonial African history, three presidents lost power through democratic elections.⁵³ Vale believes that the ANC's relations with other African allies in the early 1990s were not always as happy as publicly stated, and points to Angola and Mozambique as examples.⁵⁴ Journalist and historian R.W. Johnson agrees, claiming that the influence of FRELIMO and the MPLA 'diminishes once 1990 takes place, but the ANC does [still] acknowledge a very large debt to them'.⁵⁵

The strained relations between the ANC and continental powers during this period were exacerbated by the efforts of the NP government to develop closer ties with other Africa states. During apartheid, South Africa had repeatedly attempted to lure the continent into its embrace through a series of initiatives such as the Dialogue programme of the early 1970s and its plans for a constellation of states in Southern Africa (see Chapters Two and Three).⁵⁶ After 1990, the NP began to renew and intensify these efforts, illustrated by De Klerk's visits across the continent. As discussed previously, Africa's importance had been encapsulated in South Africa's 'New Diplomacy', which led Roger Pfister to argue that Africa was 'of seminal relevance' to South African initiatives.⁵⁷ In fact, from 1990, De Klerk's government

⁵² *FT*, 2 November 1991. Such political changes in Africa were themselves part of the unfolding post-Cold War world, allowing pro-democracy movements to make gains across the continent.

⁵³ *FT*, 7 June 1991.

⁵⁴ Interview with Professor Peter Vale, University of Rhodes, 31 August 2009.

⁵⁵ Telephone interview with R.W. Johnson, 13 November 2009.

⁵⁶ J. Hanlon, *Apartheid's Second Front: South Africa's War Against its Neighbours* (Harmondsworth, 1986), pp. 37-38.

⁵⁷ Pfister, 'Gateway', p. 66.

had worked tirelessly to undermine the ANC's alliances with the continent, and he made several official visits to establish relations with a number of African leaders.

For example in June 1991, De Klerk made an historic visit to Kenya to meet President Daniel arap Moi. They discussed greater economic collaboration, and De Klerk declared that there was a 'new wind of change blowing across Africa'.⁵⁸ The creation of formal economic ties with Africa was a pressing concern for South Africa, yet more so for the rest of the continent. When its trade links with the continent were published in December 1991, it revealed that South Africa had business links with 'nearly every country on the continent' despite the sanctions campaign against Pretoria and that its exports to the continent had grown by 40% in 1989 and another 22% in 1990.⁵⁹ Thomas subsequently argued that 'African nations motivated by self interest and increasing economic difficulties, were already ignoring ANC appeals'.⁶⁰ Such public revelations came as a major setback for the ANC. It demonstrated that African efforts to end apartheid and achieve a favourable settlement for the black majority in South Africa had diminished in favour of economic self-interest. It was however, hardly surprising that African states would put their economies before international solidarity due to their perilous financial standing; it must be remembered that many had attempted to isolate apartheid South Africa at great financial loss to themselves, so after 1990 they rushed to take advantage of the new possibilities opening up.

A further setback to the ANC occurred in April 1992 when De Klerk visited Nigeria. Nigeria, one of Africa's largest and most politically significant countries, had been publicly hostile to apartheid South Africa, but this meeting began a new chapter in bilateral relations and so 'was a tremendous breakthrough for Pretoria's Africa strategy'.⁶¹ In fact, Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida, the then chairman of the OAU, welcomed De Klerk with open arms, declaring: 'we are delighted that we have at last found someone in South Africa with whom we can do business'.⁶² Patti Waldmeir remarked that the Nigerian visit marked 'South Africa's final reconciliation with the rest of Africa, from which it has been so long estranged. No

⁵⁸ *FT*, 10 June 1991.

⁵⁹ *FT*, 18 December 1991.

⁶⁰ Thomas, *Diplomacy*, p. 229.

⁶¹ Pfister, 'Gateway', p. 66.

⁶² *FT*, 11 April 1992.

African door can remain closed to Mr de Klerk, now that Nigeria has welcomed him back'.⁶³ Pfister agrees that the meeting 'sent the message to other African states that diplomatic contact with Pretoria was now acceptable'.⁶⁴

The Nigeria visited infuriated the ANC, as the agreement between the two states, further limited the movement's policy options internationally; especially as the ANC's core-support base was being rapidly eroded. Although African states did still support the movement, they were just more critical in their approach to the ANC. Mandela publicly criticised Babangida, but was rebuked by the Nigerians, being told 'that they would "not be dictated to by anyone's business but our own"'.⁶⁵ At this point it appeared that De Klerk had achieved the progress he desired with Africa, and reduced the ANC's influence internationally. Despite establishing new foreign policy guidelines, and mounting a concerted effort to counteract Pretoria's diplomatic offensive, little had been achieved. In fact, the ANC felt that its hard won international recognition and diplomatic successes achieved during exile was being rapidly undermined.

A turning point however occurred in June 1992, when a domestic incident sparked international furore, marking the beginning of the end for De Klerk's successful diplomatic offensive. The Boipatong Massacre left over forty people dead after Inkatha members assisted by South African security forces attacked township dwellers, an event 'which set a new standard of South African atrocity'.⁶⁶ De Klerk was blamed for official complicity in the massacre.⁶⁷ The massacre prompted the ANC to walk out of the CODESA negotiations in protest and begin a campaign 'of rolling mass action' to pressurise De Klerk.⁶⁸ Internationally, this proved to be, according to Pfister, a turning point for its foreign policy, as it proved the 'ideal opportunity for the ANC to reactivate the diplomatic support of the international community'.⁶⁹ The international community was unwilling to allow South Africa to descend into a spiral of violence, but nor was it willing to accept the continued domination by whites of the levers of political power. Steven Freidman argues that

⁶³ *FT*, 8 April 1992.

⁶⁴ Pfister, 'Gateway', p. 66.

⁶⁵ Landsberg, *Quiet Diplomacy*, p. 127.

⁶⁶ P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The end of apartheid and the birth of the new South Africa* (New Brunswick, 1998), p. 191.

⁶⁷ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 724.

⁶⁸ Marais, *Limits to Change*, p. 89.

⁶⁹ Pfister, 'Gateway', p. 67.

‘the sense of crisis [Boipatong] engendered... triggered international involvement in the transition’.⁷⁰ It resulted in greater international intervention and pressure being applied to bring both sides to the negotiating table.

The new urgency in multilateral engagement became clear when, in August 1992, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a resolution to send international observers to oversee the negotiations in South Africa. This was augmented by the Commonwealth, which also agreed to send an observer team.⁷¹ The UN mission was hailed as a victory by the ANC, ‘which had always been enthusiastic about an active international role’ in the transition.⁷² These actions demonstrated to both sides that the international community was closely watching the transition process and was willing to play its part in the negotiations, to achieve a democratic outcome. Although international opinion alone did not change the situation in South Africa, it certainly contributed to creating a political climate more conducive to negotiations.⁷³

Negotiations (see Chapter Five) resumed in September 1992, when a ‘Record of Understanding’ was signed between the ANC and NP, which Waldmeir described as a ‘triumph of negotiation over conflict’.⁷⁴ According to Mandela, the ‘agreement set the mould for all negotiations that followed ... we were now aligned on the basic framework that would take the country into a democratic future’.⁷⁵ This resumption of negotiations, which were by no means predictable at this stage, allowed the ANC to begin the serious process of shaping its future foreign policy. While foreign policy deliberations were still not uppermost in ANC thinking in the following years, there was a clearer realisation that a formal position must be agreed upon to guide the movement in office once the elections had occurred.

⁷⁰ Friedman, *Long Journey*, p. 156.

⁷¹ *FT*, 18 & 19 August 1992.

⁷² Friedman, *Long Journey*, p. 156.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.158.

⁷⁴ Waldmeir, *Miracle*, p. 203.

⁷⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 726.

Formalising a Foreign Policy Perspective: 1993-1994

While the transition was predominantly focused on the negotiations to end apartheid and bring democracy to South Africa, behind the scenes the ANC was trying to address a number of other issues, including its foreign policy. As already established, the ANC only began to really consider scenarios for a state-based foreign policy during its 48th National Conference. However, once substantive negotiations with the NP resumed in September 1992, the opportunity for the ANC to start the process of policy formulation arose. In these latter stages of the transition the ANC began to develop a greater sense of the direction and substance of its policies and this found concrete expression in a number of documents. One such document, 'Foreign Policy in a new Democratic South Africa' was published in the run-up to the elections in April 1994 and was the culmination of this preparatory work. It provided a guide to a new, moralistic, international vision for South Africa under the ANC.

Work on this process was conducted by the ANC Foreign Policy Working Group, which had begun meeting a year after the movement's return to South Africa. Members of this group included, amongst others Peter Vale, Rob Davies, Gary van Staden, Alan Hirsch, the brothers Aziz and Essop Pahad, Thabo Mbeki, Welile Nhlapo, Sankie Mthembu and Stanley Mabizela.⁷⁶ Although Mbeki was a member of this group, he was not a regular attendee of its meetings, but when he did attend, the attitude of its other ANC members was deferential towards his opinions on foreign policy (the theme of deference within the movement and the increased centralisation of ANC foreign policy thinking that this occurrence reflected will be returned to in due course).⁷⁷ The Foreign Policy Working Group met on several occasions to discuss the future South African foreign policy and to draft a working policy document for the ANC. An early indication of the direction of the ANC Working Groups's deliberations after Boipatong can be found in the draft of a document entitled, 'A new foreign policy for South Africa: a discussion document'.⁷⁸ The document, primarily written by Vale, elaborates upon the proposals outlined in the

⁷⁶ Email correspondence with Alan Hirsch, 18 June 2011; Telephone interview with Professor Peter Vale, 5 March 2010.

⁷⁷ Telephone interview with Professor Peter Vale, 5 March 2010.

⁷⁸ University of Western Cape (hereafter UWC), Mayibuye Centre Historical Papers (hereafter MCH) 236, Draft Foreign Policy by Peter Vale, comments by Rob Davies, and page edits by Renfrew Christie.

‘Resolutions on Foreign Policy’ agreed at the 48th National Conference. The drastic global changes and the resultant evolving forms of state interaction were described as being a positive step forward for the international community; the document does however point to the ‘intense uncertainty’ worldwide, and warned of the resultant potential dangers such as the prospect of western triumphalism.⁷⁹ The document suggested that the ANC could exploit this new era in international relations, especially focusing on human rights; it expressed the belief ‘that South Africa should become a beacon for, a champion of, the international crusade for the values associated with this noble goal’.⁸⁰ This marked the beginning of a short lived period when the central focus of the ANC’s foreign policy approach was human rights and its promotion. The document also set out the principles which would guide ANC foreign policy in the future: a preoccupation with human rights; a belief in global solidarity; that justice and democracy should be the basis of its international relations; a desire for international peace; and the centrality of Africa.⁸¹

The draft document elaborates on each principle in turn. For example, a commitment was made to working closely within multilateral organisations like the UN and SADC to achieve goals such as disarmament, human rights and economic development. The unique nature of the ANC’s liberation struggle, which had resulted in interactions with countries from across the globe, was treated as a major advantage for the ‘new’ South Africa because as the world stood at ‘this new international crossroads’ the movement’s past experiences allowed it to fully ‘understand how to manage international relations... where worlds may clash’.⁸² This vision demonstrated the ANC’s confidence in South Africa’s ability to become a fully fledged and active member of the international community; having overcome injustice and inequality via a negotiated transition, it would act as an example to the wider world.

The document’s focus on Africa is informed by its earlier public pledges and is heavily emphasised because ‘our destiny is intertwined with theirs; our peoples belong with each other’.⁸³ This theme was one that the Working Group was keen to

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p 10.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

emphasise, and nine pages of the document are devoted to the question of future interactions with the continent. The main aim was to prevent Africa's growing international marginalisation, and to strive for equitable, mutually beneficial relations, and greater regional integration.⁸⁴ This principle was designed to repay Africa for its assistance and suffering during the liberation struggle, as well as an attempt to appease fears of South Africa's continued domination of the continent (see Chapters Six and Seven for this in practice). Vale now recalls there was a consensus amongst members of the Working Group to stress the importance of Southern Africa, because 'there was a large sense of optimism that we could transform Southern Africa, in a kind of positive way... [and to act as] retribution that we had to pay these people back for everything they'd done for us'.⁸⁵

There was, however, an element of self-interest in these proposals. The ANC as the future governing party was keen to promote stable, democratic nations in Africa, which it believed would then develop economically. If it was achieved, South African businesses would be able to take advantage of this opportunity by increasing its trade links with the continent. Furthermore, it would help make Southern Africa an attractive location for global investment flows. This would in turn boost the economy of South Africa, and enable the ANC to quicken the pace of domestic development and change. The draft discussion document was modified several times before being published in a substantively identical form in October 1993 as 'Foreign Policy in a new democratic South Africa: A discussion paper'.⁸⁶ The document clearly indicates how the ANC's thinking on foreign policy had evolved since 1991. The core message was one of democracy, human rights and the primacy of Africa. This was the most explicit statement of foreign policy intent the ANC had ever produced.⁸⁷

The discussion paper offers a powerful indication of the influences on the ANC and the policies which it hoped to pursue once in government. 'Foreign Policy in a new democratic South Africa' is very much a product of its time. Primarily, it reflects the ANC's vision of the world from the perspective of its own perceived

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸⁵ Telephone interview with Professor Peter Vale, 5 March 2010.

⁸⁶ *Foreign Policy in a New Democratic South Africa: A Discussion Paper*, October 1993, http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Govern_Political/ANC_Foreign.html (1/12/09).

⁸⁷ Interview with Professor Peter Vale, University of Rhodes, 31 August 2009.

moral struggle for democracy; and the broad consensus of the early 1990s that the global community would unite to bring about democracy, prosperity and human rights for all.⁸⁸ The document is rather celebratory in nature, as it rejoices in the end of the Cold War and the emerging, new world vision. It is clear that the ANC Working Committee had indeed embraced certain aspects of this new international thinking. This group, once in power, wanted an ANC-led South Africa to play a significant role in the new multilateral world and it was optimistic about the ways in which the international community could assist the country. Thabo Mbeki insisted that the world had a special responsibility to the country that ‘entails the obligation of the international community to assist the people of South Africa to effect the transformation’.⁸⁹

‘Foreign Policy in a new Democratic South Africa’ was the most definitive statement of intent on foreign policy produced by the ANC during the transition, but it was overshadowed by an article in the prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs*. Published in late 1993 under the name of Nelson Mandela, the article ‘South Africa’s Future Foreign Policy’ set out in detail what the country’s foreign relations under an ANC government would entail.⁹⁰ The article mainly summarised the document ‘Foreign Policy in a new democratic South Africa’ in a form more accessible to a wider international audience. The main points made in the article were the widely publicised six pillars of the ANC’s foreign policy: human rights; the promotion of democracy; justice and respect for international law; primacy of peace initiatives through non-violent means; the importance of Africa; and economic development through regional and economic cooperation.⁹¹ The article reaffirmed the focus on ‘unity and closer cooperation’ with Africa, and declared that a ‘democratic South Africa will... resist any pressure or temptation to pursue its own interests at the expense of the sub-continent’.⁹² The article also brought the decision to make human rights a central tenet of future foreign policy to a much greater audience. ‘Mandela’ argued that a human rights based approach to South Africa’s future foreign policy,

⁸⁸ This ‘moral’ struggle that was elucidated in these discussions documents differed from the more politicised version of the ANC’s thinking in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁸⁹ T. Mbeki, ‘South Africa’s International Relations: Today and Tomorrow’, in G. Mills (ed.), *From Pariah to Participant: South Africa’s Evolving Foreign Relations 1990-1994* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 201.

⁹⁰ N. Mandela, ‘South Africa’s Future Foreign Policy’, *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (1993), pp. 86-97.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

‘will be the light that guides our foreign affairs’.⁹³ Despite the idealistic underpinnings of the article, it expresses more pragmatic tendencies in referring to economic priorities. The need for foreign investment to alleviate inequalities and improve education, skills and opportunities is stressed in the article, but there was also an astute awareness that foreign intervention would not be a quick solution to South Africa’s economic woes.⁹⁴

The article has been widely identified as the benchmark for what South Africa’s new, moral foreign policy would constitute, as well as displaying the personal beliefs of Mandela. However, this article was not actually written by Nelson Mandela. In fact the ANC had very little input into it. The *Foreign Affairs* article was written mainly by Peter Vale, who constructed its intellectual argument, while various experts (Gary van Staden, Alan Hirsch and Rob Davies) contributed to it.⁹⁵ The ANC leadership did have a role in editing and approving the final outcome of the piece; this willingness is indicated by its decision to allow Mandela’s name to be publicly associated with the principles it espoused. Interestingly, there was originally a section about Burma (officially known as Myanmar) which would have given concrete emphasis to the democratic and human rights sections of the article, but it was removed from the final published version. Vale recalls that senior ANC member ‘Kader Asmal read the paper and excoriated bits of it. Particularly, excoriated the bit about Burma that was in it, and he took out the reference to Aung San Suu Kyi’.⁹⁶ Perhaps, even in the process of endorsing the primacy of human rights to its foreign policy, some ANC leaders realised that it would not be possible to implement this policy in every case; in this instance it chose to avoid publicly criticising the Burmese Junta before taking power. Given what occurred to South Africa’s promotion of human rights after 1994, it is a plausible explanation, and a sign of things to come.

In fact, two members of the ANC Foreign Policy Working Group have expressed their doubts about there ever being a widespread consensus on human rights within the ANC’s leadership. Alan Hirsch argues that ‘there was tension

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.88.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.

⁹⁵ Interview with Professor Peter Vale, University of Rhodes, 31 August 2009; Email correspondence with Alan Hirsch, 18 June 2011.

⁹⁶ Telephone interview with Professor Peter Vale, 5 March 2010.

between those who preferred human rights to be the fundamental basis of foreign policy (most of the participants) and those who believed that this was not realistic... As I recall, the main opponents to the “unrealistic” view were Thabo Mbeki and myself.⁹⁷ Furthermore, Vale recalls:

I never thought that there was a commitment on the human rights. I always thought that there was a real worry by some people, let's call them the group around Thabo [Mbeki], that the new human rights thing was quite dangerous. And that's why it reverted very quickly to a national interest centred approach. In fact, when I think about it now, the human rights dimension was carried by very few of us. But we were extremely influential because we were writing the document.⁹⁸

This brings into doubt the extent to which the ANC leadership was committed to its well publicised pursuit of a human rights inspired foreign policy after 1994, and is one supported by Mark Gevisser. He documented Mbeki's doubts about the pursuit of human rights, believing that Mbeki thought that ‘while such high-minded principles might befit a liberation movement, they were entirely impractical for the government of an emerging power, struggling to re-enter the global economy’.⁹⁹ Gevisser's, Hirsch's and Vale's sentiments are illuminating, perhaps offering an explanation for the causes of some of post-apartheid South Africa's more contradictory policies. This assessment indicates that Mbeki amongst others had serious misgivings about the new public direction the ANC was pursuing in its foreign policy, even as it was being written. It begs the question, why would the ANC leadership commit itself to the centrality of human rights in its foreign policy if it did not genuinely believe in pursuing it?

There are several potential explanations for this. One is that the ANC had historically declared the primacy of human rights in the Freedom Charter, and throughout its exile had emphasised the moral nature of its struggle against apartheid. As the Freedom Charter had been the enduring vision for the movement during exile it may have been that its leaders believed that they could not abandon this principle in the run-up to the first democratic elections, especially because of the popularity of such sentiments. It must be kept in

⁹⁷ Email correspondence with Alan Hirsch, 18 June 2011.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Gevisser, *The Dream Deferred*, p. 705.

mind that in the early 1990s human rights discourse was in the ascendency, both internationally and domestically. For example, in the South African constitution, which the ANC had a key role in creating, human rights are given a prominent position.¹⁰⁰ It would have been contradictory of the ANC if it had pursued a policy of human rights at home, but ignored it in its foreign policy.

During its exile and reaffirmed during the transition, the ANC had emphasised that the people of South Africa would have a say in the governing of a democratic country, a principle enshrined in the Freedom Charter. By including in the task of foreign policy creation a group of South African experts, in collaboration with the movement, it allowed the ANC to fulfil, in part, this longstanding objective. It did however mean that the ANC leadership was not entirely in control of the process of policy formulation. As Hirsch and Vale point out, only a few voices within the Foreign Policy Working Group promoted this principle, but because those who supported it were writing the document, the ANC's leaders (particularly Mbeki) had little influence over the policy being adopted. This is surprising as Hirsch recalls that 'the most influential participant was Thabo Mbeki, but I am not sure that he always held sway'.¹⁰¹ The result was that the human rights aspect of foreign policy was in many respects, imposed upon the wider movement. Although some of the movement's leaders may not have fully agreed with the agenda, they could not easily be seen to oppose the prevailing sentiment.

Yet, the acceptance of human rights as part of its broader foreign policy can also be seen as the ANC leadership exploiting the western international community. They were fully aware that its commitment to such a noble ideal would bring valuable plaudits to the movement and the 'new' South Africa. It is also worth keeping in mind that Mbeki was a wily and experienced international politician who had met with western diplomats on a number of occasions as the 'acceptable face' of the ANC during the 1980s. Merle Lipton believes that Mbeki may well have agreed to adopt the human

¹⁰⁰ The South African Constitution, adopted in 1996, <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf> (5/5/11).

¹⁰¹ Email correspondence with Alan Hirsch, 18 June 2011.

rights aspects for political reasons, but in the long-run he never actually intended to maintain such policies once in power.¹⁰² Adam Habib later argued, when referring to Mbeki's presidency, that his 'administration betrays characteristics of both appeasement and subversive engagement'.¹⁰³ As will be developed in the following chapters, such tendencies within the ANC leadership became increasingly apparent. What can be observed from this episode is that, while the ANC leadership may not have been fully supportive of the notion of human rights as a central element of its foreign policy, it was willing to submit itself to the consensus view, and take a bold step in this new direction.

This process does however raise important questions about the true nature of the ANC in exile, its democratic credentials, and the extent to which human rights was fully endorsed within the movement. What is clear is that Thabo Mbeki (who played a prominent role in the ANC's international relations from the 1980s, through to end of his presidency) and his confidants were not necessarily in favour of human rights as a leading principle. This was to have serious implications for the foreign policy of the ANC after 1994. On the eve of the elections, there was already an emerging tension in the ANC's foreign policy between pragmatism and idealism. Although it was willing to publicly pursue this moral stance internationally, the ANC leadership also had expressed a need for a pragmatic approach to foreign policy. The contradictions which emerged in the ANC-led government's foreign policy after 1994 were already evident by the end of the transition.

As 'South Africa's Future Foreign Policy' was being drafted and published, South Africa had moved rapidly towards a democratic future. In November 1993, the interim South African constitution was approved by delegates to the multiparty conference.¹⁰⁴ As part of the transition, the TEC was established in December, to ensure the effective administration of South Africa until the elections; it effectively

¹⁰² Email correspondence with Merle Lipton, 11 May 2011.

¹⁰³ A. Habib, 'South Africa's foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 16 (2009), p. 147.

¹⁰⁴ The Interim South African Constitution, adopted in 1993, <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/93cons.htm> (5/5/11).

governed the country from December 1993 until April 1994.¹⁰⁵ As part of the TEC, six sub councils were created to help oversee various state structures, one of which was the TEC Sub Council on Foreign Affairs (SCFA). The SCFA played a vital, but little studied or understood role in shaping the future foreign policy of the new South Africa. The activities, findings, and recommendations of the SCFA will be fully explored in Chapter Five, which will also illustrate how the sub council influenced the ANC's own foreign policy perspectives, and played a pivotal role in shaping post-apartheid South Africa's initial foreign policy.

Conclusion

The TEC provided the mechanism for a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy, and the process involved the ANC working closely with various political groups in the SCFA. However, there were concerns about the extent of the continuity between the 'old' and the 'new' in South Africa that occurred because of the transition process. Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley argued that the unique changes in the international community, the economic leverage of whites, and the reconciliatory approach of the ANC, meant that 'few ruling groups have ever wriggled themselves out of a deadly predicament more elegantly'.¹⁰⁶ For some observers, the association and apparent acceptance of the final recommendations of the SCFA by the new ANC government, was criticised for being too closely connected and reflective of the old illegitimate order. Graham Evans argued that the ANC's new approach was 'virtually indistinguishable from the overall philosophy underpinning van Heerden's New Diplomacy'.¹⁰⁷ This was in part because the ANC had worked so closely with the DFA, especially during the TEC period. Evans concluded 'by the time that the new South Africa was established, the ANC's Department of International Affairs, at the highest level at least, was working in harness with the DFA. There was therefore no discernable break with the immediate past'.¹⁰⁸ Evans's assessment is correct in many respects. Both the ANC and the NP's previous foreign policy perspectives were profoundly shaped by the international

¹⁰⁵ Mandela, *Long Walk*, p. 733.

¹⁰⁶ H. Adam, and K. Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (Berkeley, 1993), p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Evans, 'Remission', p. 259.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

circumstances in the post-Cold War era, and each was forced to react rapidly to the changed environment they found themselves in. Steven Friedman insisted it was ‘influence and pressure from abroad which began the negotiation process; throughout it, the protagonists continued to bargain with one eye on the foreign audience’.¹⁰⁹ Chapter Five will thus explore more fully the extent to which the old order, in close cooperation with the international community, ‘captured’ the ‘new’ South Africa’s foreign policy. The revelation that Mandela did not write or contribute to the *Foreign Affairs* article to which the ANC put his name, and that other foreign policy documents had been largely created outside of the ANC’s leadership control, raises a number of important questions. Do these public announcements really represent the ‘true’ nature of ANC foreign policy and did the ANC leadership (let alone its membership) ever ‘own’ its foreign policy?

In fact, one of the most remarkable aspects of the transition is the extent to which the ANC successfully adapted to the immense global changes. After its initial problems in coming to terms with the situation that faced them in 1990, the ANC’s foreign policy gradually evolved throughout the transition. By April 1994, certain aspects of the ANC’s foreign policy may have mirrored the NP’s initiatives, but these were eminently pragmatic options reflecting the movement’s understanding and perceptions of South Africa’s interest. It would perhaps have been foolhardy for the ANC to have pursued anything radically different from that of the international mainstream. Yet, the transition witnessed the ANC making some bold and distinctive assertions in its foreign policy. Most notable was its focus on human rights, which became the central tenet of its foreign policy. No matter what may have occurred to this policy after taking power and what might be seen in hindsight as its naivety, this was a noble ideal for the movement to pursue, and one which few others would have dared to embrace. By embarking on this policy the ANC showed that it was willing to lead South Africa into a new era under the guiding light of a moralistic foreign policy. The challenge the ANC faced was how best to implement its new foreign policy ideals in an unforgiving world.

¹⁰⁹ Friedman, *Long Journey*, p. 156.

Chapter Five

The Sub Council on Foreign Affairs (SCFA) of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC): The effects on the ANC's post-apartheid South African Foreign Policy

As part of South Africa's transition to majority rule, the formation of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) was the clearest signal of intent by the various parties involved that a negotiated end to apartheid could finally be reached. Months of negotiations between the apartheid government and the different political parties culminated in the TEC being established. Enacted in law by State President F.W. De Klerk on the 27 October 1993, the Transitional Executive Council Act was passed 'with a view to promoting the preparation for and transition to a democratic order in South Africa'.¹ The cross-party TEC, made up of nineteen of the political parties involved in the negotiation process (with the notable exceptions of the Freedom Alliance and the PAC), was tasked to lead South Africa during the last few months before the April 1994 elections. The TEC's main focus was on South Africa's domestic transition to democracy. It nonetheless had a vital role (but one neglected by researchers) in the future direction of South Africa's foreign policy. This chapter will explore how the TEC, and more importantly the activities of its Sub Council on Foreign Affairs (SCFA), played a decisive but historically marginalised part in shaping the country's international relations in the context of the 'new world order' of the early 1990s, which in many crucial ways negated and undermined the ANC's post-apartheid vision for South Africa's foreign policy.

Chapter Four highlighted that a vast literature had been generated on South Africa's transition. A number of key topics have been well researched, such as the intrigues within the negotiation process, the violence which ravaged many parts of the country, and the clashes of ideas between the NP and the ANC. However, the same cannot be said of the TEC, and even more so of the activities of its composite sub councils. Despite playing a significant role during the latter stages of the transition, the TEC and the SCFA have been largely neglected in the historiography. Steven Friedman's two edited collections on the negotiated settlement are rare

¹ Act No. 151 of 1993: Transitional Executive Council Act, 27th October 1993, <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=88467> (17/6/2010).

exceptions, yet even within these, the coverage of the TEC and SCFA are not central topics.² The TEC is rarely mentioned in the literature, more often than not being completely ignored and there is currently only one publication which examines the role of the SCFA.³ The following examples briefly illustrate the extent of this neglect. Patrick Bond, in the book *Elite Transition*, gives only passing mention of the TEC, with the only reference being a direct quote from a newspaper article.⁴ In *Anatomy of a Miracle*, Patti Waldmeir, who is sceptical about the supposed ‘miracle’ transition, describes the creation of the TEC in a few paragraphs, detailing merely how this new stage in the transition affected the political power of De Klerk.⁵ Hein Marais refers to the TEC only once in his main narrative, as well as in several footnotes which contain scant additional information.⁶ Numerous other studies of the period neglect the TEC or provide very little coverage of what it entailed.⁷

There are a number of possible explanations why the story of the SCFA has been overlooked or omitted from the historiography. First, it is important to recall the importance of South Africa’s transition, both domestically and internationally. The term ‘miraculous’ has been frequently used to describe this momentous event in South African history, an indication of the various interpretations of the transition. As the negotiations unfolded and the elections loomed, the attention of the media and the academic world was on the dramatic domestic political transformation. The *Financial Times* described the events as ‘one of the most extraordinary political transformations of the twentieth century’.⁸ Whilst it is evident that many important people, including politicians, civil servants, journalists, and academics in South Africa and abroad were aware of the SCFA and its activities during the transition, in the excitement of the election period and with the inauguration of the new

² S. Friedman and D. Atkinson (eds.), *South African Review 7: The Small Miracle. South Africa’s negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg, 1994); S. Friedman (ed.), *The Long Journey: South Africa’s quest for a negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg, 1993).

³ M. Graham, ‘Coming in from the cold: The Transitional Executive Council and South Africa’s reintegration into the international community’, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 49 (2011), pp. 359-379.

⁴ P. Bond, *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* (London, 2000), p. 179.

⁵ P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The end of apartheid and the birth of the new South Africa* (New Brunswick, 1998), pp. 212-13.

⁶ H. Marais, *South Africa: Limits to Change* (London, 2001), p. 104.

⁷ For example: C. Landsberg, G. Pere, and A. van Nieuwkerk (eds.), *Mission Imperfect: Redirecting South Africa’s Foreign Policy* (Johannesburg, 1995); C. Landsberg, *The Quiet Diplomacy of Liberation: International politics and South Africa’s transition* (Johannesburg, 2004); R. Spitz and M. Chaskalson, *The Politics of Transition: A Hidden History of South Africa’s Negotiated Settlement* (Oxford, 2000).

⁸ *Financial Times (FT)*, 18 July 1994.

government, it would appear that most of the important work of the sub council went unnoticed and has since been forgotten. Secondly, because the TEC lasted for only five months, its short lifespan may have been equated to an apparent lack of importance. Finally, the South African Foreign Affairs Archive in Pretoria has a twenty-year embargo on declassifying documentation on the SCFA. This provides an obstacle preventing research into the government's activities during the transition.

Nevertheless, what makes this glaring omission in the historiography even more surprising is that the SCFA had profound ramifications for South African foreign policy after April 1994. The previous chapter argues that during the four years of South Africa's transition, the ANC had never been in full control of the formulation of its foreign policy. It was argued that this lack of ownership had potentially serious implications for the subsequent ANC-led post-apartheid government's foreign policy. However, another, and potentially more decisive factor that significantly affected the new government's foreign policy was the activities of the SCFA. While being extremely important, it is in many ways an untold story. This chapter utilises newly available documentation of the SCFA housed at the South African Historical Archive at the University of Witwatersrand, the personal papers of a DFA civil servant, as well as interviews, to explore the ways in which the SCFA played a significant role in transforming, influencing and directing the foreign policy of the post-apartheid government.

The Multiparty Negotiation Process and the Transitional Executive Council

Before a thorough analysis of the SCFA can be undertaken, it is necessary to provide some context to the formation of the TEC and its sub councils. South Africa's transition went through a number of evolutionary phases before the April 1994 elections. In December 1991, the negotiation process in South Africa had been embodied by the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). However, by May 1992, CODESA had begun to break down, in part due to the intransigence of the various political parties, and also because of their widely differing visions for the future of South Africa. The Boipatong Massacre on 17 June 1992, 'precipitated the irreversible collapse of the Codesa talks' bringing South Africa's transitional talks

to a halt.⁹ However, both the NP and the ANC faced domestic, and more importantly, international pressures to resume negotiations. In August 1992, bilateral talks resumed between the two parties, represented by Roelf Meyer, Minister of Constitutional Development and Cyril Ramaphosa, Secretary General of the African National Congress. The meetings entailed discussions with a view to remove obstacles towards the resumption of negotiations; these talks culminated in the ‘Record of Understanding’ being signed on the 26 September 1992.¹⁰ There were several vital aspects to the ‘Record of Understanding’. Primarily, it provided a binding agreement for a constitution to be drafted and adopted, and secondly, established that a transitional interim government (along with various accompanying structures), would be created to oversee the transition.¹¹ This agreement between the NP and the ANC, was Richard Spitz rightly argues, ‘a turning point in political negotiations. It set broad terms for the negotiated transition from which subsequent talks never departed’.¹²

After the ‘Record of Understanding’ was signed, subsequent negotiations resulted in the formation of the Multiparty Negotiating Process (MPNP) to facilitate the essential discussions towards the transition. Bringing together the previously bitterly opposed parties, the MPNP demonstrated that a compromise could finally be reached to bring about a democratic solution for South Africa. On 5-6 March 1993, a multiparty planning conference took place at the World Trade Centre, in Kempton Park, where the parties were tasked with setting a date for the resumption of formal negotiations.¹³ Appreciating the need for swift and decisive action to overcome the impasse, the delegates agreed that the MPNP would first convene on the 1 April 1993.¹⁴ Between April and November 1993, delegates to the MPNP regularly met to debate and finalise issues which ranged from plans for the South African constitution to arrangements for the future elections. The MPNP was supported in its task by

⁹ Spitz and Chaskalson, *Transition*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁰ ‘Record of Understanding’, Meeting between the State President of the Republic of South Africa and the President of the African National Congress Held at the World Trade Centre on the 26 September 1992, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4206&t=Transition%20to%20Democracy> (6/7/2010).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Spitz and Chaskalson, *Transition*, p. 30.

¹³ D. Atkinson, ‘Brokering a miracle?: The multiparty negotiating forum’, in S. Friedman and D. Atkinson (eds.), *South African Review 7: The Small Miracle. South Africa’s negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg, 1994), pp. 21-23.

¹⁴ Spitz and Chaskalson, *Transition*, pp. 34-36.

various Technical Committees and Commissions, which as Spitz argues ‘was a fundamental departure from the structuring of the Codesa process: its importance cannot be overstated’.¹⁵ A key lesson learnt from CODESA was that large gatherings of politically opposed parties would never be able to reach agreements, or even compromise. Therefore, the process was organised in such a way that the MPNP comprised a number of small working groups that would regularly meet to discuss specifically assigned issues, making it easier to make decisions.¹⁶ This is crucial as the model of establishing smaller working groups provides the entire basis and justification for the formation of the TEC and the SCFA. These recommendations were subsequently presented to the Negotiating Committee of the MPNP for further debate, and then later to the plenary for ratification. One such committee was the Technical Committee on the Transitional Executive Council, and it was ultimately through its deliberations that the TEC was created.

The ‘First Report of the Technical Committee on the Transitional Executive Council of the MPNP’ dated the 13 May 1993, set out the reasoning for a Transitional Executive Council for South Africa. It suggested that there was a need for transparency, legitimacy and stability in order to foster free and fair elections and inspire international confidence in the electoral process.¹⁷ The MPNP fully appreciated the role the international community would play during the transition, and thus its recommendations attempted in part to appease its fears and instil it with confidence in the process. The Technical Committee proposed that as part of the TEC there should be several sub councils, each of which was ‘to be a small and effective working group’ that would engage with issues on a daily basis.¹⁸ Another key recommendation tabled was that ‘the Transitional Executive Council shall be constituted with executive powers to facilitate, in conjunction with existing legislative and executive structures, the transition to a democratic order’, with the primary aim of levelling the political playing field between all the parties involved in the MPNP before April 1994.¹⁹ The report also identified several questions that required further investigation, predominantly regarding the power that the TEC could

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁶ Atkinson, ‘Miracle’, p. 24.

¹⁷ First Report of the Technical Committee on the Transitional Executive Council 13 May 1993, <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv02039/04lv02046/05lv02097/06lv02100.htm> (2/7/2010).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

wield.²⁰ These matters were left to be discussed in greater depth during the course of the negotiations. The report did not provide significant detail concerning the exact nature of what the TEC or the sub councils would entail, as these would be worked out in due course. However, even at this early stage in the proceedings, it demonstrates that the negotiators regarded the creation of sub councils as a vital mechanism to ensure a peaceful and successful transition.

Between May and October 1993, members of the MPNP met to resolve the questions posed in the First Report of the Technical Committee and to add further detail to the tentative points raised. In doing so, they laid the groundwork for what would later become the TEC. These recommendations subsequently became law, enshrined in the TEC Act signed by De Klerk in October 1993. The forty-two page TEC Act outlined the purposes, role and objectives of the TEC, and more importantly for this chapter, its sub councils.²¹

The formation and significance of the Transitional Executive Council

The TEC had no precedent in history and was an innovative means of attempting to solve the situation in South Africa. The TEC was even more remarkable in the way in which it successfully bound the political parties towards the common goal of a peaceful and democratic transition. The transitional body was composed of the TEC, a Management Committee, and eight sub councils which reported their findings back to the TEC. Each of the political parties that had adhered to the MPNP principles were allowed two representatives on the TEC in order to prevent the process being dominated by the NP or the ANC.²² The Management Committee was composed of by members from the TEC, who would meet before the general TEC meeting to set the agenda and review the activities of the sub councils.

However, the uniqueness of the TEC was reinforced by the fact that it was served by eight sub councils, which mirrored the departments of an elected government. The sub councils that constituted the TEC were: Regional and Local

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Act No. 151 of 1993: Transitional Executive Council Act, 27th October 1993, <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=88467> (17/6/2010).

²² South African History Archive (hereafter SAHA), William Cullen Library, University of Witwatersrand, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.7.14.

Government and Traditional Authorities; Law and Order; Stability and Security; Defence; Finance; Foreign Affairs; the Status of Women; and Intelligence.²³ Each sub council consisted of six or eight members nominated by their respective parties, ranging from apartheid era politicians to African liberation activists; the breadth of representation aimed to address the racial and political divisions in South Africa. In order to maintain this balance, no party was allowed to have more than one member on each sub council.²⁴ Informed by the experience of the MPNP, these small sub councils were regarded as the best way of reaching a consensus. Also, because they closely mirrored the governmental departments, the sub councils were able to liaise closely with relevant civil servants to access their expertise and opinions. For the story of the SCFA and post-apartheid South African foreign policy, the close cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) was to prove crucial to its outcome.

During its lifespan, the TEC and the sub councils were bestowed with significant legislative powers which impacted on the activities of the government, its civil servants and Departments. First, there was a supervisory role assigned to the TEC to ‘ensure that no Government or administration exercises any of its powers in such a way as to advantage or prejudice any political party’.²⁵ This article provided the TEC with the ability to implement and enforce the stated goal of levelling the political playing field before the elections. More importantly the TEC had been granted the authority to override and block government activity. The TEC Act stated:

Each Government and administration shall keep the Council informed of and shall provide it with copies of all of its proposed legislation, including regulations, by-laws and other subordinate legislation, which have a bearing on the objects of the Council. If the Council or the subcouncil concerned has reason to believe that any proposed legislation of any Government or administration is likely to have an adverse effect on the attainment of the objects of the Council, it may, after affording the Government or administration concerned an opportunity to make representations to the Council or the subcouncil concerned, and subject to the other provisions of this Act, direct that Government or administration in writing not to proceed with the legislation concerned, and that

²³ TEC Act 1993, <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=88467> (17/6/10).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Government or administration shall, subject to section 23, comply with such direction.²⁶

The clause meant that, even though the NP was still technically in control of the bureaucratic machinery of South Africa, its decision-making was subject to the endorsement of the TEC. Any government Department that wanted to accomplish a specific task would have to seek the approval of either the TEC or the appropriate sub council before it could be implemented.²⁷ A former senior civil servant in the DFA, former diplomat, and liaison officer to the SCFA, Tom Wheeler recalled that ‘it was very important to get their [SCFA] endorsement for anything that the Department wanted to do... the government continued, subject to endorsement’.²⁸ Indeed, in certain circumstances, the activities, influence, and power of government could effectively be overridden by the TEC and its sub councils. According to Ivor Sarakinsky, the SCFA was able to prevent the NP from ‘projecting its interests abroad as those of the country’.²⁹ *The Star* newspaper, in its analysis of the TEC and its role during the transition, noted at the time that ‘on paper, the TEC, and sub-councils do, therefore, have powers that could be significant and will be binding’.³⁰ This ability to prevent unfavourable legislation being passed was a powerful tool for the TEC, and it was one which the civil service clearly recognised. While the exact nature of the TEC and its powers was contested by some of the political parties involved, it essentially became South Africa’s de facto government during the last five months before the elections in April 1994.

In spite of certain aspects of the TEC’s authority being questioned, there were minimal protests from the NP, as it had willingly ceded its authority as South Africa’s government to the TEC. This was crucial in ensuring that the transition proceeded smoothly. It demonstrated the goodwill of the governing party to the other political parties involved in the negotiations. The powers of the TEC had a

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ For example, if the DFA wanted to send a delegation to an international conference, they would first have to seek the approval of the SCFA. Some examples of the DFA’s requests to send conference delegations include: the Symposium on Conflict Management in Africa in Cairo; the World Health Organisation Conference; and the 30th International Conference of Military Medicine: SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.6.54, A1.7.23, and A1.7.25.

²⁸ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

²⁹ I. Sarakinsky, ‘Rehearsing joint rule: The Transitional Executive Council’, in S. Friedman and D. Atkinson (eds.), *South Africa Review 7: The Small Miracle. South Africa’s negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 78.

³⁰ *The Star*, 10 September 1993.

significant bearing on the course of the SCFA and on South Africa's future foreign policy (see below). An important caveat is that the SCFA did not have a mandate to formulate foreign policy itself; it was only a bridge to future policy formulation by the Government of National Unity (GNU).³¹ Nevertheless the SCFA was highly influential; whilst the DFA fully appreciated the influence it could wield over its activities, it was forced to work closely with the sub council in order to advance its own agenda. To influence the decision-making of the SCFA, the DFA did its utmost to control, direct and shape the activities of the sub council and therefore South Africa's future foreign policy. This chapter will elaborate on this aspect of the SCFA in greater depth.

The Sub Council on Foreign Affairs

The role of the SCFA as set out in the TEC Act was to attain the broadest possible consensus on matters affecting South African international interests. To do so, the sub council was tasked with discussing and securing appropriate agreements with the international community that would benefit the future government, and provide it with the information necessary to act as a basis for its foreign policy. The SCFA's activities were to culminate in May 1994 with a set of proposals, recommendations, and agreements for the new government. In doing so, the SCFA's activities were supposed to enable the new government to 'hit the ground running'. The mandate of the SCFA set out in the TEC Act was as follows:

The Council shall, for the purpose of attaining its objects, through its Subcouncil on Foreign Affairs, in regard to foreign policy liaise, monitor, make recommendations and, where it is considered necessary, assist with a view to-

- (a) achieving progressively the broadest possible consensus on matters affecting South Africa's international interests, particularly its long-term interests;
- (b) securing appropriate agreements with the international community regarding the contribution that community could make to the peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa;
- (c) in consultation with the Subcouncil on Finance, securing such international assistance as the Subcouncil considers necessary in

³¹ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.7.14.

order to address the socio-economic needs of the people as a whole and not to serve the interests of one or other political party;
(d) ensuring that any foreign policy initiative benefits the country as a whole and not one or other political party; and
(e) promoting such international relations, including trade, finance, culture and sport relations, as in the opinion of the Subcouncil will benefit the country as a whole.³²

The emphasis on ensuring that foreign policy benefited South Africa, not individuals or political parties, reflected the fact that, even at this late stage in the transition, there was still widespread concern that one of the political parties would seek to manipulate the TEC in its own interests. As this chapter will suggest, the process was indeed subverted; this however was not achieved by a political party, but instead a government department, namely the DFA. The mandate also specifically identified the financial relations that the sub council could promote, via its activities. With the western international community's primary focus on economic relations, pursuing such links was to become a vital aspect of the SCFA's work.

The individual members who were nominated to the SCFA were John Barratt (Democratic Party), Aziz Pahad (ANC), Leon Wessels (National Party), Stella Sigcau (Cape Traditional Leaders), Godfrey Hetisani (Ximoko Progressive Party), and Ossie Gannie (National People's Party).³³ All were political representatives of their respective parties except Barratt; despite being nominated by the Democratic Party, Barratt was not actually a member of it. Instead, Barratt, the National Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), was appointed as a foreign affairs expert, whilst the others, had been selected for party political reasons (although, both Pahad and Wessels did also have significant foreign policy experience).³⁴ The sub council agreed to meet at regular intervals, both in South Africa and abroad, with the chairmanship of meetings rotating amongst the six members on an alphabetical basis in order to avoid accusations of political or racial bias. All its decisions had to be reached through voting by its members, with each resolution requiring a two-thirds majority to be approved.³⁵

³² Act No. 151 of 1993: Transitional Executive Council Act, 27th October 1993, <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=88467> (30/6/2010).

³³ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A2.4.

³⁴ Thanks to Professor Peter Vale for clarifying this point, telephone discussion, 5 March 2010.

³⁵ *The Star*, 10 September 1993.

The first meeting of the SCFA took place in Cape Town on 22 December 1993, which was attended by all six members. The sub council invited to this meeting the South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, the DFA's Director General Rusty Evans and its three deputy Director Generals Jeremy Shearer, Derek Auret, and Albert Van Niekerk.³⁶ This roll call of high ranking DFA attendees indicates how seriously the Department took the activities of the SCFA. The discussions were held in a 'positive and relaxed atmosphere' in which those present outlined the task of the SCFA.³⁷ The meeting also gave the DFA its first opportunity to clarify how the relationship between the Department, the TEC and the SCFA would work in practice.³⁸

Foreign Minister Botha addressed the assembled members during a working lunch, where he expanded on many of the themes that were outlined in the TEC Act. Botha insisted that the country's 'international relations should be apolitical and that we should have a non-partisan foreign policy', adding that 'in the field of foreign relations we should not allow internal political differences to weaken the solidarity'.³⁹ Botha instructed the sub council to subsume its political differences so as to benefit the whole country and not those of one party, so they should try as much as possible to relegate 'their party political aspirations to the background'.⁴⁰ The SCFA members were able to achieve this with considerable ease. As Wheeler suggests, the TEC process allowed DFA officials and the members of the sub council, who came from diverse political and social backgrounds, to engage with one another on both a professional and social level. It meant that, in Wheeler's words, 'they weren't sort of a strange bunch of people who were... a threat to us'.⁴¹ This enabled the DFA and SCFA to make significant progress with the task in hand.

The strength of this emerging relationship was powerfully demonstrated in Singapore during one of the SCFA's many foreign visits, on which it was accompanied by DFA officials. During the visit, all the delegates embarked on a

³⁶ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.6.5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.7.14.

⁴¹ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

cruise around Singapore harbour, which ended in a shared evening of karaoke.⁴² A published report of the visit, which detailed the events of the evening's entertainment, claimed that those present, had through the power of song, 'set about nation[s] building'.⁴³ This event reveals the growing personal ties that were being forged during the short period of the SCFA's existence, and indicates how the members of the sub council and the DFA had indeed been able to put aside their political differences. The close working relationship developed into a social relationship, and in due course they became 'drinking partners'.⁴⁴ Having previously approached each other with political caution, in a few months of close work and extensive travelling together, they discovered significant common ground between them. According to Wheeler, this particularly paid off in the case of Aziz Pahad, who was appointed as Deputy Minister of the Department after the elections.⁴⁵ The sub council provided an important way in which the old and new administrations began the process of integration. It meant that on his appointment, Pahad already knew many of the people serving him (such as the Director General Rusty Evans), and the internal workings of the DFA. Pahad's role in the SCFA enabled him to begin work with full working knowledge of the issues at hand, due to the part he had played in formulating the recommendations for South Africa's foreign policy.

As already noted from the opening meeting, senior DFA officials took a keen and pro-active interest in the activities of the SCFA. Moreover, the report of the meeting describes the DFA's presentation to the SCFA. The presentation by the Director General, Evans, set out the DFA's initiatives during the transition, before the TEC had come into existence. Furthermore, the DFA had already put a liaison officer in place to provide information to the sub council; Evans also offered the SCFA free use of its offices and conference facilities in the Union Building.⁴⁶ The DFA had the facilities, knowledge, contacts and experience to initiate the members of the SCFA into the world of foreign relations. By providing such extensive assistance, the DFA was fulfilling the mandate of the TEC and adhering to the recommendations of Pik Botha. In fact, Wheeler believed that 'it was an interactive

⁴² 'Junketing on a Junk', contribution for the Meintjieskop Courier for publication after 27 April, from Tom Wheeler's personal papers.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.6.5.

process... There was no hostility mutually between us; we worked very well with them... And so it was useful to the old government until the change came, to have this body that would legitimise what they were doing'.⁴⁷

Although the DFA was compelled to act in accordance with the TEC, the Department did its utmost to influence the findings of the SCFA. The DFA's implementation of foreign policy since 1990 had gone through various phases, with the main focus being breaking South Africa's isolation and reintegrating the country back into the international community (see Chapter Four). In many respects, the NP and the DFA in tandem had been successful in improving South Africa's international standing, especially through its wholehearted embrace of fashionable neo-liberal ideals. Deon Geldenhuys recalls Pik Botha arguing at this time that 'as far as foreign policy is concerned, South Africa, or at least the out-going government, more or less handed the world on a platter to the ANC, with so many links, formal links... established'.⁴⁸

What made the SCFA potentially powerful was that it could nullify the policy formulations of both the ANC and the NP. The SCFA's final foreign policy recommendations were supposed to benefit the whole nation and not one political entity. As a cross-party body, the sub council was empowered to reach agreements with other countries and multilateral organisations. It would then be virtually impossible for the incoming GNU to rescind these agreements without severely damaging South Africa's international reputation. With only a matter of months until the elections, the ANC as a movement was still largely committed to its relatively 'radical' international outlook. However, the DFA was loath to see its efforts at reintegration with the western dominated international community destroyed by what it regarded as inexperienced politicians. Having recognised the authority of the sub council to shape the future direction of South African foreign policy, the DFA did its utmost to monitor and influence its activities, in accordance with its own international perspectives. The following section explores how the DFA went about achieving this goal.

⁴⁷ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

⁴⁸ Interview with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Johannesburg, 29 March 2010.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and its influence over the SCFA

In order to fulfil the mandate set out by the TEC, the SCFA reviewed the options available for South Africa's future foreign policy direction. However, there were major challenges in meeting this objective. Primarily, the sheer scale of the task was staggering. The SCFA had to pass judgement on a wide range of issues, including regional political concerns in every corner of the globe, trade agreements, and South Africa's reintegration into multilateral organisations like SADC or the Commonwealth.⁴⁹ The second problem was one of time. The SCFA had only five months to complete its review and put in place recommendations for the GNU. A further difficulty was the extent of foreign policy experience within the SCFA membership. In the sub council, Barratt, Wessels and Pahad all had previous working knowledge of foreign affairs: Barratt was the national director of SAIIA; Wessels had been South Africa's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Pahad served in the ANC's Department of International Affairs during exile. Whilst these three were extremely knowledgeable on foreign policy issues, the same could not be said of the others. In order that these three did not dominate proceedings, the other members of the SCFA required substantial assistance in rapidly raising their proficiency in international relations to an adequate standard, especially within such a tight deadline. In light of this, the SCFA faced a daunting undertaking.

The issues raised above were not insurmountable, but could have seriously impinged on the impact and quality of the SCFA's work. The DFA positioned itself as the solution to these problems. The DFA had all the tools necessary to formulate and conduct foreign policy, and was therefore in the ideal position to assist the SCFA in its work. Through a range of means, including organising conferences and foreign visits, providing links to the international community, and supplying reports and findings, the DFA provided substantial support to the SCFA. In fact, the DFA organised many aspects of the SCFA's activities during its lifespan, providing it with an extraordinary degree of control over the whole process. The remainder of this chapter will explore the various activities of the SCFA, providing an illustration of how the DFA could and did influence its outcomes and, ultimately, South Africa's new post-apartheid foreign policy.

⁴⁹ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.11.

The DFA had successfully secured the right to observe the activities of the sub council. Its Director General Rusty Evans ensured from the very start of the process that at every working meeting of the SCFA at least one member of DFA staff would be present to observe its deliberations.⁵⁰ The exact role of these civil servants in the SCFA's meetings remains unclear, but it can be safely assumed that the minute details of the SCFA's discussions were relayed back to the senior officials of the DFA. The active participation of the DFA in the SCFA's work did not go unnoticed by the TEC. In a memorandum dated 5 March 1994, the TEC's Management Committee took the sub council to task about this relationship stating: 'we also note that the Department of Foreign Affairs attends all the meetings of the Sub-council. We are of the view that this is against the spirit of the Act [Transitional Executive Council Act]. We are therefore of the view that the Department should attend the meeting only when summoned'.⁵¹ The memorandum signalled that the TEC was concerned about the role and conduct of the DFA in the work of the SCFA. However, it is striking that the TEC was unable to stop the DFA's continued participation in the activities of the sub council. The protest from the Management Committee appears to have been ignored, as the minutes of all the SCFA's subsequent meetings until the election show that the DFA continued to be present.⁵² What the memorandum does aptly demonstrate is that there were (justifiable) concerns about the sub council's independence and the DFA's interference.

One way in which the DFA influenced the thinking of the SCFA was through the flow and provision of information. The SCFA members would regularly request information and advice from the DFA on a wide spectrum of foreign policy matters as a means of assisting them in reaching conclusions. The DFA was eager to oblige, and did so in a variety of formats, particularly reports and documents.⁵³ Due to the immense scope of foreign policy, the SCFA could not have been expected to acquire extensive insights into the various strands that constitute international affairs. To overcome this, the specific desks of the DFA would commission reports from appropriate civil servants and ambassadors, detailing the problems, options and their

⁵⁰ SAHA, John Barratt Collection AL3081, A1.6.5.

⁵¹ SAHA, John Barratt Collection AL3081, A1.5.5.

⁵² For example, at an SCFA meeting in Pretoria on the 29 April 1994, eleven days before the GNU's inauguration, three members of the DFA were in attendance. SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.6.53.

⁵³ Examples include reports on the implications of NAFTA, the ways US Foreign policy could affect South Africa, return to the UN, SAHA John Barratt Collection AL3081, A1.7.9, A1.7.10, A1.7.59.

recommendations for South Africa's foreign policy. This process is illustrated by an in-depth report entitled 'The Directorate: Africa Multilateral'.⁵⁴ The dossier, created by the African and Middle East Desk of the DFA, analyses what South Africa's foreign policy towards the continent should entail after 1994. In doing so, it categorises every African nation in order of importance, describing the nature and substance of current relations, potential future relations, the significance of that country to South Africa and a recommended approach.⁵⁵ The main focus of this report is Southern Africa, as at that time both the ANC and NP's foreign policy statements emphasised the importance of the region to South Africa after the elections. As a means of familiarisation with the intricacies of South Africa's foreign relations with the continent, and more importantly its neighbours, this report was of immense potential value to the SCFA. The reports and documents created by the DFA covering an array of issues were clearly a useful tool for the members of the sub council as they neatly synthesised often complex issues, providing them with important details and policy options.

However, despite the obvious benefits of the DFA's provision of information, there was equally a potential drawback. As the DFA created the documentation, it was clearly in control of the flow and content of information sent to the sub council. This is not to claim that the SCFA's members did not have access to other sources of information concerning foreign policy, but that provided by the DFA was probably the most influential component. Wheeler describes the various DFA reports as having been 'drafted by the desks, the appropriate desks in the Department, perhaps at the request of the TEC, or perhaps to guide the way the TEC thought'.⁵⁶ The final part of the quote reveals exactly what the DFA was trying to achieve. The creation and use of reports by the DFA enabled civil servants to highlight the areas of concern that they deemed as most important to South Africa, and diminish the significance of other options. By creating these reports such as the one above, they could supply the 'appropriate' information as a means of influencing the sub council. As detailed in the TEC Act, the sub councils were supposed to be an independent body, free from the old government structures, to enable them to establish a new approach for the future. However, it is clear that this process was being manipulated by the civil

⁵⁴ SAHA, John Barratt Collection AL3081, A1.7.35.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

servants of the DFA, to guide the SCFA in a direction more akin to their own international outlook.

As noted, the SCFA embarked upon a series of overseas trips to meet with various individuals and organisations. To provide the sub council with the greatest opportunity to broaden its foreign policy perspectives, its members were subject to a gruelling schedule of meetings, presentations and visits during the five months of its existence, as countries, politicians and organisations from across the world enthusiastically sought to be seen playing their part in South Africa's miraculous transition.⁵⁷ During three separate trips, the SCFA, accompanied by civil servants from the DFA were sent to: 1) New York, Washington and London, 4 - 12 February; 2) Nairobi and Addis Ababa, 18-22 February; and 3) Paris, Brussels, The Hague, Geneva, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul and Tokyo, 16 March – 2 April.⁵⁸ All the SCFA's visits were meticulously organised by the DFA, which had set up meetings with South African ambassadors, high ranking politicians from some of the world's most powerful nations, and representatives of multilateral organisations. The international visits had several purposes, which to varying degrees, and in different ways, benefited the DFA, the sub council, and the wider international community. More importantly for South Africa, the meetings abroad provided the opportunity to inform a broad spectrum of global leaders about the evolving situation in the country, and how the international community's continued support could enhance the positive steps that had already been made. By providing assurances in person about the progress that had been made, such meetings also instilled confidence in these important stakeholders.

While the international visits played a vital role during the five months of the SCFA, the idea for them originated from rather more pragmatic intentions. As soon as the formation of the TEC had been announced, the DFA's Director General, Evans, arranged a high level meeting of his senior officials. It transpires that he was less than enthusiastic about the prospect of the SCFA dictating the future course of South Africa's foreign policy. Wheeler recalls that as soon as the implementation of the sub councils was announced, Evans brought the DFA's Chief Directors together to discuss the situation:

⁵⁷ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.15.

⁵⁸ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.6.40.

we are now stuck with this TEC business, and we need to keep them out of our hair, I think what we should do is take them on a tour of the world... It was to keep them out of our way, so we could get on with our business. It was a misreading of how things were going to develop, but that was... how he [Evans] saw it.⁵⁹

Despite this initial disquiet amongst the Department's senior officials, the tours proved very beneficial to them, and arguably for the SCFA. As well as being an opportunity for meeting the international community, the overseas visits gave the sub-council an insight into the day-to-day workings of the DFA. During the three visits, the SCFA met South Africa's ambassadors in different countries and organisations, as well as participating in planning conferences. For example, during the SCFA's visit to New York in February 1994, its members met with the Ambassador VRW Steward, while in the same month they participated in a Foreign Affairs Planning Conference in Nairobi.⁶⁰ The SCFA's meetings with the DFA's overseas staff usually took the form of short presentations from the Chief Directors of the appropriate desks on specific topics, followed by round table discussions to facilitate decision making.⁶¹ Such occasions ensured that the SCFA was fully briefed 'on current and important issues' that were of significance to South Africa by people actively engaged in pursuing foreign policy objectives.⁶²

At some of the DFA-arranged meetings and conferences, the ANC's External Heads of Missions were invited, giving them the opportunity to meet with DFA officials and ambassadors, allowing the civil servants to offer ANC representatives their perspectives on foreign policy concerns. The SCFA documents state that the Planning Conference held in Nairobi 'was the first opportunity ever for the ANC Representatives to jointly meet with their counterparts in South Africa'.⁶³ Likewise the tours of Europe and Asia provided similar opportunities for the SCFA, ANC and DFA operatives to work together at planning conferences.⁶⁴ These played a crucial role in the assimilation process. By bringing the different parties together, it provided another opportunity for the representatives to put aside their differences, and discuss the future direction of South Africa's foreign policy.

⁵⁹ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

⁶⁰ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.3 & A1.3.4.

⁶¹ Internal DFA Document, Multilateral Conference: New York 4-7 February: Proposed visit of sub-council on foreign relations – New York, 6 January 1994, Tom Wheeler's Personal Papers.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.2.3.

⁶⁴ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A2.14.

However, there still appeared to be a degree of apprehension about the overseas meetings within the DFA, specifically regarding the prospect of the ANC's involvement. In several internal DFA documents dated early 1994, concerns are expressed about the ANC's role, because 'the ANC will, subject to developments, be prominently represented on the SCFR [the document incorrectly refers to the SCFA as the Sub Council on Foreign Relations] mission. This raises questions regarding whether the ANC/and or PAC representatives are to be acknowledged or accommodated in any way, including socially, before or during the mission's visit'.⁶⁵ A few days later, DFA officials in New York requested 'guidance, as noted in previous communications, on the handling of the ANC representation in New York, both prior to and during the visit'.⁶⁶ These extracts suggest that there were some DFA officials who had not yet come to terms with the imminent election of the ANC. Even at such a late stage in the transition, members of the old apartheid era bureaucracy were apparently resistant to change and distrustful of the aspirations of the liberation movements, questioning their right to full participation in international negotiations. However, what is apparent from these documents is that these obstacles were overcome, allowing the ANC to play a full and constructive role in the various planning conferences and individual meetings.⁶⁷

Another important aspect of the overseas visits is that they gave the DFA an opportunity to introduce the South African delegation to the wider international community. During the course of the three foreign tours the SCFA met a wide range of people and international organisations including the UN Secretary General, the EC, the OAU, the World Health Organisation, and various national presidents and foreign ministers.⁶⁸ The SCFA, and to a lesser extent the ANC, were thereby given the chance to have personal discussions with some of the world's most senior and influential politicians, whose personal views could shape the relationship between their nation or organisation and South Africa. One example of such a high-level meeting was during the SCFA's visit to New York, where they met with the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali to discuss South Africa's future relations

⁶⁵ Internal DFA Document, Multilateral Conference: New York 4-7 February: Proposed visit of sub-council on foreign relations – New York, 6 January 1994, Tom Wheeler's Personal Papers.

⁶⁶ Internal DFA Document, Multilateral Conference: New York 4-7 February: Proposed agenda items and appointments/briefings, 14 January 1994, Tom Wheeler's Personal Papers.

⁶⁷ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.2.3.

⁶⁸ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.15.

with the organisation.⁶⁹ Another was during the European leg of the tour, when the SCFA held discussions with Dr Ergon Klepsch, the President of the European Parliament.⁷⁰ These two instances indicate the importance of South Africa's transition to the international community, but also the DFA's administration of meetings for the sub council with these powerful figures.

As a result of these meetings the SCFA was given unprecedented access to key figures, enabling them to question, discuss and learn about the benefits of conducting a foreign policy that interacted in an advantageous fashion with multilateral organisations such as the UN. It was also an opportunity to establish closer working relations which would be invaluable to South Africa after the elections. For international representatives, it provided the chance to meet the SCFA for the first time. It allowed them to inform the sub council about their roles and activities, and how they expected South Africa to contribute to the organisation/international community once re-admission had been granted. For example, UN officials in New York, during a working lunch, informed the SCFA that 'the foreign policy of the Government of National Unity will be closely monitored by the world'.⁷¹ This extract is just one of several concerns expressed to the SCFA concerning South Africa's future foreign policy direction.

The control the DFA had over these processes meant that it was in the position to dictate the itinerary of the sub council. The Department had the ability to select the people and organisations it wanted the SCFA to meet. This control over the SCFA's schedule ensured that the DFA had effectively filtered the options available to the sub council, selecting only those it deemed as 'appropriate'. Relations with major nations and organisations would be vital to South Africa's future, because without their political and economic support the new government would face severe limitations on its foreign policy options. The DFA therefore felt it necessary to expose the SCFA's members to the opinions of the global community who would then emphasise the importance of adhering to the international mainstream. During the international visits, the DFA exposed the SCFA to the global economic and political powers (with the exceptions of Kenya, Ethiopia and the OAU) all of which

⁶⁹ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A2.6.

⁷⁰ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.7.21.

⁷¹ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.3.

held similar neo-liberal views. This meant the SCFA were party to a very one-sided international outlook, which did not offer a balanced analysis of the options open for South Africa. Socialist and left-wing political views had of course lost much of their potency in the mindset of international elites since 1990, and the SCFA were not entertained with such notions during the tours. The international visits were a method by which the SCFA could be cautioned in person by the world's leading political powers, not to initiate a foreign policy for South Africa that would oppose the international mainstream.

The extent of the DFA's control can also be seen by analysing the composition and length of the various legs of the SCFA's international tour. The vast majority of the three visits were spent in the USA, Europe, and Asia. To briefly illustrate this point: the SCFA was provided with the opportunity to meet various branches of the UN, the US State Department, EU member states, and representatives of the Japanese, Korean, and Malaysian governments. These destinations were, according to the SCFA, in a document to the TEC's Management Committee, regarded as 'of paramount importance... [and] will contribute to the revival of the South African economy more significantly than any other grouping'.⁷² The decision to meet these stakeholders was entirely pragmatic, as the results of the discussions would have been of the greatest benefit to South Africa. However, in order to maximise the benefits it may receive from such contacts, South Africa would be required to conform to a specific set of international criteria. By such meetings the DFA sought to ensure that this message was conveyed to the SCFA by the global elites. Yet, the document also provides an apt illustration of how the SCFA had been influenced by the DFA's efforts, as the language and content is very much attuned to the principles of the global status quo.

During the three trips only five days were spent in Africa.⁷³ The main purpose of the SCFA's visit to Africa 'was to promote current and future effective management of South Africa's relations with Africa..., by analysing trends, identifying objectives, opportunities and coordinating policy with regard to normalising relations'.⁷⁴ During the visit, the delegation met with Kenyan President

⁷² SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A2.14.

⁷³ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.6.40.

⁷⁴ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.2.3.

Daniel arap Moi, Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, and also the Secretary General of the OAU Dr Salim Salim.⁷⁵ These provided a much needed opportunity to discuss issues of South African-Africa relations with some of the continent's most influential people. However, the scant time dedicated to this visit is somewhat surprising, as the DFA, NP and the ANC in their foreign policy announcements had all stressed the paramount importance of Africa to South African interests. Despite such rhetoric claiming the continent's significance to South Africa's future, Africa was largely ignored by the SCFA's activities. This may have been due to the DFA's lack of organisational presence on the continent after years of isolation, a lack of time in the tight schedule of the TEC, but it might equally suggest that Africa was deemed not to have the necessary capacity to assist post-apartheid South Africa. The continent's lack of economic development power meant that the SCFA focused upon the major trading nations, which could aid the democratic transition in the country and provide much required investment after the elections. By focusing the majority of the SCFA's work towards western nations was arguably to the detriment of Africa. After 1994, the new ANC-led government did make efforts to work more closely with the continent, especially Southern Africa, but these policies were not assisted by the work of the SCFA. In fact, when compared to the expectations of Southern African nations concerning Pretoria's role in the region, its neglect by the SCFA seems startling.⁷⁶ A question then that must be raised in light of the rhetoric, is how important was Africa really seen to be for South Africa?

As previously discussed, the international community had taken considerable interest in South Africa's transition to democracy for a host of both altruistic and pragmatic reasons. As described in Chapter Four, during the transition, the ANC had begun to form its own set of foreign policy positions, outlining the way it wanted South Africa to interact with the world, which were not necessarily in keeping with the then dominant international consensus. With the SCFA poised to have the decisive say on the outcome of the country's foreign policy, the international community applied pressure to ensure that the sub council (and thus post-apartheid South Africa) conformed to the mainstream international thinking. Chris Landsberg points out 'that there is little doubt that world opinion – and the need to

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AI3081, A1.3.4.

accommodate it – formed a constant backdrop to the thinking of domestic negotiators’,⁷⁷ while James Barber insisted that during the transition ‘attempts [were made] to shape the end result’.⁷⁸ Furthermore, David Ginsburg argued that ‘we should not underestimate the extent to which the South African transition was shaped precisely by the fact that it gathered momentum just when alternative visions of democracy were becoming discredited by experiences in the Eastern bloc... Nothing could have played more into the hands of those Western powers anxious to shape the outcome of the transition’.⁷⁹ In this context the signals emanating from the leaders of the international community were to have a significant impact on the SCFA.

Arguably, one of the clearest examples of such a warning occurred during a meeting between the Deputy Director General of the DFA and the Ambassador of the Russian Federation E.P. Goussarov on 11 April 1994, only a matter of weeks before the election. In the confidential memorandum sent to the SCFA detailing the discussions, there is an explicit warning to South Africa to maintain the status quo in its foreign relations:

[the ambassador] added that it was essential for South Africa to demonstrate to the world that it could be relied upon as a solid partner, not only now but in the future. Continuity of foreign policy, in substance if not in style, was the very cornerstone of interstate relations. He could not emphasise too clearly the importance the world would attach to an unambiguous demonstration of reliability and continuity.⁸⁰

As the record of an official meeting between the two nations, the content of the document is unequivocal in its message to South Africa, with its stress on ‘continuity’ and ‘substance’. In effect the Russian Federation was informing South Africa that it could change the way in which it presented foreign policy to the world, but that the content should not change. For the DFA, this was unambiguous support for the approach it had been pursuing since 1990 from a major international nation, and a powerful member of the UN Security Council. What makes such a conservative message even more striking is that the Russian Federation, previously as the former Soviet Union, had been a key supporter of the ANC during exile. The transformation

⁷⁷ Landsberg, ‘Directing’, p. 289.

⁷⁸ J. Barber, *Mandela's World* (Oxford, 2004), p. 75.

⁷⁹ D. Ginsburg, ‘The democratisation of South Africa: transition theory tested’, *Transformation*, 29 (1996), pp. 96-7.

⁸⁰ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.7.24.

in the Soviet Union's approach towards South Africa has been explored by Vladimir Shubin, who described the effects of this dramatic shift in policy for the ANC and South Africa.⁸¹ In a very short period of time, Russia had moved from the champion of global communism to a champion of free market capitalism. For the members of the SCFA and the ANC, Russia provided a plain and simple message. If South Africa failed to adhere to the dominant international thinking of the time, then the global community would not provide the assistance the country desperately craved to address the legacy of apartheid.

This warning from the Russian Federation was not an isolated incident. In fact, there was a concerted effort to influence post-apartheid South African foreign policy. A similar warning emerges in another memorandum to the SCFA which analyses South African and Greek relations. In October 1993, the Greek socialist PASOK party won a landslide electoral victory; the DFA document expresses a sense of horror of a new socialist government taking power, 'which sent shockwaves through Europe'.⁸² The memorandum emphasises that 'the general feeling within the EC community was clearly not in favour of Greece... [which] according to all expectations, would follow a... foreign policy, that would not be acceptable to the country's other European partners'.⁸³ The surprise from Europe is tangible as socialism was supposed to have ended as a viable option in 1990. The memorandum holds no punches, and the emphasis is clearly on the anticipation that Greece would pursue a foreign policy which would deviate from the rest of Europe. Even though the report refers to events in Europe, it provided a none to subtle warning to the SCFA. It was another warning to the SCFA that a foreign policy that deviated from the international status quo would not be tolerated by the major trading nations of the world. These examples demonstrate that in certain instances, steps were indeed taken which 'enabled foreign governments to influence the... negotiating process directly'.⁸⁴ The SCFA had been sent clear signals. There must be no major shift in South Africa's foreign policy which might damage relations with the west, but more importantly, investment opportunities. It was rather effective blackmail.

⁸¹ V. Shubin, 'The Soviet Union/Russian Federation's Relations with South Africa, with special reference to the period since 1980', *African Affairs*, 95 (1996), pp. 5-30.

⁸² SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.7.60.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Landsberg, 'Directing', p. 289.

An intriguing feature of the sub council is that such recommendations appear to have been accepted with minimal fuss by all of the political parties involved. A report noted that ‘it had seemed self-evident beforehand that... there would be vast areas of disagreement about a future foreign policy orientation for South Africa. There was nothing of the kind. Instead, common goals emerged, a common reality was perceived and agreement was reached on methods of achieving the desired goals. Ideological differences appeared to be almost completely absent’.⁸⁵ What is most striking is the ANC’s position during the SCFA. Just before the onset of the SCFA, the ANC had been finalising its own foreign policy positions and, under the name of Nelson Mandela, had published a well documented article setting out the party’s objectives (see Chapter Four). The ANC’s representative on the SCFA was Aziz Pahad who had been part of its Department of International Affairs in exile, and was a high ranking and well respected member of the movement’s National Executive Committee (NEC). Although the ANC only had one member on the SCFA, in line with the mandate of the TEC, one would have expected the party to have attempted, through Pahad, to try and influence the sub council into pursuing foreign policy recommendations closer to its own ideals. This does not however seem to have occurred; indeed quite the opposite happened. Wheeler, when interviewed, was unsure of the extent to which Pahad and the ANC leadership collaborated about SCFA issues, but believes that ‘if Aziz Pahad took messages back to Shell House [the ANC headquarters] in the process, well that was a benefit’.⁸⁶ James Barber believed that through the extensive negotiations with the NP there was ‘an increasing convergence of views... The change came gradually, perhaps unconsciously, as with increasing contact and the search for support the ANC absorbed more Western views and outlooks’.⁸⁷ Both points may be accurate, but they leave several crucial questions unanswered. Was it beneficial for the DFA to have Pahad on the SCFA because he could act as an effective and reliable conduit for transferring its ideas and policy positions on foreign policy directly to the ANC leadership? Did Pahad assent to the SCFA’s findings because he personally agreed with them or thought they were the right course of action? As there appears to have been no noticeable dissent, did the ANC actually agree with the DFA’s international outlook, which was influencing the

⁸⁵ Cited in R. Southall, ‘The New South Africa in the New World Order: beyond the double whammy’, *Third World Quarterly*, 15 (1994), p. 124.

⁸⁶ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

⁸⁷ Barber, *Mandela’s World*, p. 61.

SCFA, even though it was out of sync with that of the movement's supporters and its declared positions? Or had the ANC begun to pragmatically abandon its own newly formulated foreign policy positions even before the end of the transition?

The acceptance of the SCFA's findings was in all likelihood a pragmatic decision by the ANC. As discussed in Chapter Four, the ANC leadership had adhered to the human rights discourse imposed upon it, despite having serious misgivings about the policy. Therefore, in the case of the SCFA, the probability is that Thabo Mbeki, a close confidant of Aziz Pahad, instructed him to conform to the SCFA's recommendations; these would be implemented in the initial years of the GNU to win the support of the international community, but like its stance on human rights, the ANC's leaders had little intention of maintaining them in the long-run (see Chapters Six and Seven).

Conclusion

When the GNU was inaugurated on the 10 May 1994, the work of the TEC Sub Council on Foreign Affairs came to an end. In five months the sub council had held twenty-one meetings covering a range of issues such as membership of the Commonwealth, South Africa's development status and the transfer of Walvis Bay to Namibia, it had met thirteen foreign visiting delegations to South Africa; and while on official visits abroad, had held meetings with senior international diplomats, as well as participating in four regional planning conferences.⁸⁸ The meetings, agreements and copious recommendations by the SCFA enabled the new government to begin an informed process of reintegrating South Africa back into the international community.⁸⁹ This act of re-engagement has to be viewed as one of the key successes of the ANC's foreign policy after 1994 (see Chapters Six and Seven). In the following months and years it became a member of almost every important international organisation open to South Africa, ranging from the Commonwealth to the Non-Aligned Movement. South Africa's attempts to reassert itself on the world stage began with readmission into the OAU in May 1994. This process would not

⁸⁸ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.15.

⁸⁹ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.11.

have occurred so smoothly or quickly without the tireless activities and recommendations of the Sub Council on Foreign Affairs.

However, this chapter, and Chapter Four, have questioned the extent to which the ANC led GNU's foreign policy immediately after the elections can be regarded as truly its own. During the lifespan of the SCFA the available evidence points towards the over-arching influence of the DFA. In 1993, Rusty Evans had argued that South Africa could not be out of step with the international thinking of major western nations, and subsequently would be forced to operate within strict parameters, determined for them.⁹⁰ The DFA, whose own perspectives on foreign policy were very much in keeping with that of the international community, and with its endorsement, did its utmost to direct and shape the thinking, and thus the final recommendations of the SCFA. This process could be described as one of 'domesticating' the former liberation movements.⁹¹ Indeed, Wheeler corroborates this idea, when he argued that although senior figures in the ANC had represented the movement abroad, they had no government experience, and thus had to be 'acculturated into a different way of doing business'.⁹² The DFA and the international community pursued prevalent shared norms in foreign affairs, and were unwilling to allow South Africa to deviate from this set path. They were particularly concerned that a post-apartheid South Africa, led by former liberation activists, would act in a similar fashion to dissident countries such as Cuba or Libya in multilateral forums. The SCFA process provided the perfect opportunity to demonstrate the great benefits that conformity would bring to the country, but also a means of warning South African political elites about the dangers of pursuing a radical foreign policy. If South Africa acted like Cuba, then the vast groundswell of popular international support for its transition would swiftly dissipate. The SCFA acted as a way of schooling the former liberation movements in the established means and practices of international diplomacy and imbuing it with the normative ideals of the time. It could be put in even stronger terms. For the DFA and the international community, the SCFA process was a way of disciplining the country's political elite into a specific approach to foreign policy. What can be witnessed from

⁹⁰ R. Evans, 'South African Foreign Policy and the New World Order', *Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS) Paper 4* (1993).

⁹¹ Thanks to Professor Peter Vale for this point, telephone discussion, 5 March 2010.

⁹² Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

the SCFA is how the ‘new’ South African foreign policy was partly captured by elements of the old regime and those of the international community.

It is crucial to emphasise that the sub council did not actually make policy. It was however, instrumental in laying the foundations for post-apartheid South African foreign policy. The findings presented to the TEC would ultimately be used to inform the new government’s foreign policy. The importance of the SCFA to South Africa’s foreign relations was highlighted retrospectively in the DFA’s 1996 Green Paper, entitled ‘South African Foreign Policy: Discussion Document’ which stated that ‘the Subcouncil therefore became actively and effectively involved in the conduct of South Africa’s international relations, as regards not only policy matters but also the creation of the new Department of Foreign Affairs, budgetary matters, senior personnel appointments, the opening of new missions abroad and other management matters of medium or long term importance’.⁹³ During the first few years of ANC rule in South Africa, the GNU accepted the vast majority of the SCFA’s recommendations, with its foreign policy following many of the key tenets it had proposed.⁹⁴

Not only had the post-apartheid government’s foreign policy positions been created outside of the ANC’s direct control, but so too had those of the ‘new’ South Africa it would be leading, through the SCFA’s work in re-engaging with the international community. As the incoming leaders of a new government, the ANC’s foreign policy for South Africa had been heavily influenced by the SCFA. It must be stressed that the international community’s concern for South Africa was not simply one of benevolence, but was based on self-interest. Foreign state actors tend not to intervene unless they can see a benefit to themselves. The SCFA provided an opportunity to ‘capture’ South African foreign policy, even if the results did not correspond with the aspirations of the ANC and the majority of the population. In light of these revelations, it is therefore worth considering whether the positions adopted by the new government were really reflective of its own international agenda, or those of the officials of the DFA.

⁹³ South African Foreign Policy: Discussion Document, DFA, <http://www.info.gov.za/greenpapers/1996/foraf1.htm#3.2> (1/7/2010).

⁹⁴ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.10.

The evidence presented in this chapter provides some explanation as to why South Africa pursued some of its foreign policy initiatives after May 1994. They may also explain why South Africa's foreign policy has been criticised for lacking direction under the ANC, because the nation's international position had already been largely determined by the SCFA. The ANC-led government found itself implementing a foreign policy which was not truly its own, and one which it could not immediately refine or reject for fear of alienating important international backers. Only when Mbeki began to assert control over foreign policy in the following years, particularly after the NP left the GNU in 1996, did South Africa's international positions begin to move away from those formulated by the SCFA.

Chapter Six

Idealism versus Realism? The contested nature of South African Foreign Policy under Nelson Mandela, 1994-1996



1

One of the most challenging questions confronting commentators on post-apartheid South Africa has been identifying the composition and meaning of the nation's foreign policy. The ANC came to power in May 1994 with an ambitious set of foreign policy principles, which would provide a framework for the country's interactions with the international community. However, critics were soon questioning the nature and direction that foreign policy was taking under the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU). South Africa's foreign policy has been variously described as being poorly planned, inconsistently implemented, and unrealistically idealistic.² The cartoon above by South African satirist Zapiro, neatly encapsulates the confusion surrounding the country's international perspective in the

¹ Zapiro, 'Great Unsolved Mysteries', (copyright obtained: 950614mg) www.zapiro.com, Copyright © Zapiro.

² Examples include: A. Habib and N. Selinyane, 'South Africa's Foreign Policy and a Realistic Vision of an African Century', in E. Sidiropoulos (ed.), *Apartheid past, renaissance future: South Africa's foreign policy 1994-2004* (Johannesburg, 2004); G. Mills, 'South Africa's Foreign Policy: From isolation to respectability', in D. Simon (eds.), *South Africa in Southern Africa* (Oxford, 1998); J. Spence, 'South Africa: an African exception or just another country?', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 7 (2007), pp. 341-347; J. Spence, 'The New South African Foreign Policy: Incentives and Constraints', in F. Toase and E. Yorke (eds.), *The New South Africa: Prospects for Domestic and International Security* (Basingstoke, 1998).

mid-1990s. The cartoon depicts the puzzled looking ANC Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfred Nzo, carrying a briefcase emblazoned with 'Nzzzzo', (the malicious, but not entirely inaccurate, nickname given to him because of his habit of falling asleep in meetings) and a question mark above his head with the title 'South African Foreign Policy'.³ This question indeed posed many problems for members of the ANC, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the international community and South African observers – what exactly was the 'new' South Africa's foreign policy? This and the following chapter will analyse this question by exploring the evolution of South African foreign policy under Mandela's presidency, with particular reference to its policies towards the African continent.

Although the following chapters will not directly discuss the ANC's domestic economic policies, it is important to recognise that these had undoubted implications for foreign policy. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and later the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, were important aspects of South Africa's interactions with the west, which aimed (amongst other things) to make the country more attractive to international business.⁴ These economic policies also affected South Africa's interactions with the rest of Africa. After 1994, South African business expanded rapidly northwards, and while this proved beneficial to the nation's economy, such investments were not always welcomed.⁵ The implications of business expansion in Africa on Pretoria's foreign policy will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

³ Information about Nzo sleeping in meetings provided during an interview with former ANC MP Andrew Feinstein, London, 1 July 2009.

⁴ RDP was first initiated in 1994, and GEAR was introduced in 1996. The RDP's primary goal was to tackle poverty and invest in the country's shortfall in service. Using a mix of socialist and neo-liberal tendencies, RDP incorporated massive infrastructure spending, trade liberalisation, reducing government debt, and lowering taxes to alleviate the problems. GEAR on the other hand, demonstrated the ANC-led South Africa's commitment to free trade and privatisation. It was seen by Finance Minister Trevor Manuel as a means of encouraging foreign investment, which was hoped, would aid massive job creation and increase GDP by 6% year.

⁵ A prime example was when South African brewing company SABMiller (the second largest brewer in the world) was forced to cease operations in Kenya due to poor returns and local hostility, *Daily Nation* (Kenya), 28 July 2010. For academic studies on South African business expansion see: J. Daniel, V. Naidoo, and S. Naidu, 'SA expansion into Africa. Can the Leopard change its spots?', *South African Labour Bulletin*, 27 (2003), pp. 14-16; J. Daniel, V. Naidoo, and S. Naidu, 'The South Africans have arrived: Post-apartheid corporate expansion into Africa', in J. Daniel, A. Habib, and R. Southall (eds.), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2003-2004* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 368-390; J. Daniel, J. Lutchman, and A. Comninou, 'South Africa in Africa: trends and forecasts in a changing African political economy', in S. Buhlungu (eds.), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2007* (Cape Town, 2007), pp. 508-532.

More generally, the implementation of these economic policies is regarded by some as uncritical acceptance of western neo-liberal policies; Mark Gevisser goes so far as to suggest that the 'implementation of GEAR was a 'culmination' of the systematic pursuit of the ANC leaders by Western Diplomats and big business, and [represented] the liberation movement's 'moral surrender''.⁶ This surrender was arguably also witnessed in some aspects of foreign policy. This could be seen during the lifespan of the Sub Council on Foreign Affairs (SCFA) (see Chapter Five), which demonstrated how some ANC leaders were influenced into adopting a conservative, western-inspired path. Throughout Mandela's presidency, the ANC continued to pay close attention to western demands, something which exposed divisions within the wider movement. Its comparatively liberal economic policies undoubtedly played an important role in South African foreign policy, as the country sought western endorsement for its efforts. However, because of the scope of these chapter's on Mandela's presidency, and the fact an already substantial literature exists on the economic policies of post-apartheid South Africa, they will be not be examined in depth.⁷

Before analysing South Africa's foreign policy under Mandela, an observation must be made about the tendency by historians of all periods to designate the foreign policy of a nation to that of its leader. Some examples relevant to this study which illustrate this practice include James Barber's *Mandela's World* and Tom Lodge's *Mandela: A Critical Life*.⁸ This practice tends to neatly categorise often complex periods of time, thereby providing an overarching framework for a study. For histories of Emperors and Kings, this can often be a suitable way of describing their periods of rule, as such figures were largely in absolute control of power and decision-making. However, for a modern state, it is evidently incorrect to attribute a national foreign policy solely to one person, primarily because of the

⁶ M. Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* (Johannesburg, 2007), p. 693.

⁷ Examples include: H. Adam, F. van Zyl Slabbert, and K. Moodley, *Comrades in Business, Post-Liberation Politics in South Africa* (South Africa, 1998); P. Bond and M. Khosa, *An RDP Policy Audit* (Pretoria, 1999); P. Bond, *Talk Left Walk Right South Africa's Frustrated Global Reforms* (Scottsville, 2004); J. Saul, 'Liberal Democracy vs. Popular Democracy in Southern Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, 24 (1997), pp. 219-236; J. Saul, *The Next Liberation Struggle, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy in Southern Africa* (Toronto, 2005); I. Taylor, *Stuck in Middle Gear: South Africa's post-apartheid Foreign Relations* (Westport, 2001); J. Weeks, *Stuck in low GEAR? Macroeconomic policy in South Africa, 1995-1998* (London, 1999).

⁸ J. Barber, *Mandela's World: the international dimension of South Africa's political revolution 1990-99* (Oxford, 2004); T. Lodge, *Mandela: a critical life* (Oxford, 2006).

multitude of actors involved in its formulation and pursuit. It would be clearly wrong to assert that State President Mandela was not in control of international affairs because he was ‘the most powerful actor in foreign policy’, and ultimately final responsibility lies with the holder of this position. It must nevertheless be stressed that ‘the State President is not part of every decision made around foreign policy’.⁹ Indeed Maxi van Aardt has argued that it ‘was notoriously difficult to identify who makes foreign policy’ in South Africa, arguing that ‘international relations are conducted in a vastly more complicated arena than that suggested by the unitary actor figure’.¹⁰ South African foreign policy decision-making processes were and are shaped by the inputs and opinions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the civil servants of the DFA, other government departments such as Trade and Industry, the opinions of multilateral partners, academics, and civil society actors.¹¹ This was certainly the situation after the 1994 elections, as a multitude of people were initially involved in the foreign policy process. However, during the course of Mandela’s presidency, foreign policy-making was indeed increasingly centralised within a small elite and dominated by the personality of the president. This is a theme that will be explored further in Chapter Seven.

Nelson Mandela’s inauguration as South African President on 10 May 1994, as head of an ANC-led GNU, was a moment of international significance. Against the backdrop of widespread global expectation, South Africa had successfully ensured that the transition to multiparty democracy had been peacefully completed. The success of this process could be gauged by the fact that Heads of States from across the world arrived en masse to be part of this historic occasion. Against this background, South Africa’s achievement was rightly lauded. Nonetheless, precisely because of the manner in which South Africa had effected change, there were very high expectations both at home and abroad, about what it might now achieve as an actor on the international stage. An indication of these expectations about South Africa’s role comes from two high-ranking American politicians. The former US Ambassador to South Africa Princeton Lyman wrote an article in 1996 titled ‘South Africa’s Promise’; and President Clinton’s Secretary of State, Warren Christopher

⁹ R. Suttner, ‘A brief review of South African Foreign Policy since April 1994’, *Umrabulo*, 1 (1996).

¹⁰ M. Van Aardt, ‘A Foreign Policy to Die For: South Africa’s response to the Nigerian Crisis’, *Africa Insight*, 26 (1996), p. 110.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

declared ‘I see very few countries with greater potential to shape the twenty first century than the new South Africa’.¹² It was a mantle that South Africa’s new leaders were eager to live up to, but one which also placed a considerable burden on the fledgling democracy.

The process of creating a foreign policy had been far from simple. As explained in Chapter Four, the ANC’s official foreign policy positions in the early 1990s were developed largely by academics and liberal advisors, who had formulated a universalistic, moralistic, and human rights-inspired vision. However, this vision was partly vitiated by the concurrent activities of the SCFA, which through its mandate had in fact dictated many of the terms of engagement for subsequent relations with the international community before Mandela had even taken office.¹³ These contradictory twin tracks to policy formulation during the transition meant that, on coming to power, the ANC-led government was already confronted by a number of constraints. These constraints would ultimately play a significant role in shaping foreign policy during Mandela’s presidency.

For example, by the time of the elections, the SCFA had laid the groundwork for a number of treaties and policy positions which the ANC-led government could not realistically have reneged on, for fear of losing international credibility. Through the SCFA process (see Chapter Five), the DFA and the western-dominated international community had attempted to domesticate the ANC into the world of global politics, imbuing it with many of the hegemonic norms of the time, such as neo-liberalism. The SCFA had facilitated the capturing of the ‘new’ by the entrenched interests of the dominant international order, as well as remnants of the out-going apartheid regime. Leading DFA officials and the international community had, during the final days of the transition, influenced a small group of ANC leaders into adopting the SCFA’s recommendations. In doing so, the western world appeared to have ensured that South Africa would uphold the international status quo by pursuing a largely liberal foreign policy. The western powers were therefore prepared to place a great deal of faith in the new ANC-led government, believing that South Africa would engage with the wider world according to its principles.

¹² P. Lyman, ‘South Africa’s Promise’, *Foreign Policy*, 102 (1996), pp. 105-119; W. Christopher, cited in Barber, *Mandela’s World*, p. 85.

¹³ South African History Archive (hereafter SAHA), William Cullen Library, University of Witwatersrand, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.11.

This was significant because the ANC had been, and remained, a far from monolithic organisation. Even in exile, the ANC had been a 'broad church', encompassing various ideological perspectives ranging from Marxism to bourgeois nationalism. However, the transition primarily involved a relatively narrow process of negotiations between the leaders of ANC and the NP, whose deliberations formulated changes in all areas of government policy. The end of the CODESA process had resulted in the formation of the MPNP which streamlined negotiations into smaller working groups and sub councils, arguably making agreement possible. However, this simultaneously removed the vast majority of people from both sides, leaving many disillusioned that their ideals had been undermined. The 'miracle' of the transition can therefore be best described as an elite pact.¹⁴ However, due to the way the ANC was organised, this small elite (which itself was not unified) was unable to contain all of the contradictory elements that resided within the party. Thus, the western world, which believed it had secured South Africa's membership of a liberal orthodoxy, would often be surprised by some of the actions of Mandela's government, which were sometimes contrary to its expectations. In the words of Tony Leon, the leader of the opposition from 1999, South African 'policy lurched between high-minded principle and the lowest common denominator of Third World struggle solidarity'.¹⁵ The failure to match the expectations, either of the western world or its own supporters, was to have a damaging effect upon how South Africa's foreign policy was viewed.

The external constraints imposed on the ANC were compounded by the party's own ideals, which included a commitment to remain friendly with all nations, to reward allies from its period in exile, and to pursue a moralistic, human rights-based foreign policy. These points alone immediately demonstrate the evident contradictions in the ANC's foreign policy perspectives; publicly acclaiming the centrality of human rights, while maintaining links with liberation allies now presiding over authoritarian governments would inevitably create opposing pressures.

¹⁴ The idea of an 'elite pact', capturing the 'new' South Africa's foreign policy for its own benefit, constitutes a specific manifestation and demonstration of the characteristics of a transition process. Such a notion was first formulated by Samuel Huntington, who argued that transitions were based on the choices, perceptions and actions of elites involved in the process. This was adapted by Patrick Bond, who has referred to South Africa's transition as an 'elite pact'. See: P. Bond, *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa* (London, 2000), pp. 55-56; S. Huntington, 'Democracy's Third Wave', *Journal of Democracy*, 2 (1991), pp. 12-34.

¹⁵ T. Leon, *On the Contrary: Leading the Opposition in a Democratic South Africa* (Cape Town, 2008), p. 272.

Some policies could therefore not be reconciled with others, and these contradictions would subsequently contribute to emergent problems in the new South Africa's foreign policy. These contradictions will be explored in the course of this chapter.

Foreign Policy in the months after the elections

The new government wasted no time in implementing many of the foreign policy recommendations set out in the final report of the SCFA.¹⁶ The SCFA had concluded, in a report summarising its activities, that the country would need a flexible but principled approach to foreign policy, arguing that 'the world has a perception of South Africa and expectations of what it can offer. It is therefore incumbent upon the democratic South Africa to define a policy that will inter alia respond partly to the challenge'.¹⁷ Central to the sub council's recommendations was that South Africa apply for membership of various multilateral forums as quickly as possible, so the country could begin to actively participate in international issues.¹⁸ The new government turned its attentions to this immediately. The first major foreign policy decision was an application to join the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 20 May 1994, which was formally accepted by its Secretary General Dr Salim Salim three days later.¹⁹ After the raising of the South African flag at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa on 'Africa Day', the country became an officially recognised member.²⁰ This swift foreign policy initiative both symbolically and practically laid down a statement of intent. At the OAU Heads of State meeting in June 1994, Mandela announced: 'we have entered this eminent African organisation and rejoined the African community of nations inspired by the desire to join hands with all the countries of our continent as equal partners'.²¹ Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad described the decision to join the OAU as one which demonstrated South

¹⁶ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.11.

¹⁷ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.15.

¹⁸ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.11.

¹⁹ 'OAU officially informs Government of acceptance', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 23 May 1994.

²⁰ 'Building democracy, securing economic development, advancing social justice and peace', remarks by Mr Alfred Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Council of the Socialist International, Cape Town, 10 July, 1995.

²¹ Statement by President Nelson Mandela at the OAU Heads of State and Government, Tunis, 13 June 1994.

Africa's commitment to the continent and as an opportunity to 'contribute to the role that Africa can play in world politics'.²²

South Africa followed this up by applying for membership of other multilateral organisations. By early August, South Africa had in quick succession joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Group of 77 (an intergovernmental caucus of developing nations at the UN), retaken its seat at the UN and rejoined the Commonwealth.²³ These decisions, most of which had been recommended by the SCFA, were important early steps for the ANC. Not only did they make practical sense for South Africa, they also provided an opportunity for the ANC to reaffirm its commitment to work closely and positively with the international community. The decision to join such organisations symbolised an important break with the past. No longer would South Africa be an isolated pariah state, instead it aimed to have a significant and constructive global impact. Within a few months of democratic rule, South Africa was well on its way to becoming a fully fledged, dedicated, and active member of the international community.

During the first months of democratic rule, South African leaders regularly took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of the international community to the country, and the role that South Africa wished to play. On 24 May 1994, during his speech at the opening of Parliament, Mandela asserted the importance of the international community to South Africa, declaring that the nation's people were now 'citizens of the world'.²⁴ Mandela informed parliament about the key principles which would guide South Africa's future foreign policy, emphasising his government's commitment to human rights and its willingness to contribute to the peace processes then underway in Angola, Mozambique and Rwanda.²⁵ These themes would be replicated in numerous other speeches at various international forums, in which ANC leaders committed the country to a role of service and duty to the world, whilst stressing the centrality of Africa to its thinking.

²² 'Deputy Minister Pahad on Foreign Policy Priorities', *Johannesburg SABC TV 1 Network*, 29 May 1994.

²³ Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Alfred Nzo, Foreign Affairs Budget Vote, Parliament, 8 August, 1994.

²⁴ 'Mandela Addresses Parliament', *Johannesburg SABC CCV Television Network*, 24 May 1994.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Foreign Minister Nzo set out his own vision to parliament in August 1994. He again thanked the world for the part it had played in the transition, stressing that 'South Africa is indebted to the international community'.²⁶ As previously, Nzo repeatedly expressed gratitude for global efforts to help South Africa overcome its problems. However, this continual expression of gratitude was in some respects a rewriting of the historical record. Whilst millions of ordinary people across the globe had indeed campaigned against apartheid, western governments did not generally assist the ANC's struggle and in fact, arguably helped to extend the lifespan of the apartheid regime.²⁷ The policy of actively forgetting the realities of the past and thanking the international community for its supposed assistance was a clever political manoeuvre by the ANC. Ann Grant, a former British High Commissioner to South Africa, argued that 'Mandela's big trick of course was to exaggerate the extent to which people in the west had supported the anti-apartheid struggle, and that was a very good tactic'.²⁸ By including the world in its 'miracle' transition, the ANC hoped that the resultant goodwill would translate into concrete economic assistance, and enable South Africa to exploit the opportunities afforded to it by the international community.

Nzo's speech also covered the themes of human rights, economic development, and African co-operation, which were all regarded as being of central importance to the country's future. In tune with the recommendations of the SCFA, Nzo committed South Africa to close cooperation with international organisations, stressing consultation and consensual decision-making.²⁹ This he hoped would be exemplified by the country's relations with Southern Africa, in which 'South Africa will not prescribe the nature or form of regional co-operation but will consult with our neighbours as equal partners'.³⁰ The importance of cooperation and consensus was constantly stressed by South African leaders in their foreign policy statements.

²⁶ Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Alfred Nzo, Foreign Affairs Budget Vote, Parliament, 8 August, 1994.

²⁷ For western assistance of apartheid see: R. Harshe, 'Africa: Trends in U.S. Imperialism', *Social Scientist*, 12 (1984), p. 29; P. Vale, 'Pivot, Puppet or Periphery: The Cold War and South Africa', *The Cold War as Global Conflict International Centre for Advanced Studies, New York University*, Unpublished Working Paper #9 (Sept., 2003), p. 11.

²⁸ Telephone interview with Ann Grant, Consul and Head of Chancery at the British Embassy in Maputo, Mozambique from 1981-84 and former British High Commissioner to South Africa, 2000-2005, 7 December 2009.

²⁹ Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Alfred Nzo, Foreign Affairs Budget Vote, Parliament, 8 August, 1994.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

While the ANC believed consensus-building was the best course of action, it was an approach which would ultimately lead to criticisms of the country for not being sufficiently decisive, especially during Mbeki's presidency and his responses to Zimbabwe.

The ANC was eager to be seen repaying the support of Southern Africa for the suffering it had endured at the hands of the apartheid regime (see Chapter's Two and Three). Senior ANC official, the then Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Kader Asmal, expressed the widely held view 'that post-apartheid South Africa would owe its regional neighbours compensation for the devastation it had wreaked'.³¹ John Daniel likewise insisted that 'South Africa's debt to the region is an overpowering one', and Deon Geldenhuys agrees that focusing upon Southern Africa 'has been one of the basic tenets of South African foreign policy'.³² Mandela spent much of his presidency visiting various African states to pay his respects; as late as May 1997 he visited Zimbabwe, describing the trip as an 'opportunity to thank the people of Zimbabwe for their role in South Africa's liberation struggle'.³³ The ANC-led government was eager for the nation to start afresh, and rewrite its interactions with the continent. The SCFA had placed great emphasis on the importance of Africa, arguing that as a major continental power, South Africa could play a positive role by engaging constructively and innovatively.³⁴ The ANC-led government heeded these recommendations, paying close attention to Africa, placing great efforts on becoming a constructive and cooperative neighbour, based on cooperation and making 'the normalisation of relations with Africa... a priority of the new government'.³⁵ Nzo stressed 'that South Africa's first priority, also in the multilateral field, is the Southern African sub-region, followed closely by the rest of the African continent'.³⁶ Ministers were acutely aware that without stability and democracy in Africa, South African development could be severely hindered, because 'central to our thinking is

³¹ Cited in R. Southall, 'Regional Security: The 'new' security in Southern Africa', *Southern Africa Report*, 10 (1995), p. 3.

³² J. Daniel, 'Second Speaker', in C. Landsberg, G. Pere, and A. van Nieuwkerk (eds.), *Mission Imperfect: Redirecting South Africa's Foreign Policy* (Johannesburg, November 1995); Interview with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Johannesburg, 29 March 2010.

³³ Speech by Nelson Mandela at a breakfast meeting with Business and Media, Harare, 21 May 1997.

³⁴ SAHA, John Barratt Collection, AL3081, A1.3.11, A1.3.15.

³⁵ Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Alfred Nzo, Foreign Affairs Budget Vote, Parliament, 8 August 1994.

³⁶ Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Alfred Nzo, Foreign Affairs Budget Vote, Senate, 16 May 1996.

that we in the Republic of South Africa cannot be an island of prosperity, surrounded by a sea of poverty and deprivation'.³⁷

However, these apparently positive signals from South Africa inspired a mix of fear and expectation amongst its Southern Africa neighbours. The ANC feared South Africa being perceived as a regional hegemon, seeking to dominate its neighbours, and the leadership regularly tried to ease such fears. Wary of the past violence of the country's actions in Southern Africa, the ANC was acutely aware of the limitations this imposed. Mandela stressed: 'we are largely inhibited by the legacy of apartheid... we need to think very carefully as to what we do because however justified... we may be accused of merely carrying on the policy of a government which we sharply criticised'.³⁸ In Tunis, Mandela asserted: 'it will never happen again that our country should seek to dominate another through force of arms, economic might or subversion'; the objective was instead for 'the creation of a South Africa that would be a good neighbour and an equal partner with all the countries of our continent, one which would use its abilities and potentials to help advance the common struggle'.³⁹ South Africa's accession to Southern African Development Community (SADC) membership reinforced the country's engagement with the region. Nzo tried to dispel lingering suspicions regarding South African intentions, arguing that 'it would be a pity if co-operation and progress were to fall victim to unfounded fears of South African domination. Such fears are not a good formula for growth... [we are] one player amongst many. We harbour no desire to be the dominant partner. We entertain no illusion of becoming the regional benefactor – because such capacity we do not possess'.⁴⁰ Such statements illustrate that the 'new' South Africa was acutely aware of the need to tread carefully in its dealings with the region. The ANC leadership was conscious of its regional responsibilities, but equally cautious of the adverse reactions this might provoke.

The provision of assistance to Southern Africa was a thorny issue for the new South African government. Following years of destruction at the hands of apartheid,

³⁷ 'Building democracy, securing economic development, advancing social justice and peace', remarks by Mr Alfred Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Council of the Socialist International, Cape Town, 10 July 1995.

³⁸ Mandela Interviewed on First 100 Days, *Johannesburg SABC TV 1 Network*, 18 August 1994.

³⁹ Statement by President Nelson Mandela at the OAU Heads of State and Government, Tunis, 13 June 1994.

⁴⁰ Speech made by Minister Alfred Nzo to the Council of Ministers on the occasion of the accession of South Africa to the SADC Treaty, Gaborone, 26 August 1994.

some African states expected South Africa to be Africa's miracle maker, alleviating many of the problems the continent had experienced. On the other hand, the west (applying a version of pivotal state theory)⁴¹ hoped Pretoria, as the continental powerhouse, would adopt the mantle of regional policeman, acting to solve many of Africa's conflicts.⁴² South African officials moved swiftly to dampen international expectations. Rusty Evans, Director General of the DFA declared: 'of course they (African countries) have expectations... of course, in their misery, they look at South Africa as something that might suddenly bring relief of sorts. At the same time there is a sense of realism. The South African delegation has been warning against expecting too much'.⁴³ Only a month after the elections it was made clear that direct financial compensation requested by the Frontline States for their assistance during the liberation struggle would not be forthcoming. Instead South Africa 'would enter joint projects aimed at developing the region'.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the ANC was eager to solve its own poor relations with many Southern African governments, which by the late 1980s and early 1990s, had soured considerably. The ANC-led government thereby initially approached Southern Africa cautiously, willing to assist the region's development, but without an overly interventionist approach. However, this combination of fear and expectation was one which the ANC failed to overcome, during Mandela's presidency, ultimately inhibiting South African policy-making.

In these early stages, South Africa's foreign policy towards Africa remained largely rhetorical. The nation was still finding its feet internationally, urgent domestic problems needed to be addressed, and the DFA lacked the capacity to deal effectively with the demands placed upon it. However, to avoid criticisms of not being proactive, Pretoria did take some early tentative steps of constructive engagement with Southern Africa, particularly focusing on peace initiatives. One of the first problems the new government faced was the escalating tensions in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. The Lesotho military was in a state of near revolt in 1994, resulting in the assassination of the Deputy Prime Minister and sparking a

⁴¹ Pivotal state theory concerns a nation, which in comparison to its neighbours, is an immensely powerful country. 'From such relative powerfulness flows the capability to influence other states, events and regions. The pivot state is influential in a region because the internal development in such a state, or lack thereof, is so significant that it typically holds major implications for states in its immediate region', C. Landsberg, 'Hegemon or Pivot?: Debating South Africa's role in Africa', <http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000620/page2.php> (28/10/10).

⁴² *Sunday Times (SA)*, 19 June 1994.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

constitutional crisis.⁴⁵ South Africa became an active part of a multilateral commission, which investigated the Lesotho Defence Force and made recommendations to ease the tensions.⁴⁶ In consort with Botswana and Zimbabwe, South Africa attended and hosted meetings and summits and, after some tense negotiations, an agreement was brokered in September 1994.⁴⁷ The mediation efforts were regarded as a victory for democracy and stability in the region. The crisis allowed South Africa to practically implement its rhetoric of promoting stability and democracy through peaceful negotiations. Similar South African peace initiatives occurred in Angola and Mozambique in these formative months, with varying degrees of success.⁴⁸

One of the new government's more eye catching acts in demonstrating its commitment to the region occurred in December 1994, when South Africa cancelled Namibia's R800 million debts.⁴⁹ Discussions about such a proposal had been under consideration since the April elections. In a meeting with the Namibian President Sam Nujoma at Upington airport, Mandela announced, 'SWAPO and the ANC have been allies in the struggle for decades. We do not think that it is morally correct for us to call upon the SWAPO government to pay a debt of this nature'.⁵⁰ The announcement came as a welcome reprieve for Namibia, a country crippled by economic underdevelopment.⁵¹ The exercise provided the ANC the perfect opportunity to publicise and fulfil its stated obligations to the region, repaying an historic debt to one of its allies.

'A Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa': The ANC's sets out its post-election vision

Throughout the latter stages of the transition, the formulation of a new foreign policy had been addressed by both the ANC and the SCFA. The outcome of these deliberations did not actually provide a formal foreign policy for the new South

⁴⁵ 'Lesotho Minister Discusses Recent Military Uprising', *Gaborone Radio Botswana Network*, 21 April 1994.

⁴⁶ 'Nzo: Commission on Lesotho Army Working Well', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 25 July 1994.

⁴⁷ 'Praises Agreement Signed in Lesotho', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 14 September 1994.

⁴⁸ Barber, *Mandela's World*, p. 100.

⁴⁹ 'Nujoma Leaves With Debt Relief', *Johannesburg SABC TV 1 Network*, 06 December 1994.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ 'Mandela Comments on Cancelling Namibian Debt', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 13 December 1994.

Africa, but merely a set of recommendations, and overarching principles on which it could be based. These amounted to what could be criticised as an idealistic wish list of how it was hoped South Africa would interact with the wider world. This meant that for the first seven months of ANC-led rule, foreign policy was largely conducted at the behest of its leaders, or on the basis of the ground work laid by the SCFA. The first formal, post-election document produced by the ANC concerning foreign policy was 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa'.⁵² However, except for the addition of an introduction describing the post-Cold War international climate's effect on South Africa, the document was virtually identical to the October 1993 publication 'Foreign Policy in a new democratic South Africa: A discussion paper' (see Chapter Four).⁵³ The publication of 'Foreign Policy Perspective' nevertheless provided an opportunity for the ANC to reiterate its core principles governing foreign policy interactions; echoing the Freedom Charter, it emphatically declared that 'foreign policy belongs to South Africa's people'.⁵⁴ This bold statement did not however reflect the reality, which was that foreign policy-making in South Africa continued to be confined to a small number of people (see Chapter Seven).

The document emphasised seven core principles which were to guide South African foreign policy. These had been previously publicised several times, most prominently in the ghost-written Mandela article in the blue ribbon journal *Foreign Affairs* (although the article only lists six principles; the final point on the list below is the addition), the October 1993 discussion paper (see Chapter Four), and in various speeches by ANC leaders. The principles were:

- A belief in, and preoccupation with, Human Rights which extends beyond the political, embracing the economic, social and environmental;
- A belief that just and lasting solutions to the problems of human kind can only come through the promotion of Democracy, worldwide;
- A belief that Justice and International Law should guide the relations between nations;

⁵² Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=230> (9/08/10).

⁵³ Foreign Policy in a New Democratic South Africa: A Discussion Paper, October 1993, http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/Diversity/General/Government/International/ANC/Policy_Docs/foreign.txt (1/12/09).

⁵⁴ Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=230> (9/08/10).

- A belief that international peace is the goal to which all nations should strive. Where this breaks down, internationally- agreed peaceful mechanisms to solve conflicts should be resorted to;
- A belief that our foreign policy should reflect the interests of the continent of Africa;
- A belief that South Africa's economic development depends on growing regional and international economic cooperation in an independent world;
- A belief that our foreign relations must mirror our deep commitment to the consolidation of a democratic South Africa.⁵⁵

The message which the ANC reiterated seven months after taking power thereby focused on the issues of human rights, peace, economic growth, democracy, and the primacy of the African continent. The two principles of human rights and the African continent will be discussed in greater depth.

Human rights had become the cornerstone of the ANC's post-apartheid foreign policy and, despite some misgivings within the leadership, it was an issue which Mandela and other party leaders regularly stressed to the international community. This was in the words of the 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa' document, because, 'the world dare not relinquish the commitment to Human Rights... Our Struggle to end apartheid was a global one and we believe that a change has enhanced the necessity for a worldwide Human Rights campaign. South Africa should and must play a central role in this campaign'.⁵⁶ The ANC pledged that the human rights abuses inflicted by the apartheid regime would never be repeated. The ANC rejected claims that human rights pledges would be only symbolic: 'in our efforts to canonise human rights in our international relations, we regard them as far more than this'.⁵⁷ Setting South Africa on such a bold path was a courageous statement of intent by the ANC. Based on its own experiences, the party saw the pursuit of human rights as an ideal basis for its foreign policy in the 'new world order'.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

However, the document also arguably demonstrates the ANC's naivety concerning foreign policy, despite the best efforts of the SCFA to domesticate it. It asserted that 'we shall not be selective, nor, indeed be afraid to raise human rights violations with countries where our own and other interests might be negatively affected. South Africa's experience, we believe, shows how damaging policy can be when issues of principle are sacrificed to economic and political expediency'.⁵⁸ This was certainly a noble position and, if South Africa had stuck to this principle then the country would have truly been an agent for change in international relations. Indeed, South Africa was probably the only country that could have realistically pursued such a goal in the 1990s, because after the successful transition, the country and its president were held in such high esteem by the global community that they might have been able to enact such a policy. However, the inconsistent implementation of this policy and indeed its inherent problems meant that this clear statement of intent would later come to haunt the ANC. Although the pursuit of a human rights inspired foreign policy caused a number of dilemmas for the ANC-led government, its predicament was not unique in international relations. For example, US President Jimmy Carter in the 1970s and British Prime Minister Tony Blair in the late 1990s, had both committed their respective governments to moral and human rights based foreign policies.⁵⁹ Ultimately, despite their best intentions, both powerful leaders struggled to live up to their lofty principles, illustrating the difficulties of implementing such ideals to foreign policy.

The second major focus of 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa' was the African continent, and more specifically Southern Africa. It was at the forefront of ANC's efforts because 'a democratic South Africa's future is inextricably intertwined with that of Africa', and furthermore, because 'the region sustained us during our struggle... Southern Africa is, therefore, a pillar upon which South Africa's foreign policy rests'.⁶⁰ The document declares: 'we dedicate our foreign policy to helping to ensure that Africa's peoples are not forgotten or ignored

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ For more information on Jimmy Carter and Tony Blair's attempts see: D. Carleton and M. Stohl, 'The Foreign Policy of Human Rights: Rhetoric and Reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan', *Human Rights Quarterly*, 7 (1985), pp. 205-229; D. Schmitz and V. Walker, 'Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy', *Diplomatic History*, 28 (2004), pp. 113-143; R. Little and M. Wickham-Jones (eds.), *New Labour's Foreign Policy: A new moral crusade?* (Manchester, 2000).

⁶⁰ Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=230> (9/08/10).

by humankind'.⁶¹ By creating a balanced, more cooperative approach to trade and development on the continent, and working in multilateral forums such as the OAU to pursue the goals of peace, stability and democracy, the premise was that Pretoria would enhance regional and continental unity. It was a principle which was informed by both the findings and recommendations of the SCFA, and the experiences of the ANC in exile. The ANC wanted to reward the continent for supporting its liberation struggle, and to prove that its government was different from the apartheid regime. The SCFA had also suggested that without peace and stability in Africa, the desired aim of economic development could not be fulfilled in the manner which South Africa required for its own envisaged domestic transformation. The emphasis on Africa thus made perfect sense for the ANC, influenced by both altruistic and material motivations.

The major part of the 'Foreign Policy Perspective' document had been drafted during the transition, at a time when the pressures and realities of power on the ANC had not yet tested whether its stated foreign policy principles were feasible in practice. It is perhaps surprising that the ANC had not modified the document after seven months in power, as it might be expected that its initial forays would have provided greater insights into the realities of the international community and the practicalities of its foreign policy. However, the ANC certainly believed these were appropriate options, and that there was widespread support for its initiatives. In the new introduction to the document, the claim was made that 'our policies and programmes have, by and large, been accepted by the international community as realistic and the endeavour to transform South Africa into a truly free, prosperous and non-racial society has been acclaimed... The world is literally bending backwards to make us a success story'.⁶²

With no more overt foreign policy document in place after the elections, 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa' was to act as the framework for the ANC's first tentative steps into foreign policy. But, 'Foreign Policy Perspective' could not be described as a foreign policy in the truest sense of the term. Although it helped cement South Africa's entrance into international activities, and offered an indication of the objectives it wished to pursue, it did not

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

provide definitive guidance for the nation's foreign policy. For example, 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa' did not at any point define what South Africa's national interests were. As foreign policy is normally considered an extension of domestic priorities, it is usually necessary to identify what the national interests of the country are, but this is something the document failed to do. Secondly, there is no indication of how Pretoria would be able to achieve or even implement the highly ambitious goals it had set for themselves. This meant that South Africa still did not have a definitive foreign policy by the end of 1994 to guide its interactions with the rest of the world. This was to prove important, when as always occurs, unpredictable foreign policy problems presented themselves.

South Africa and the Nigerian Crisis

The first major foreign policy issue that post-apartheid South Africa faced was its confrontation with the military dictatorship of Nigerian President Sani Abacha. In 1993, Abacha had assumed power by dissolving democratic institutions, ousting civilian rulers, and replacing them with military personnel, while clamping down on domestic dissent.⁶³ Nigeria therefore provided the first real test case for South Africa's well publicised democratic, human rights and African-focused foreign policy. It was a particular interesting country on which to pin South Africa's foreign policy principles, for several reasons. Nigeria is an extremely powerful country and one which many African states regard as a natural leader; it had been an active supporter of the ANC during the liberation struggle, providing training and financial assistance; and was the largest contributor to the OAU, providing a third of its income.⁶⁴ With its massive oil reserves, Nigeria was a major economic power on the continent, and a country with which South Africa would have realistically expected to have established close links. However, as the 'Foreign Policy Perspective' document clearly stated, South Africa 'would not be selective' when dealing with human rights abuses and acts which violated democracy. For the declaration to have any meaning Pretoria was forced to act. The actions of South Africa, the Nigerian

⁶³ 'Human Rights Group Begins Anti-Execution Campaign', *Paris AFP*, 13 July 1995.

⁶⁴ Barber, *Mandela's World*, p. 110.

government and the international community between 1994 and 1996 resulted in a breakdown of relations, commonly referred to as the Nigerian crisis.

The South African government initially adopted a 'quiet diplomatic' stance towards Nigeria, encouraging Abacha to reform his style of government, release political opponents and pave the way for democratic elections.⁶⁵ However, Abacha was an autocratic and inexperienced leader who did not conform to international norms, and in fact openly defied them.⁶⁶ Secondly, the issues the South African government confronted in Nigeria, human rights abuses and demands for democracy, are not traditional foreign policy concerns.⁶⁷ A central dilemma was that South Africa did not have the instruments in place to force Nigeria, a sovereign state, to comply with its demands. Nigeria was sufficiently economically powerful to resist any South African sanctions or coercion, and Pretoria could not realistically have engaged Nigeria militarily, both because of distance, and its promotion of non-interventionist ways of addressing foreign policy problems. Mandela, Mbeki and Nzo all made visits to Abuja during mid-to-late 1995 to discuss their concerns, and the South Africans claimed they were making progress, 'because we are certain that the Nigerian government is sensitive to the concerns we and many other people have raised with regards to clemency'.⁶⁸ However, while South Africa repeatedly engaged Abacha and his government in quiet bilateral talks, no concrete gains were actually achieved because there were neither the incentives nor the means to make Nigeria act differently.

Matters came to a head in November 1995 during the Commonwealth Heads of State meeting in New Zealand, when Nigerian activist Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed. Mandela was shocked, as he genuinely believed that he had made progress in persuading Nigeria to alter its stance. The President furiously condemned the execution and 'the callous disregard of efforts by the South African and other

⁶⁵ 'Mandela Prefers 'Quiet Persuasion' With Nigeria', *Johannesburg Channel Africa Radio* (accessed via Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports), 1 November 1995.

⁶⁶ Van Aardt, 'To Die For', p. 111.

⁶⁷ In this regard traditional foreign policy making is largely based on the 'realist' world view, which informs the international system. South Africa found it difficult to implement its 'idealistic' vision for foreign policy (and attract others to support its goals), because the pursuit of human rights fall outside the scope of common concerns such as national interests, and more importantly the notion of state sovereignty and non-intervention are two factors which underpin the current international community.

⁶⁸ *The Star*, 24 July 1995.

African governments to lend assistance in the restoration of democracy'.⁶⁹ Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth for its actions, but Mandela personally called for greater punishment, including an oil embargo and diplomatic isolation, evidenced by his phone calls to the US and UK governments to seek such measures.⁷⁰ At Mandela's insistence, South Africa withdrew its High Commissioner in protest, and convened a regional meeting of SADC Heads of States to formulate a cohesive plan of action against Nigeria.⁷¹ Mandela became increasingly belligerent in his attacks on Abacha, describing him as 'a corrupt dictator in charge of an illegitimate and barbaric regime'; he argued that Africa should unite behind sanctions and the isolation of Nigeria to show its disgust, because otherwise any talk of an 'African Renaissance' would be discredited.⁷² It was a principled step by South Africa, but unfortunately its efforts were not supported by the rest of the world.

South Africa's diplomatic efforts therefore came to naught. Instead it was forced to back down and apologise, with Nzo subsequently insisting that 'we have never intended to humiliate or destabilise' Nigeria.⁷³ Mandela failed to convince Abacha to soften his stance; he and South Africa were accused of doing either too little or for being too draconian. The international community did not follow Pretoria's lead by imposing sanctions or isolating Nigeria. In fact, it left South Africa as the one that was isolated and humiliated. South Africa was accused by Nigerian civil society of being too weak; Nigerian poet laureate Wole Soyinka accused South Africa of 'appeasement and compared the strategy of quiet diplomacy to the notorious strategy of constructive engagement adopted by the Thatcher and Reagan administrations in dealing with apartheid'.⁷⁴ In hindsight, this statement seems unfair, as there was arguably little else South Africa could have done short of invading the country. In fact, South Africa had taken the strongest stand of any nation, and was pilloried for it. What this does demonstrate is that, regardless of South Africa's best efforts, many Africans expected more from them, and criticised the country when these were not fulfilled. Certainly, the two stages of South Africa's approach, quiet

⁶⁹ *The Star*, 16 November 1995.

⁷⁰ 'Mugabe Rules Out Isolated Response to Nigeria', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 18 November 1995.

⁷¹ J. Barber, 'The new South Africa's Foreign Policy: Principles and Practise', *International Affairs*, 81 (2005), p. 1084.

⁷² *The Observer*, 26 November 1995; Popularised by Thabo Mbeki, the concept of the 'African Renaissance' was to unite the continent politically and philosophically in a bid to end Afro-pessimism, and to move Africa towards peace, development and democracy.

⁷³ Parliamentary Briefing Week: The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nzo, 13 February 1996.

⁷⁴ *Mail and Guardian*, 17 November 1995.

diplomacy, followed by over-stated individual condemnation, were inadequate for the purpose of altering Abacha's behaviour.

Most damaging for South Africa, was Mandela's failure to unite the continent behind his initiatives. The OAU's inaction was described by *The Star's* Foreign Editor, Dale Lautenbach, as a 'disgraceful silence'; only four Heads of State attended the emergency SADC meeting, leaving Mandela 'without the regional solidarity he was seeking'.⁷⁵ The SADC meeting agreed to leave any decisions to the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, meaning that by December 1995 South Africa had been forced to effectively surrender its bilateral efforts to influence Nigeria's leaders, in favour of collective measures.⁷⁶ These failures damaged South Africa's prestige, suggesting not only to Pretoria but the rest of the world that it lacked the ability to wield decisive influence in Africa. Matters were worsened by the barrage of hostility from Nigeria. Abacha openly ridiculed Mandela, arguing that 'probably because... of being incarcerated for 27 years, he cannot understand the complexity of modern diplomacy'.⁷⁷ He also cited the history of Nigerian support for the South African struggle, stating: 'I cannot understand... why [they]... are behaving the way they did. These were the same people for whom we have made a lot of sacrifices in order to ensure freedom'.⁷⁸ Abacha even described South Africa as a 'traitor' for having a western-centred approach because of its supposed desire to win permanent membership of the UN Security Council.⁷⁹ These were wounding words for the new South African government which had been desperate not to damage relations with Africa, nor arouse resentment amongst its governments and peoples. Although Abacha's statements were detrimental to Pretoria, they would have been manageable if they were simply those of an isolated, desperate leader. Abacha's criticisms were however more damaging because of Africa's telling failure to support South Africa's initiatives. The continent had effectively rejected Mandela's efforts to pursue a moralistic path on the continent, partly because South Africa had broken with diplomatic tradition in so publicly attacking Nigeria.

⁷⁵ *The Star*, 13 December 1995.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ 'Abacha: Mandela Lacks Understanding of Diplomacy', *Paris AFP*, 23 November 1995.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Some have come to consider the moment Mandela spoke out against Abacha's rule in Nigeria as one of the greatest achievements of his presidency.⁸⁰ *The Star's* Foreign Editor argued that Mandela's active defence of his principles, it was a bold and courageous move 'because South Africa has chosen the "right way" ... we cannot imagine that others should not see the light'.⁸¹ However, notwithstanding the merits of South Africa's bold moral stance, its handling of Nigeria was an abject failure of its foreign policy. It was clear that quiet diplomatic talks had no substance, and South Africa lacked any sort of bargaining tool, which allowed Nigeria to disregard its efforts. It also became evident that there was no co-ordinated diplomatic approach towards Nigeria, and that the DFA had failed to properly brief Mandela.⁸² *The Mail and Guardian* exposed the fact that neither Nzo nor Thabo Mbeki had done anything substantial to resolve the situation, keeping out of the public eye and leaving Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad to pick up the pieces.⁸³ It was further revealed that the South African High Commissioner to Nigeria, George Nene, had failed to follow his instructions to keep in regular contact with opposition groups in the country, thus limiting the quality of South African intelligence.⁸⁴ Additionally and most harmfully, South Africa had been unable to garner any meaningful support for its initiatives from other African nations, leaving it isolated. South Africa had also failed to prevent Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution, stop other human rights abuses, or to foster democracy in Nigeria.

It would not be overstating the point to suggest that, even though it occurred within a year of the advent of democratic rule, the Nigerian crisis was a seminal moment in post-apartheid South African foreign policy. It was the moment that South Africa learnt a hard lesson about the nature of foreign policy in Africa and more widely the international community, which would shape the future. Primarily, South Africa realised that a more discerning approach to foreign policy would be required. In the wake of the Nigerian crisis, the ANC officially stuck to the belief that human rights would be an important tenet of foreign policy, but realised it would need to approach its implementation in different ways, primarily through multilateral

⁸⁰ 'Evaluating the effectiveness of South Africa's foreign policy since 1994', Goedgeacht Forum for Social Reflection, 12 April 2003.

⁸¹ *The Star*, 13 December 1995.

⁸² *Mail and Guardian*, 17 November 1995.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

forums. While bilateral links would still be important, South Africa increasingly turned to arenas such as the UN and SADC to promote its agenda. It also realised the need to rethink its emphasis on the term ‘human rights’, in order to avoid similar diplomatic disasters. Pahad argued that ‘the ANC had not fully elaborated on its human rights policy – possibly due to inexperience in government’.⁸⁵ This ‘inexperience’ was cited by Pahad to defend the ANC’s position: ‘we had to learn by doing. We were new’.⁸⁶ A senior ANC official thus defended South Africa’s handling of Nigeria by claiming naivety and inexperience. The second major lesson for South Africa was its discovery that the international community’s rhetoric about defending human rights and democracy often went untranslated in practice, no matter how obvious the abuses were. Although it had been noted during the transition by the DFA and SCFA that economic considerations would be a more important influence on policy than ideology, the crisis in Nigeria reinforced this position. The international community ignored Mandela’s requests to impose sanctions and diplomatic restrictions on Nigeria, and did nothing to support South Africa’s efforts; large oil companies such as Shell continued to do business with Nigeria as normal.⁸⁷ It also starkly demonstrated that Mandela’s moral authority did not carry as much weight as originally believed.

However, the most significant and enduring lesson of the Nigerian crisis was in its revelations about Africa’s attitudes towards South Africa. Despite the ANC’s rhetoric of wishing to forge closer relations with Africa, the reality was that after thirty years in exile it did not understand the continent, its leaders or their priorities; much of Africa was in turn suspicious of South Africa. A *Star* editorial argued that ‘we fail to understand the power politics of Africa’, and that the OAU’s silence on Nigeria ‘reflects the reality of the sum of African states’.⁸⁸ The ANC wished to reform the continent, and the international community’s perceptions of it. However, South African foreign policy makers were confronted, in van Aardt’s words ‘the dilemma of pursuing goals which clash so fundamentally with many of the practises and customs of African politics’.⁸⁹ South African foreign policy aims were not aligned with the rest of the continent, and were thus rejected by the very leaders the

⁸⁵ *Sunday Independent (SA)*, 7 March 2010.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ ‘Shell To Continue Nigerian Gas Project’, *Johannesburg SAPA*, 29 November 1995.

⁸⁸ *The Star*, 13 December 1995.

⁸⁹ Van Aardt, ‘To Die For’, p. 115.

ANC was seeking to work with. South Africa was ostracised on the continent for breaking the ‘unwritten rule, the gentleman’s agreement, that African leaders don’t criticise each other in public’.⁹⁰ Since the end of colonial rule, it had come to be understood that African states did not attack one another publicly; rather they closed ranks against external threats. Already regarded with a degree of suspicion, South Africa had broken the solidarity rule.⁹¹ From this time forward South Africa was far less willing to stick its head above the parapet and take on initiatives on human rights by itself. To avoid isolation, South Africa would, where possible, seek consensus with others before taking policy actions. The policy was now in the words of Geldenhuys, ‘that you dare not stand alone, don’t swim against the tide in Africa’.⁹² This was to be the most important lesson that South Africa took from the Nigeria crisis, and one which would profoundly influence its future interactions with the African continent.

Inconsistencies in South African foreign policy

Even before the Nigerian crisis, there was already mounting concern amongst academics and observers about the inconsistencies in South African foreign policy, and these steadily increased during Mandela’s presidency. The ANC-led government found itself caught between the competing strands of its foreign policy, which incorporated its own ideological principles, the recommendations of the SCFA, and the expectations of the international community. It resulted in what appeared to be an inconsistent approach to international relations. A major problem was that the seven stated principles were potentially contradictory, and did not sit neatly with the realities of the international community.

One key issue that plagued the ANC was the need to be seen repaying its debts to former allies which had sustained and supported the liberation struggle. The vast majority of these were African states, which correlated with the ANC’s expressed desire of working closely with the continent. In the fight against apartheid most of the western world had not supported the ANC, and in fact the movement had

⁹⁰ Interview with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Johannesburg, 29 March 2010.

⁹¹ Van Aardt, ‘To Die For’, p. 115.

⁹² Interview with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Johannesburg, 29 March 2010.

been labelled as a terrorist organisation by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan.⁹³ Lacking western assistance, the ANC had turned to the Eastern Bloc and to various authoritarian states for support, putting them further at odds with the major economic powers. After the Cold War had ended, the bulk of the ANC's former liberation allies, such as the USSR, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and Poland had ceased to be communist regimes. They had instead embraced democracy and neo-liberal economics. However, a small number of communist and radical nations managed to survive the upheaval of the early 1990s, becoming the 'pariahs' of the now much larger capitalist world in the process. The ANC-led government of South Africa had meanwhile begun to implement the recommendations of the SCFA, which focused upon working in multilateral forums and increasing economic ties with the western world. The west was however concerned by South Africa's emerging ties with socialist or rogue nations. The SCFA had committed the ANC to a specific manner of interacting with the international community - if South Africa adhered to the status quo, the global community would reward it (see Chapter Five). Yet, even at Mandela's inauguration, there was evidence of the 'new' South Africa's diplomatic ties with the ANC's former allies; powerful western leaders found themselves sharing the stage with dictators past and present, with revolutionary leaders like Yasser Arafat, Muammar al-Gaddafi and Fidel Castro.⁹⁴

South Africa's links with these 'pariah nations' were further cemented with early visits to, and diplomatic missions established in countries such as Cuba, Libya, and North Korea.⁹⁵ In the new international order, with foreign policy increasingly linked to trade, these countries had almost nothing to offer South Africa, although Cuba had supplied doctors to rural health clinics.⁹⁶ However, these links were in the eyes of some critics, 'purely symbolic, nostalgic and ideological'.⁹⁷ They provided a means for the ANC to thank its former allies. Mandela personally thanked the ANC's former allies, making a thinly veiled swipe at the west by insisting 'that we never forget our friends who were with us when we were all alone, when some of the countries, with whom we now have developed special relations, were on the side of

⁹³ *The Independent*, 28 August 2006.

⁹⁴ 'U.S., other delegations described', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 9 May 1994.

⁹⁵ 'DP also criticises Omar', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 25 July 1994.

⁹⁶ Interview with Andrew Feinstein, London, 1 July 2009.

⁹⁷ Telephone interview with R.W. Johnson, 13 November 2009.

the enemy, giving them resources to enable the apartheid regime to continue the repression'.⁹⁸ This however, presented a major strategic problem for South Africa. The west, upon which South Africa relied most heavily on for trade and aid, was critical of Pretoria's insistence on entertaining isolated nations, believing that relations with South Africa provided those states with a degree of legitimacy. Mandela was himself criticised on various occasions, especially by the USA, which was angered about the direction South Africa was taking under his Presidency, exemplified by its ties to Cuba and Libya. The United States expected South Africa to conform to western norms, as encouraged by the SCFA. In cultivating links with such nations, it was doing exactly the opposite. However, the more the west criticised South Africa for these links, the more Mandela promised to retain them, which led to a growing sense of unease amongst many observers.⁹⁹ On one occasion, when questioned about links to Libya, Mandela reacted furiously, claiming that 'those who feel we should have no relations with Gadaffi, have no morals. Those who feel irritated by our friendship with President Gadaffi can go jump in the pool'.¹⁰⁰ Yet, despite such politically explosive statements, the western world did not reduce aid or trade. However, it did reflect the increasing confusion about what South Africa actually stood for internationally.

South Africa's links with former ANC allies was also informed by the idea of a universal foreign policy. In theory this meant that South Africa would be a totally non-aligned country – a friend to all, but particularly of the developing world. Indeed, the ANC committed itself to the self determination of oppressed peoples, which in turn potentially meant supporting national liberation movements. As the ruling party of a major nation, this was certain to ruffle feathers internationally. In the context in which 'one person's terrorist, is another's freedom fighter', the ANC was in contact with groups regarded by some countries as terrorists. However, the ANC argued that links with rebel movements provided a means of opening lines of dialogue, so that a peaceful solution could be reached. Nonetheless, a number of countries instead perceived a powerful African nation to be potentially undermining the sovereignty of others by assisting its enemies.

⁹⁸ 'On efforts to resolve Lockerbie', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 3 February 1995.

⁹⁹ *The Citizen*, 14 February 1996.

¹⁰⁰ *Mail and Guardian*, 6 August 2010.

Several examples illustrate this point. Throughout the ANC's liberation struggle it had been closely allied to the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government in Angola, which had provided bases, training, and support. The civil war in the country had been raging since Portuguese decolonisation in 1975, and the MPLA (and at times the ANC) had fought against the guerrilla movement, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). After South Africa's own independence, the ANC-led government was as part of its efforts to assist the Angolan peace process, in contact with the MPLA's sworn enemy UNITA. Although South Africa's involvement in peace efforts arose from the ANC's expressed principles, Angola was a powerful Southern African nation with strong liberation credentials. The MPLA was also especially offended that the ANC had not fully acknowledged its efforts to support the South African liberation struggle during exile, especially as Angola was one of the key locations for ANC bases in Southern Africa. Furthermore, the ANC had not recognised the importance of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, and Angola's role in changing the strategic landscape in Southern Africa. Gary Littlejohn also argued that 'the fact the ANC did not tip off the Angolans when they knew that the SADF was trying to provide logistical support for UNITA during the 1992 electoral registration campaign, and that the SADF tried to use their presence in Angola at this time to spy on Angolan forces cannot have helped to develop mutual trust'.¹⁰¹ It did not help matters that reports identified South Africa as still providing weapons in February 1995 to the rebel movement, contravening an arms agreement signed with the Angolan government in November 1994.¹⁰² The insult was worsened by South Africa's cancellation of Namibia's debts and its establishing close links with Mozambique, whilst Mandela continued to ignore the MPLA. The extent of the MPLA's deep mistrust of the ANC was aptly demonstrated in 1997 when the Angolan government rejected the South African's offer of its Rooivalk helicopters to be used as a rapid reaction force to target UNITA.¹⁰³ South Africa's position in peace negotiations was regarded as a betrayal of Angola's earlier support, and this marked

¹⁰¹ Email correspondence with Dr. Gary Littlejohn, 24 June 2011.

¹⁰² *New Nation*, 30 June 1995.

¹⁰³ Email correspondence with Dr. Gary Littlejohn, 24 June 2011.

the start of a period of extremely poor relations between the two countries which steadily worsened under Mbeki's presidency.¹⁰⁴

A second example was South Africa's actions concerning the Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony in West Africa. In 1975, Spain ceded two-thirds of the territory to Morocco which occupied the region, despite it being claimed as a homeland by the Saharawi people. The Saharawi, represented by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) fought a guerrilla war operating out of Algeria until 1991, and still claimed to be the 'country's' government in exile.¹⁰⁵ Despite the 1991 ceasefire, negotiations had reached a stalemate, and the UN became involved in mediation attempts. The apartheid regime had kept close ties with Morocco, while the ANC in exile had established relations with POLISARIO, previously agreeing to recognise the independence of Western Sahara. After the 1994 elections, the new South African government maintained links with both Morocco and POLISARIO as part of its universalistic strategy, and the ANC allegedly received financial donations from both sides.¹⁰⁶ However, Mandela, who had given a written promise in June 1995 to officially recognise the state of Western Sahara, subsequently reneged on this commitment, waiting until the UN decided whether to recognise Western Sahara.¹⁰⁷ POLISARIO leaders were furious with Mandela and suspected that the Moroccan government had influenced the ANC's decision.¹⁰⁸ This decision was compounded by the fact that the Western Sahara was a full member of the OAU, prompting Jeremy Cronin to state 'we are absolutely alone in this regard among all Southern African states, even Malawi has recently accorded recognition'.¹⁰⁹ As the issue of the Western Sahara had not been rectified, and as Pretoria maintained links with both sides in the conflict, South Africa decided to join the mediation efforts in accordance with its stated foreign policy goals. This sparked a mini-crisis as the Moroccans now took exception to South African talks with POLISARIO, which 'Moroccan diplomatic efforts have focused on preventing'.¹¹⁰ This forced Mandela to call the Moroccan King, in order to bring Foreign Minister 'Nzo's recent North African trip

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Mark Ashurst, Director of the Africa Research Institute, London, 3 March 2010.

¹⁰⁵ *Mail and Guardian*, 23 June 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Leon, *Contrary*, p. 273.

¹⁰⁷ *Mail and Guardian*, 1 December 1995.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Mail and Guardian*, 23 June 1995.

¹¹⁰ *Mail and Guardian*, 1 March 1996.

back from the brink of disaster'.¹¹¹ The ANC had tried to work with two mutually opposed parties, and had resulted in offending both.

A final and better known example of South Africa's efforts to pursue a universal foreign policy was in its relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), more commonly referred to as Taiwan. Apartheid-era South Africa had maintained close links with Taiwan, as both were internationally isolated; Mandela had however expressed an interest in maintaining these diplomatic connections. South Africa was nevertheless also keen to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, as it was a growing economic power, a member of the UN Security Council, and a powerful developing nation. The problem was that the PRC did (and still does) not recognise the sovereignty of Taiwan, and refused to establish formal ties with South Africa if the latter pursued dual recognition, the so-called 'Two China's Policy'. It was thought that Mandela's moral authority and charisma might have been able to overcome this obstacle, but Beijing stood firm and tried to pressurise South Africa into dropping its recognition of Taiwan. Mandela made clear that he had 'no intention of ending ties with Taiwan' to achieve diplomatic ties with PRC.¹¹² To counteract PRC pressure, Taiwan provided large financial donations to both the South African state and the ANC election campaigns, and was in 1994 the country's sixth largest foreign investor.¹¹³ The dilemma for South Africa was that, on the one hand, it wished to retain links with an important investor and supporter; but on the other hand it needed to recognise the PRC, one of the world's largest and most powerful countries. Ultimately, economic and realpolitik considerations won the day; in an interview with journalist Maureen Isaacson, Pahad admitted that 'it was inevitable that South Africa would follow the one-China policy in the end and join the rest of the world – but money "spoke"'.¹¹⁴ The 'Two China's Policy' was finally dropped in November 1996, when Mandela announced that by the start of 1998, South Africa would establish links with the PRC and cease ties with Taiwan. It was a perfectly understandable 'realist' course of action for South Africa to take, bringing the nation into line with the international community and providing trade access to China. It however, contradicted the ANC

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² 'Mandela: 'No intention' of ending ties with Taiwan', *Johannesburg SAPA*, 6 July 1995.

¹¹³ *Mail and Guardian*, 8 December 1995.

¹¹⁴ *Sunday Independent (SA)*, 7 March 2010.

government's earlier statements about favouring dual recognition, and its stated policy of universalism. The abandoning of this policy marked the moment when South Africa realised that a universal approach to foreign policy was not achievable, and this aspect of the country's foreign policy soon ceased to exist. Jack Spence concluded that 'it demonstrates that reputation and moral authority achieve little when States interests are at stake'.¹¹⁵

A related concern regarding the universalistic element of South African foreign policy was that it contradicted the equally important principle that the country's policies should be based upon human rights. How can a country maintain friendly relations with all others, when a sizeable number of these countries abuse human rights? How was it possible to be universalistic in relations with countries which are non-democratic, when South Africa was committed to promoting democracy? Long before South Africa reproached Nigeria for its abuses of human rights and democracy, the ANC had been trying to square this circle without much luck. The ANC's allies in places like North Korea, Sudan, Libya, and Indonesia constantly infringed upon human rights and democratic rights. This meant that South Africa's lofty and well publicised principles were being undermined by its own actions. It was thus easy for the west to criticise South Africa for its approach, because it was falling far short of its own high ideals and, in theory, those of the international community. These ideals were further undermined when economics entered the equation. Numerous states had given money to the ANC (both as a liberation movement and a post-apartheid political party), as well as to the South African state. After the elections, Mandela met on several occasions with President Suharto of Indonesia, even though the country was occupying East Timor. It was revealed that, notwithstanding human rights abuses in East Timor, he had accepted donations from Indonesia.¹¹⁶ As already noted, Taiwan donated large sums of money to the government, with R35 million dollars going towards the ANC's election campaign, and a further R141 million towards a demobilisation centre for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).¹¹⁷ Mandela was forced to stress that these were not bribes, but the correlation between Taiwanese donations and South Africa's continued diplomatic recognition is striking. It appeared that South Africa was happy

¹¹⁵ J. Spence, 'The New South African Foreign Policy', p. 161.

¹¹⁶ *Mail and Guardian*, 8 December 1995.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

to downplay its commitments in return for a donation to the party or a favourable trade deal. This drew a number of criticisms. Tony Leon, leader of the opposition Democratic Party (DP), argued that ‘our whole foreign policy is based on the electoral debts of the ANC... There is a porous wall between party and state in this regard’. Leon alleged that South African ‘foreign policy is largely for hire... if you make a substantial donation to the ANC you get special foreign policy considerations’.¹¹⁸

The new South Africa further undermined its principles over the sale of arms. During the country’s isolation, the apartheid regime had developed one of the most successful domestic arms industry in the world and, despite strict sanctions, had become a major exporter. In the shape of the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCOR), the post-apartheid state had inherited a profitable nationalised industry, which employed numerous skilled people and was one of the country’s biggest export earners. After the election, there were hopes amongst some domestic observers that South Africa would end, or at least vastly diminish, its status as a major arms exporter. However, on realising ARMSCOR’s economic importance, the new government delayed addressing this difficult question. It posed several serious dilemmas for the ANC; foremost was how could they promote human rights whilst selling lethal weaponry? It was revealed that soon after May 1994, South Africa had been selling weapons to Yemen, a UN-prohibited weapons destination, providing a major embarrassment for the new government. As Xolani Skosana notes, ‘the incident had severe consequences for South Africa’s international image and was a slap in the face to South Africa’s emerging foreign policy’.¹¹⁹ In response, the ANC established the South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) in August 1995. This was a Cabinet-appointed committee designed to regulate and exercise control over the country’s arms sales. It meant the government would know to whom South African arms were being exported. Additionally, as part of the overhaul of South African arms sales, the Cameron Commission was established by Mandela to thoroughly investigate the issue. Mandela had previously emphasised the importance of the issue:

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ X. Skosana, ‘Arms Control South Africa Style: The dynamics of post-1994 arms export control policy’, ISS Paper, 62 (October, 2002), p.1.

our morality as a democratic government dictates that we have to act in accordance with internationally acceptable norms and standards.... In our approach to the sale of arms, we are resolved to act responsibly. Arms are for the purpose of defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a country; not to undermine any considerations of humanity nor to suppress the legitimate aspirations of any community.¹²⁰

One of the most pertinent recommendations of the Cameron Commission Report published in 1995 was that South Africa should not sell 'arms to repressive and authoritarian regimes'.¹²¹ These recommendations were endorsed by the ANC, which became a vocal proponent of disarmament, signed numerous treaties such as the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and was an international campaigner for the cause of arms reduction.

However, despite strict government regulations and moralistic political statements about the need to avoid controversial arms sales, an evident gap remained between rhetoric and practice. While maintaining strict accordance with international arms protocols, from 1994 onwards the South Africa government knowingly sold weapons to numerous nations that had dubious human rights records, were involved in conflicts, or were not entirely democratic. Roger Southall argues that the Arms Control Committee knowingly ignored human rights concerns as it 'completely abandoned any serious attempt to only supply relatively decent countries with arms'.¹²² Some arms deals involved sales to Rwanda (before and after the genocide) and Uganda, both of which invaded Zaire in 1997. Arms sales also took place to Turkey, Indonesia, Algeria, Congo-Brazzaville and Angola.¹²³ This led the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative to declare that the 'disturbing record of arms sales since April 1994 has fed the perception, domestically and internationally, that the ANC Government's foreign policy is haphazard and that South Africa has failed to become a restrained and responsible arms trader'.¹²⁴ This was a damning indictment, and further evidence that South Africa's foreign policy principles were being undermined by its own actions. A more worrying tendency was that, despite regularly proclaiming the importance of human rights and even after the

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹²¹ Findings of the Cameron Commission cited in *ibid*, p.4.

¹²² Interview with Professor Roger Southall, Johannesburg, 14 September 2009.

¹²³ 'South Africa: A question of principle. Arms trade and human rights', *Human Rights Watch*, Vol. 12, No. 5 (A), (October, 2000), section vii.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*.

implementation of reforms to arms sales, South Africa was still unable to implement its moral position in practice.

Conclusion

The ANC came to power on a wave of euphoria, with high expectations of what it could achieve internationally. The ANC-led government threw itself into reintegrating South Africa back into the international community. This commitment was informed both by its own perceptions, and the recommendations of the SCFA. The result was that in the first two years after the elections there were many demonstrations of the ANC-led government pro-actively engaging with the international community. Despite South Africa's enthusiasm for international action, many problems arose in its foreign policy. The new government's room for manoeuvre was partially constrained by the outcomes of the SCFA, which had predetermined many of its foreign policy interactions along a pro-western path. Yet these principles clashed not only with the ANC's own interests as a party, but those of its developing world allies.

This chapter has illustrated how many of the lofty principles of the ANC had been steadily undermined by its own activities in its first two years in power. Once in government, the ANC in many respects still acted as if it was a liberation movement; for example it had maintained links with a range of 'pariah' regimes from exile. Once in power, the ANC was surprised to find its foreign policy being roundly criticised from many different quarters, especially the west. It became abundantly clear that the positions of the ruling party were being blurred, undermining South Africa's national interests (see Chapter Seven). Former ANC MP Andrew Feinstein argued that the 'narrow interests of the party are not necessarily in South Africa's national interest... there has been a combination of national interests and narrow political party interests'.¹²⁵ Thus, whilst maintaining relations with allies such as North Korea, or selling arms to Indonesia may have been a means of the ANC recognising and rewarding the support of these countries for its exile struggle, they offered South Africa little in terms of national interest, and indeed generated widespread opposition. The ANC also attracted criticism from powerful western

¹²⁵ Interview with Andrew Feinstein, London, 1 July 2009.

countries, which were dismayed by the way that South African foreign policy shifted between the country's declared commitment to work within multilateral forums, and its continued links with ostracised nations. Furthermore, the west had believed that through the SCFA process they had 'captured' South African foreign policy, and were thus surprised when the government took actions contrary to expectations. In the process of pursuing its foreign policy principles, South Africa managed to almost irreparably damage relations with former allies such as the MPLA, with which diplomatic links would not be repaired until the Presidency of Jacob Zuma. The *Mail and Guardian* rightly argued in 1995 'that we have no coherent foreign policy; we have no firm attitude to human rights abuses in other countries; instead we have an ad hoc series of responses to world events based on Mandela's prestige, his reluctance to become too involved in international affairs, and his party's need for cash'.¹²⁶ Chapter Seven will therefore examine how, from 1996, the ANC began the process of reviewing its foreign policy to rectify this problem of 'coherence'.

¹²⁶ *Mail and Guardian*, 26 May 1995.

Chapter Seven

South African Foreign Policy under Review, 1996-1999

As the previous chapter explained, the initial implementation of foreign policy in the 'new' South Africa was a steep learning curve for all involved in the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU). Although some success was achieved in foreign policy (which will be examined in the course of this chapter), the initial stages of Mandela's presidency were mired by apparent failures. In a short space of time, the ANC had periodically reneged on its stated desire to pursue a human rights based policy, endured harsh domestic and international criticism for its links to 'pariah' nations, and markedly failed to convince Africa of its guiding principles. Stung by the widespread criticism of its actions, and recognising that the country still lacked a definitive vision for foreign policy, the ANC, DFA and the GNU all sought to rectify this. In the wake of the Nigerian crisis (see Chapter Six), 1996 proved to be a watershed year for South African foreign policy. It marked the beginning of a systematic review of foreign policy, in which key documents were produced by both the DFA and the ANC, namely: the 'South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document'; 'Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy'; and the 'White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions'. Two significant events in 1996 also influenced the ways in which the ANC would henceforth interact with the international community. The first was the decision by Deputy President De Klerk to withdraw the NP from the GNU, leaving the ANC in sole control of the country. The second was Thabo Mbeki's landmark 'I am an African' speech on 8 May 1996, which re-emphasised South Africa's African focus and outlined his vision for the continent. These factors would systematically influence foreign policy in subsequent years.

The decision by De Klerk to withdraw the NP from the GNU in May 1996 was in one sense a shock (particularly as the party had fought so hard for a power sharing agreement during the transition) but ultimately was not entirely unexpected.¹ Since 1994, despite being Deputy President, De Klerk had been increasingly marginalised by the ANC and had become frustrated at his lack of influence and

¹ *Financial Times (FT)*, 13 May 1996.

power.² There were two significant consequences of his decision: firstly, the NP's withdrawal placed the ANC in full power of the State; and secondly it provided Thabo Mbeki the opportunity to increase his own influence on decision-making as the sole Deputy President. The NP's abandonment of the GNU prompted Mandela to declare that 'the country had reached full political maturity'.³ The NP had not had much influence over the GNU, but it had still acted as a counterbalance to the ANC. In a practical sense, the foreign policy of South Africa from 1996 onwards was truly that of the ANC. The issue was however, that the ANC's foreign policy ideals had not been fully articulated, and in practice its principles had been implemented haphazardly, and inconsistently. The mistakes of previous years had been acknowledged, prompting a series of foreign policy discussion reviews, in an attempt to clarify what the ANC hoped South Africa could achieve internationally under its leadership.

At the same time as the NP was withdrawing from the GNU, Mbeki delivered his seminal 'I am an African' speech in Cape Town. This was an important statement of intent and a precursor for what South Africa would strive to achieve in the future, particularly under Mbeki's leadership.⁴ The rousing speech reasserted parts of the Freedom Charter; Mbeki insisted that 'African' was not something that could be simply defined by race. He also argued that, no matter what the historical actions of white South Africans may have been, they had played an influential part in creating the country and the identity of all its people. However, the speech's key message was a clarion call for Africa. Mbeki declared: 'the time had come that we make a super-human effort to be other than human, to respond to the call to create ourselves a glorious future'. He emphasised that as a South African, he was 'born of the peoples of the continent of Africa'.⁵ The argument was that as an African, Mbeki shared in the pain of violent conflicts across the continent, and 'the dismal shame of poverty, suffering and human degradation of my continent is a blight that we share'.⁶ Mbeki concluded that it was time for Africa to lift itself out of these problems, and suggested that once this process was under way, the continent would begin an

² J. Barber, *Mandela's World: the international dimension of South Africa's political revolution 1990-99* (Oxford, 2004), p. 128.

³ *FT*, 13 May 1996.

⁴ 'I am an African', Thabo Mbeki's speech at the adoption of The Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill, 8 May 1996.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

unstoppable rise to peace and prosperity. Mbeki's message had several purposes. First, it was an effort to dispel Afro-pessimism and cynicism about the continent being a poor, aid-dependent, and war ravaged region of the world. Secondly, Mbeki sought to emphasise that Africans could resolve these issues by working together. Thirdly, it was an attempt to tie South Africa closer to the continent, stressing its commitment to Africa in a bid to lessen suspicions about its intentions. It is telling that after only two years in power, the ANC felt the need to reaffirm its vows to the continent, suggesting the extent of the failures of post-apartheid South African foreign policy. Importantly, the speech also set in motion the 'African Renaissance', embodied by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which would become the centrepiece of Mbeki's foreign policy after his accession to the presidency in 1999. Mbeki's speech was the moment when the ANC strengthened the process of re-aligning South Africa's foreign policy towards the continent.

The DFA's review of South African Foreign Policy

The first post-apartheid review of foreign policy was carried out by the DFA which published the 'South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document' in 1996.⁷ It must be stressed that this review was not undertaken by the ANC, but rather the civil servants of the DFA, which intended to provide an overview of foreign policy and make recommendations to the government. In fact, the document emphasised its purpose was 'not to formulate fine-tuned foreign policy for the democratic government' but rather to give 'an overview of the many components of international relations, objectives and priorities which warrant the attention of policy makers and the policy dimensions which government and all its extensions need to consider'.⁸ The document was designed to provide a springboard for further discussion, and was intended to lead to the formulation of a White Paper on foreign policy.

The discussion document synthesised the first two years of South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy experiences, examining key policies in the context of the international changes of the period, predominantly evidenced by the speeches of

⁷ South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document, DFA, 1996, <http://www.info.gov.za/greenpapers/1996/foraf1.htm> (11/5/11).

⁸ *Ibid.*

Alfred Nzo and Mbeki. The scope of the review examined the principles and cornerstones of the country's foreign policy, and the multilateral activities of the state. The discussion document concluded by summarising the central tenets of South African foreign policy into eight overarching recommendations:

1. South Africa must consistently endeavour to pursue a coherent foreign policy, which includes economic, security and political components.
2. Preventive diplomacy and pro-active initiatives should be the approach, rather than reaction to events. A monitoring network with African partners is essential.
3. South Africa should assume a leadership role in Africa in all those areas where a constructive contribution could be made without politically antagonising the Country's African partners.
4. The Government should continue to pursue a non-aligned approach, with due regard for South Africa's SADC, OAU, NAM and other membership commitments.
5. A diplomacy of bridge-building between the "North" and the "South" should be pursued.
6. In multilateral forums, South Africa should strive to promote its interests in regard to the major global issues such as respect for human rights, democracy, global peace, security and the protection of the environment.
7. South Africa should constantly endeavour to positively influence and change the direction of events and developments internationally, to the extent that they affect South Africa.
8. Diplomatic relations and all related aspects should be a means to an end, namely to promote the well-being of the country and its citizens.⁹

The document reiterated what had been previously announced by the government and ministers. In fact, this DFA document barely deviated from the ANC's principles which had been set out in a 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa'.¹⁰ Even though the DFA publication was only seen as one 'further step in the process of policy review', the specific recommendations it offers are few and far between.¹¹ Its initial proposals were that 'South Africa's policy initiatives should be modest and not overtly ambitious', and 'that economic imperatives and political realities need to be balanced'.¹² However, its main conclusion was that 'South Africa needs to adopt a more pro-active foreign policy approach, within its means, to

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ 'Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa', <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=230> (9/08/10).

¹¹ South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document, DFA, 1996, <http://www.info.gov.za/greenpapers/1996/foraf1.htm> (11/5/11).

¹² *Ibid.*

achieve strategic objectives'.¹³ Therefore the only recommendations offered by the document were that South Africa should scale back its ambitions, take advantage of the opportunities open to it in order to fulfil its principles, and to do so on a more realistic basis. Since 1990, the DFA had largely pursued a 'realist' approach to foreign policy (see Chapters Four and Five), and the findings of this review were perfectly attuned to this school of thinking. Although, the review mirrored many of the ANC's principles, the conclusions however implied that South Africa had not achieved any of these under the GNU.

What is most interesting about the document is what it does not say. The document did not provide any in-depth case studies of South African foreign policy in action, and certainly did not offer any critical analysis of its successes and failures. For example, it highlighted that democracy and human rights were important pillars of the nation's foreign policy, but there is no comment about how these had been implemented in practice, especially after what had occurred in Nigeria or Indonesia, and nor did it examine whether the country's approach had worked. The only sign of criticism, which is not expressed explicitly, is made in regard to the seven broad principles which had been set out in 1994. The document states: 'it may be questioned whether these principles are sufficient... whether they are achievable, or how far the government should and can go in imposing them on others'.¹⁴ Indeed for a policy review there appeared to be a lack of analysis of how the government should actually change its approach, especially as there were no indications of how it could be fulfilled. On the whole, the document reverted to reiterating broad aspirational statements, which reaffirmed previous ANC positions. A cynical reading would suggest that the discussion document, for reasons of political expediency, sought not to antagonise the government by criticising its approach.¹⁵ However, in light of such comments, it must be noted that a predominantly white civil service, under a new administration would be unlikely to openly criticise government practice. Although the document includes the caveat that it does not seek to propose policy changes, it may be expected that a major policy review, in a significant government department would have done so. Indeed, the very role of the DFA is to advise the Minister for

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Civil servants don't generally attack the approach of the government in power, so the lack of criticism in the 'South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document' is not especially unusual.

Foreign Affairs (Nzo) and other relevant parties, including the President, on all aspects of foreign policy and to coordinate South Africa's responses to international developments. It therefore begs the question, if the DFA was not in the process of formulating policy for ministers, who was?

Foreign Policy formulation within the ANC and South Africa: a democratic process?

Although the ANC had openly expressed that foreign policy belonged to South Africa's people, what had in fact occurred since 1994 is that a highly personalised form of policy-making had emerged in South Africa. Anthony Butler's study of the ANC's internal democracy illustrated that there had been an increasing centralisation of decision-making around a small elite, in an apparent throwback to exile-style politics, but also replicating foreign policy decision-making under apartheid.¹⁶ The Leninist principles of the ANC in exile had ensured that the lives of its cadres were almost completely controlled by the movement's elite, with Butler's assertions applicable to South Africa's foreign policy formulation under Mandela. As has been previously discussed in Chapters Four and Five, foreign policy decisions during the transition were taken by a small number of ANC officials, and this was a practice which continued through into democratic government. The process of foreign policy-making was centralised to a handful of people within the government, with Mandela, Mbeki, Nzo and Pahad the key protagonists. However, given the President's overwhelming stature and moral authority, Mandela had the final say on South Africa's foreign policy proceedings.¹⁷ Mandela was a 'foreign policy' president, who busied himself in various aspects of South Africa's international affairs, ranging from trade delegations to peace missions. Consequently, most of South Africa's major foreign policy initiatives were carried out by him. Greg Mills argued, 'it has thus become a highly personalised affair, with President Mandela's international superstar status overshadowing all else'.¹⁸ Garth le Pere in a report for the Presidency declared that 'his [Mandela's] command and seeming domination of

¹⁶ A. Butler, 'How democratic is the African National Congress', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31 (2005), pp. 719-736.

¹⁷ Barber, *Mandela*, p. 88.

¹⁸ G. Mills, 'Leaning all over the place? The not-so-new South Africa's foreign policy', in H. Solomon (ed.), *Fairy Godmother, Hegemon or Partner? In Search of a South African Foreign Policy* (ISS, 1997), p. 21.

every major foreign policy decision and issue was so complete as to almost overshadow the role of the DFA, cabinet and parliament'.¹⁹ Andrea Ostheimer agrees that 'the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs neither set the agenda nor dominate the discussion; it is mainly the Presidency that drives the discourse'.²⁰ Furthermore, Raymond Suttner, chair of the Portfolio Committee from 1994-1997, and later the Ambassador to Sweden, was well placed to make observations about South African foreign policy:

It is not clear that the Presidency relates on a regular and coordinated basis with other foreign policy structures when it makes interventions on foreign policy questions. Nor is it clear that there is a structure that relates to the President on an advisory basis, as one finds with other presidencies in other parts of the world.²¹

Victor Mallet reported in the *Financial Times* that the DFA's ineffectiveness was compounded by the fact that 'Mandela often creat[ed] policy on the spot in his discussions with other world leaders, leaving the foreign ministry stumbling behind, with no idea what is happening'.²² Yet, while Mandela was the figurehead, behind the scenes, Mbeki as Deputy President, had a very strong influence over South Africa's foreign policy. For example, Mbeki had pushed for Nzo's appointment as Foreign Minister, because despite his 'incompetence and tendency to sleep on the job', this enabled Mbeki to direct 'foreign policy himself via his trusted client, Aziz Pahad, now deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs'.²³ The control of the levers of power by Mandela, and a small clique of ANC leaders, ensured that the input of other important foreign policy contributors was largely ignored.

Roger Pfister, however has argued that foreign policy contributors outside of this ANC-clique still had an important role, because 'the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has become the most important body in the arena of foreign policy

¹⁹ G. Le Pere, 'South Africa's Foreign Policy in a Globalising World An Overview: 1994-2002', The Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services in the Presidency as part of a 10 year review, <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/docs/pcsai/irps/perel.pdf> (2/9/10), p. 15.

²⁰ A. Ostheimer, 'Foreword', in T. Hughes, *Composers, Conductors and Players: Harmony and discord in South African foreign policy making* (Johannesburg, 2004), p. iii.

²¹ R. Suttner, 'Foreign Policy of the New South Africa: A Brief Review', in S. Guimaraes (ed.), *South Africa and Brazil: Risks and Opportunities in the Turmoil of Globalization (Brasilia, 1996)*, p. 193.

²² *Financial Times*, 27 August 1998.

²³ R.W. Johnson, *South Africa's Brave New World: The beloved country since the end of apartheid* (London, 2009), p. 55.

making... [and] on the Parliamentary side, the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs has gained some importance... This illustrates the democratisation in the sense of bringing foreign policy making closer to the electorate'.²⁴ In reality, quite the opposite scenario occurred. What will be illustrated is that both the DFA and the Portfolio Committee had increasingly become irrelevant to policy formulation in South Africa, and that there was little, if any, democratisation of foreign policy in South Africa, despite the transition from apartheid.

A pertinent example of the centralisation of South Africa's foreign policy is the exclusion of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs (PCFA) from policy formulation. Suttner, in his role as chair of the committee, published several studies during the mid-1990s criticising South Africa's increasingly centralised foreign policy. Suttner claimed the 'DFA was pretty useless in its policy drafting and they were bypassed almost entirely. Their briefing documents for visits to countries seem to have been ignored, by Mbeki and I think Mandela used his own perceptions'.²⁵ He added that the PCFA, which circulated documents to MPs and acted as a discussion forum, also 'had no influence on government'.²⁶ A reason for this was 'the fact that... decision[s] may well have been taken before the Committee has had the opportunity to meet with the authorities (a clear example of this was around Nigeria in the course of 1995)'.²⁷ Another example occurred during media enquiries into Taiwanese donations (see Chapter Six), to which Suttner was quoted as saying that 'he had no personal knowledge of any donations to the ANC'.²⁸ This points towards the increasing centralisation of decision-making, whose role and influence over the ANC government was vastly diminished after 1994. Furthermore, Tim Hughes argues that the PCFA lost some of its relevance and independence in an ANC-dominated parliament, which thus dominated the committee.²⁹ A factor which contributed to the marginalisation of the PCFA was because the South African parliament is elected via a system of proportional representation, where the party lists

²⁴ R. Pfister, 'South Africa's recent foreign policy towards Africa: Issue and Literature', *Centre for International Studies*, 29 (August, 2000), p. 2.

²⁵ Email correspondence with Raymond Suttner, 26 January 2010.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ R. Suttner, 'South African Foreign Policy Since April 1994', *African Communist*, 145 (1996), p. 69.

²⁸ *Mail and Guardian*, 8 December 1995.

²⁹ T. Hughes, *Composers, Conductors and Players: Harmony and discord in South African foreign policy making* (Johannesburg, 2004), p. 30.

are closed.³⁰ The outcome is that MPs are entirely reliant upon the party leadership for their nomination to office, and as a consequence many unquestioningly follow the policy positions of the leadership, even on controversial foreign policy issues.³¹ He concludes that ‘the PCFA [Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs] receives policy as a *fait accompli* with very little indication of how its comments may or have impacted on policy adjustment’.³² This had much to do with the way the presidency, the ANC, the DFA and parliament interacted with each other over foreign policy. This prompted Hughes to describe the formulation of foreign policy in South Africa as one of ‘vertical integration from conceptualisation within the Presidency, endorsement from the party, implementation by the DFA and largely unquestioning and compliant support from parliament’.³³

The ANC leadership’s domination of parliament meant that the ruling party could, on the whole, push controversial policies through parliament with little debate or dissent. Andrew Feinstein depicts, for example, the way in which the ANC’s National Executive Council (NEC) and the Presidency put pressure on him and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) to shelve investigations into corruption surrounding the arms deal.³⁴ Feinstein also demonstrates how the ANC leadership and party whips stifled debate within parliamentary committees, so that outcomes conformed to their wishes. However, many ordinary ANC cadres were all too aware of the undemocratic practices within the party. Delegates to the ANC’s 50th National Conference in December 1997 resolved:

that the policy process within the ANC ha[s] been fundamentally affected by the ANC’s ascension to office in 1994; that since 1994, the point of gravity as regards policy development appears to have

³⁰ In a system where the party lists are closed, the accountability between MPs and their constituencies is reduced, especially because MPs are entirely reliant upon the party leadership for their nomination to office. The process of being nominated by the leadership means there is almost no attachment between the MPs and their constituency, resulting in a diminished level of accountability to the electorate. This system ensured a lack of criticism from the ANC dominated parliament, as dissidents who did not tow the party line, could be easily removed from the electoral rolls.

³¹ Hughes, *Composers*, p. 30.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 188.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

³⁴ A. Feinstein, *After the Party: A personal and political journey inside the ANC* (Johannesburg, 2007), pp. 156-207.

shifted to government and away from ANC constitutional structures.³⁵

Furthermore, Matthews Phosa had publicly derided the movement for its increasing lack of ‘regard for the principles of collective leadership, democratic practices, criticism and self-criticism’, arguing that there was a very real danger that the government’s policies would now be simply imposed upon the ANC.³⁶ The conference resolution and Phosa’s criticisms suggest that Pfister’s claims regarding the ‘democratisation’ of foreign policy were misplaced. Foreign policy was not a democratic process nor, as the ANC claimed, ‘owned by the people’. The ANC in exile had consistently spoken on behalf of its supporters without consulting them, and a similar tendency remained common after apartheid. While foreign policy is commonly an elite-dominated activity in even the most democratic nations, the situation in South Africa ensured the ANC leadership ‘actually [had] free hand, to a very large extent in foreign policy’.³⁷

The fact is that the ANC largely ignored the recommendations of the DFA and the PCFA in its foreign policy. It does though offer an explanation as to why South African foreign policy was regarded as being so inconsistent after 1994. A small group within the ANC controlled the levers of foreign policy, an approach which had its roots in the movement’s experiences of exile, its own centralised policy-making and the activities of the SCFA during the transition. This group was prone to making decisions based upon its members’ personal perspectives, without always being informed by appropriate briefing documents. The ANC leadership could do largely as it wished, pursuing policies which served its own narrow perceptions; these policies were unquestioningly supported and adopted by MPs, in part aided by a lack of stringent government oversight. Feinstein’s comments (see Chapter Six) that South Africa witnessed the blurring of national and party interests should be borne in mind.³⁸ The increasing centralisation of foreign policy became even more pronounced during Mbeki’s presidency, with decision-making almost solely the preserve of the President’s Office. The origins of this, however, lay in

³⁵ Resolutions - Role of State and Governance, ANC 50th National Conference, Mafikeng, December 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2425> (10/11/10).

³⁶ *New Nation (South Africa)*, 1 November 1996.

³⁷ Interview with Professor Deon Geldenhuys, Johannesburg, 29 March 2010.

³⁸ Interview with Andrew Feinstein, London, 1 July 2009.

Mandela's tenure. With little domestic constraint, and not seeking the advice on offer, the ANC approached foreign policy very much in accordance with its leaders' own perceptions of their party's needs.

The ANC's perspectives on South African Foreign Policy

The 1997 ANC document 'Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy' offers the most effective barometer of the organisation's thinking on international relations.³⁹ While parts of the document offer a pragmatic, realist view on foreign policy, it does so however, through a left-wing lens, displaying some strikingly undemocratic tendencies in the ANC, as a broader movement.⁴⁰ The document illustrates some of the tensions that were being played out within the party, concerning the direction of its foreign policy, some of which will be explored below. The document also provided an opportunity for the party to assess its experiences in the previous three years, and is far more critical and analytical than the DFA's earlier contribution. The ANC was actually quite candid in articulating what it had, and had not achieved in government, and where it could learn from its mistakes.

The document recognised that 'human rights are often disputed in their interpretation and relevance', and in relation to the Nigerian crisis admitted that 'it highlighted the potential limits of our influence'.⁴¹ Although it renewed the party's commitment to its 'seven pillars', the document did not propose a way to translate human rights as the cornerstone of its foreign policy into meaningful action. It simply stated that 'the difficult challenge is to translate these principles into effective governmental policies'.⁴² It might have been expected that the ANC would have developed a strategy to implement a central tenet of its foreign policy, but after three years the party was left still pondering how best to do so. In an attempt to reconcile

³⁹ Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy, July 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2348> (2/9/10).

⁴⁰ The overt left-wing perspective of the document is perhaps because SACP and NEC member Blade Nzimande had a role in drafting it through his position as head of the NEC Committee on International Affairs. 50th National Conference: Report of the Secretary General, 17 December 1997, Mafikeng, Section 4: Activities of the National Executive Committee, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2484> (6/6/11).

⁴¹ Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy, July 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2348> (2/9/10).

⁴² *Ibid.*

its principled policy with its more pragmatic practices, the document argues that, although South Africa still sought to place human rights at the forefront of its foreign policy, this ‘should not mean that we refuse to conduct any diplomatic and trade relations with countries whose record in human rights or democracy we regard as unsatisfactory’.⁴³ This was a considerable reverse in the ANC’s foreign policy vision having previously declared in 1994 that it would not be selective in highlighting human rights abuses and that this principle would not be ‘sacrificed to economic and political expediency’.⁴⁴ The ANC was thus tacitly admitting that human rights concerns would now be applied on a less idealistic, pragmatic, case by case basis, and that it would still deal with countries that violated these principles. Gareth van Onselen commented that:

The romantic period under Mandela was constantly juxtaposed by his personality and the decisions he made personally as an individual, while the party itself, and its particular beliefs always lurked just below the surface and when Mandela went, and Mbeki replaced him, those undercurrents that under-pinned his administration came to the fore which were epitomised by him, and you started having hard practical decisions taken that went against human rights.⁴⁵

Given that senior ANC members around Mbeki had major reservations about the inclusion of human rights into foreign policy (see Chapter Four), this was the moment in which it began to distance itself from such visions. What appears obvious is that the ANC had begun to rationalise its failure to consistently implement its human rights policy.

Africa also remained a central feature of the document, and one that the ANC was still eager to reinforce. The document attempted to address Africa’s grievances by conceding that ‘it is not always possible to act in a way that satisfies the expectations of other countries, particularly those on the African continent’.⁴⁶ It was acknowledged that in some instances, especially concerning human rights issues in multilateral forums, ‘[we] have had to vote differently from some of our closest

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=230> (11/5/11).

⁴⁵ Interview with Gareth van Onselen, the DA’s Executive Director of Research and Communications, Cape Town, 7 September 2009.

⁴⁶ Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy, July 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2348> (2/9/10).

allies’, and furthermore it had become clear that ‘international relations are not merely based on solidarity... an important lesson for us’.⁴⁷ It was a signal that some ANC leaders recognised that solidarity-based alliances were an insufficient basis for its foreign relations. However, the conclusion apparently contradicts this, insisting that ‘our priority... should be towards our former allies in the liberation struggle in Southern Africa’.⁴⁸ Furthermore, for the first time, some of the more left-wing and communist-inspired views within the ANC began to emerge. In one section, the document argued that the movement should strengthen its relations between international political parties, because ‘the ANC as a political movement, has a critical role to play in cementing solidarity amongst the progressive forces in the world based on the principles of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and a democratic world’.⁴⁹ This focus on anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism later became enshrined in the concept of an African Renaissance (see below), and it marked the moment when South Africa increasingly championed a developing world agenda. In addition, despite the ANC’s expressed wish to champion global democracy, the document takes a surprisingly undemocratic stance, arguing that: ‘while the right to form political parties and participate in democratic elections is undoubtedly a fundamental democratic right, multi-party systems have been introduced in Africa in circumstances where other conditions have had the effect of weakening the capacity of governments’.⁵⁰

Later in that year, at the ANC’s 50th National Conference at Mafikeng, the importance of liberation solidarity was once again highlighted. Yet at the conference, delegates bemoaned the fact that ‘another problem which arises here is that some of our former allies (political parties) are no longer in government’.⁵¹ This suggested that some ANC cadres struggled to relate to the new democratic Southern African governments which had replaced some of the movement’s former allies. The conference recommendations offer an illustration of the diversity of opinions within the ANC as a movement. The final resolutions portray a far more radical outlook

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Discussion Document for: Commission on International Relations, ANC 50th National Conference, Mafikeng, December 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?doc=ancdocs/history/conf/conference50/discomms3.html#Discuss%20Inter%20Relations> (2/8/10).

than the publicly pro-western outlook of the ANC on issues such as Israel, and foreign-owned media was too critical of the government.⁵² Such views could not be entirely ignored by the leadership (who may well have agreed with these sentiments), but it had the dilemma of appeasing the west and its own supporters. Following his ‘I am an African’ speech, and this document’s gradual move away from the ANC’s earlier principles, this was the moment when Mbeki began to assert control over foreign policy and re-orientate its overall direction. It also coincided with the ANC expressing more inflammatory rhetoric about the west, exemplified by Mandela’s outburst over South African ties with Libya (see Chapter Six), which ran contrary to external expectations.

Having raised concerns about the difficulty in meeting the high expectations it faced in Africa, whilst defending its record of standing outside the continental bloc in multilateral forums, ‘Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy’ articulated and set out the grand concept of the ‘African Renaissance’. It argued the ‘African Renaissance was being advanced as the main pillar of our international policy not only relating to Africa, but in all our international relations’.⁵³ This was a significant re-alignment for South African foreign policy. Despite the DFA warning that South Africa should pursue a more realistic foreign policy, the notion of an African Renaissance was highly ambitious, supposedly acting as a counter balance to western globalisation, and as the focal point for rapid economic development, democracy and stability on the continent. The document claimed that ‘an African Renaissance poses a threat to the strategy of globalising capitalism. In fact, globalisation contradicts the very agenda of the African Renaissance. Therefore, the success of the Renaissance depends on the depth of and extent to which it challenges globalisation’.⁵⁴ Tinged with liberation rhetoric, the African Renaissance is couched in terms of defeating neo-colonialism and preventing imperialism. These statements appealed to many of the ANC’s more radical supporters, including its leaders. Not only was it a highly ambitious ideal, it contradicted many of South Africa’s day-to-day policies, not least its ever strengthening ties with western capital and the acceptance of a neo-liberal approach

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy, July 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2348> (2/9/10).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

to economics. South Africa had strenuously sought economic investment to alleviate its domestic problems, which was predominantly obtained from the west. On the other hand, the principles of the African Renaissance identified western capitalism as a danger to the country. In fact, the ANC had begun to implement a number of domestic policies such as affirmative action, which were hardly in line with neo-liberal principles.⁵⁵ In light of the ANC government's acceptance of the principles and recommendations of the SCFA in 1994, such sentiments proved surprising to the international community, and raised questions about what South Africa stood for. The NP's departure from the GNU had given the ANC leadership greater freedom to truly assert its own views; one expression of which was the articulation of an African Renaissance.

In addition, despite its assurances in 1994 that South Africa would not seek to become the leader of Africa (see Chapter Six), this document presented an overarching and ambitious plan for the reorganisation and revitalisation of the entire continent, but without widespread consultation with Africa. Furthermore, the document argued that South Africa should take the lead in this campaign to empower the OAU. The ANC government had been under pressure to provide leadership for the African continent, and such demands had not just come from South Africa. Since 1994, there had been many such calls; for example in Julius Nyerere's speech to the South African parliament in 1997, he demanded that the country fulfil its responsibilities in Southern Africa.⁵⁶ In a very different vein, the USA wished South Africa to act as a pivotal state, because it believed that it was the only country that could provide effective political and economic leadership in the region.⁵⁷ These demands put further pressure on the ANC and created further contradictions within South Africa's foreign policy.

The ANC's 'Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy' concluded by setting out a series of challenges and tasks which confronted South African foreign policy, particularly relating to its activity in multilateral forums. It argued that Africa needed to be placed more prominently on the agenda in

⁵⁵ Johnson, *Brave New World*, pp. 110-16.

⁵⁶ Former Tanzanian President Dr Julius Nyerere speaking to the South African Parliament, Cape Town, 16 October 1997.

⁵⁷ R. Chase, E. Hill, and P. Kennedy, 'Pivotal States and US Strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, 75 (1996), pp. 33-51.

international forums; that a common ‘developing world’ agenda needed to be established, utilising organisations such as the UN and the NAM; and that South Africa should play a greater leading role in the OAU, to effectively co-ordinate continental economic relations and stability. However, after making these bold claims, the document also warned that ‘we should not overestimate ourselves as a small middle-income country’.⁵⁸

Just as with the 1994 document ‘Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa’, this new strategic review by the ANC was predominantly a wish-list of proposals for the future. Once again, the ANC failed to take the opportunity to define exactly what it believed South Africa’s national interests were. It claimed instead that the identification of the seven foreign policy pillars in 1994 ‘should be seen as an essential part of defining the national interest’.⁵⁹ Without a clearer definition of what the national interests were, the ANC’s foreign policies lacked an overarching and co-ordinated strategy. Likewise, the African Renaissance, which contained many noble ideas, was largely rhetorical in nature, lacking a definitive vision for how it could realistically be achieved. Peter Vale and Siphosiso Maseko described the African Renaissance vision as ‘an empty vessel’, which was ‘high on sentiment, low on substance’, existing only as ‘an undetermined policy goal propounded by a political leadership which faces a particular set of challenges, both domestically and internationally’.⁶⁰ Such criticism was becoming a recurring theme, unsurprising given the gulf between what the ANC claimed it would achieve and the unfolding reality.

The White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions

It was the 1998 ‘White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions’ that was arguably one of the most crucial policy documents produced during Mandela’s presidency.⁶¹ On the face of it, the document is

⁵⁸ Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy, July 1997, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2348> (2/9/10).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ P. Vale and S. Maseko, ‘South Africa and the African Renaissance’, *International Affairs*, 74 (1998), pp. 276-277.

⁶¹ White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions, 21 October 1998, <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70438> (2/8/10).

unremarkable, primarily acting as the framework for South Africa's entry into international peacekeeping missions. This was a role South Africa had been encouraged to adopt by western powers, and one which it wanted to embrace for international political reasons, including its hope of being selected as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It was envisaged that, if UN reforms went ahead, Africa would be granted one permanent seat on the Security Council. This resulted in South Africa, Egypt, Libya and Nigeria all vying for position in order to stake their claim for the seat. One way for South Africa to publicise its suitability was through active participation in African peacekeeping missions. However, the White Paper's importance was far greater. Theo Neethling argued that, 'from a foreign policy point of view, the White Paper is certainly a groundbreaking document. It is possibly the most important foreign policy document yet to pass Cabinet, since it forced the South African government to outline its national interests and to define... its general approach towards Africa'.⁶² Indeed, it is the only example of a foreign policy related document during the Mandela period that actually attempted to define South Africa's national interests.

The vast majority of the White Paper assessed South Africa's future contributions to peacekeeping, emphasising preventative diplomacy and declaring that only in the last resort would Pretoria send its armed forces overseas. One conclusion in this regard was that 'the South African approach to conflict resolution is thus strongly informed by its own recent history'.⁶³ The White Paper argued that South Africa's national interests were underpinned by values enshrined in the constitution such as security, promotion of peace and stability, and regional development. It also recognised the primacy of the ANC's 'seven pillars' as a guide to South Africa's foreign policy. However, it ultimately stated that it is 'in the South African **national interest** [original emphasis] to assist peoples who suffer from famine, political repression, natural disasters and the scourge of violent conflict'.⁶⁴ The publication of the White Paper was also important in terms of South Africa's ever increasing commitment to conflict resolution on the continent, which had been steadily increasing since 1994. By the end of Mandela's presidency, South Africa

⁶² T. Neethling, 'The emerging South African profile in Africa: Reflections on the significance of South Africa's entrance into peacekeeping', *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2 (2002), p. 101.

⁶³ White Paper, 1998, p. 20.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

was involved in attempts to resolve conflicts in Africa, most notably in Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Lesotho, and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo or DR Congo). These efforts at peacekeeping are analysed below.

These various reviews of South African foreign policy did not produce a clear foreign policy strategy, but they were nonetheless important steps. The ANC's first two years in power had seen the party attempt to pursue an ambitious, universalistic foreign policy: this appealed to many idealistic observers, but proved unrealistic in practice (see Chapter Six). Despite South Africa being regarded as the golden child of the international community, justifiable accusations of inconsistency had been levelled at Pretoria. The subsequent policy reviews demonstrated that the DFA and ANC were fully aware of the criticisms concerning South Africa's failure to practice what it preached. More pertinently, it was recognised that some of the more ambitious principles were not fully compatible with the practical realities of international relations. These various reviews importantly sought to resolve these issues, and to extend the foreign policy debate within the country. Although there was not much change in the overall direction following the reaffirmation of the ANC's 'seven pillars', the reviews did mark the beginning of a realignment in South Africa's foreign policy. What the reviews revealed was that the ANC was becoming more cautious about its highly publicised human rights policy, placing qualifications on its use and implementation. They also expressed its concern about the intentions of western powers in Africa, especially the effects of increasing globalisation on the continent. Attempts to rectify these perceived threats would develop during Mbeki's presidency. The most significant new policy arising from the reviews was the idea of the African Renaissance. Born out of South Africa's underlying commitment to Africa, it was described as an alternative to the negative effects of globalisation. The ANC insisted that from this point forward, fulfilling the African Renaissance would form the basis of all of the country's foreign policy. While this was in one sense an extension of its 'seven pillars', it also marked the shift towards a new approach to foreign policy under Thabo Mbeki, one that had an overarching 'South' agenda and which was increasingly anti-western in tone. Nevertheless, after three review documents, the ANC remained in a very similar position to 1994, without an achievable and practical foreign policy. Rather, it found itself harnessed to an even more elaborate and fanciful vision for the future.

South Africa's foreign policy successes under Mandela

Despite the many criticisms of foreign policy formulation and practice described above and in Chapter Six, it would be wrong to depict South African foreign policy as an outright failure. Under Mandela, South Africa made rapid progress in reintegrating itself into the international community, and strove to make a telling contribution through its multilateral activities. Having been largely a pariah state before 1990, within a few years, South Africa had made itself central to the developing global agenda. Andrew Feinstein suggests that this reintegration into the international system should be regarded as a major success in itself.⁶⁵ This ascension to a position of prominence was in part aided by the changed international context South Africa found itself in, with a world far more sympathetic to Pretoria's development needs. Furthermore South Africa's successful transition was a shining example for the world, an example many nations wished to emulate and it became a key part of the 'new world order' discourse. In its capacity as a leading major moral voice, South Africa became a highly respected and active member of a number of multilateral organisations such as the UN, the G20, the Commonwealth and the NAM.⁶⁶ R.W. Johnson argues that South Africa became 'very noticeable internationally... it did mean that everybody... came here and wanted to cultivate links, be it China or America'.⁶⁷ An illustration of the depth of goodwill towards South Africa was illustrated by the unprecedented decision by the UN General Assembly to absolve payments of the country's arrears to the organisation.⁶⁸ South Africa's visible international role and its extensive multilateral activities earned the country the status of a 'middle power'.⁶⁹ In fact, South Africa, under Mbeki, became

⁶⁵ Interview with Andrew Feinstein, London, 1 July 2009.

⁶⁶ Telephone interview with Ann Grant, former Consul and Head of Chancery at the British Embassy in Maputo, Mozambique from 1981-84 and British High Commissioner to South Africa, 2000-2005, 7 December 2009.

⁶⁷ Telephone interview with R.W. Johnson, 13 November 2009.

⁶⁸ Parliamentary Briefing Week: The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr AB Nzo, 13 February 1996.

⁶⁹ The term 'middle power' is multifaceted, but when applied to South Africa, it often refers to its status as a semi-peripheral world power, yet because of its political, economic and military dominance in Southern Africa, this power makes it the pre-eminent nation in the region. For more details see: M. Schoeman, 'South Africa as an emerging middle power: 1994-2003', in J. Daniel, A. Habib, and R. Southall (eds.), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2003-2004* (Cape Town, 2004), pp. 349-367; and J. van der Westhuizen, 'South Africa's emergence as a middle power', *Third World Quarterly*, 19 (1998), pp. 435-455.

even more active internationally.⁷⁰ This assertive and self-assured international role was in part due to the extensive activities and recommendations of the SCFA during the transition (see Chapter Five). The SCFA process had introduced South Africa to the world and the international community had encouraged it to play an active and visible role. As indicated it was a message which South Africa enthusiastically embraced. By playing such a role South Africa was making a political statement. They were different from what had preceded it. In doing so the new government earned world-wide prestige for its activities. The foreign policy principles set out by the SCFA, DFA and ANC in the early 1990s, all clearly stated that working via international forums was imperative for the new democracy, and it was one which was successfully achieved. For such a young democracy, its international successes were so impressive that Barber argued that they enabled South Africa ‘to punch above its weight’ in international affairs’.⁷¹

South African activities in the multilateral environment produced some significant successes, most notably its role in the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) Conference in 1995.⁷² One of the key purposes of the conference was to discuss whether the proposed NPT deal should last for a fixed period or indefinitely. South Africa played a crucial role in pushing for an indefinite position, which was agreed by the majority of signatories. South Africa’s endeavours in this regard was aided by the fact that it was the only country ever to have unilaterally dismantled its nuclear weapons capability, providing it with moral diplomatic leverage in the proceedings.⁷³ South Africa was also keen to make Africa a non-nuclear weapon region, and this vision was enshrined in the Treaty of Pelindaba.⁷⁴ However, despite the success of having the treaty approved in June 1995 by the OAU, it must be noted that by the end of Mandela’s presidency only eleven African countries had ratified the Treaty.⁷⁵ Ironically, although there was an

⁷⁰ Pertinent examples of this visibility internationally are South Africa’s role in the formation of the African Union (AU) the successor of the OAU, and in 2006 it became a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

⁷¹ Barber, *Mandela*, p. 200.

⁷² Statement by Mr Alfred Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the General Debate of the Fiftieth Session of the General Assembly of the UN, 6 October 1995.

⁷³ Ironically this process of decommissioning South Africa’s nuclear arsenal was carried out by the NP in the years 1989-1993.

⁷⁴ Statement by Mr Alfred Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the General Debate of the Fiftieth Session of the General Assembly of the UN, 6 October 1995.

⁷⁵ The eleven countries were - Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe – although thirty nine had signed it:

extensive armaments industry in the country, South Africa was particularly active in pursuing a disarmament strategy around the world, working hard to apply pressure on the international community. Pretoria was key to establishing resolutions and practical proposals on a range of arms control issues. These included its major role at the OAU 'Landmine Conference' held at Kempton Park in May 1997, and later that year in Oslo, where the 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction' was adopted.⁷⁶ This dedication to global disarmament is regarded by former civil servant Tom Wheeler as the greatest success of Mandela's presidency.⁷⁷

After 1994, South Africa under the ANC had made significant progress when it came to economic expansion. In the post-Cold War 'new world order', the west had increasingly shunned the African continent, in favour of Asian and Eastern European markets. Western neglect of Africa provided an opportunity for the new South Africa to fill the economic void, with the country rapidly becoming the largest investor in Africa. The expansion of South African capital northwards was described by the *New York Times* as being 'one of the most vivid illustrations of South Africa's metamorphosis since apartheid ended in 1994'.⁷⁸ With little competition, and with significant amounts of money available, South African capital initiated an explosion of trade with Africa.⁷⁹ This reflected the 'realist' approach of DFA officials; Suttner pointed out, the mantra of the DFA was that 'foreign policy is trade, trade, trade' and it was a message the country's markets embraced.⁸⁰ South African direct investment into Africa reached R13 billion in 1997. Within two years of the elections, trade with the SADC region alone was valued as R20.3 billion, an indication of just how swiftly South African capital was maximising its new found opportunities.⁸¹ Furthermore, the activities of the state owned Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) illustrates the immense reach of South Africa's investment capabilities on the continent,

'African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (ANWFZ) (Treaty of Pelindaba)', <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/Multilateral/africa/treaties/anwfz.htm> (3/11/10).

⁷⁶ Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Media Briefing, 'South Africa's new place in the world', 12 September 1997; Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs Nzo, to the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly, 22 September 1997.

⁷⁷ Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

⁷⁸ *New York Times*, 17 February 2002.

⁷⁹ Daniel, Naidoo, and Naidu, 'SA expansion into Africa', pp. 14-16; Daniel, Naidoo, and Naidu, 'The South Africans have arrived', pp. 374-375.

⁸⁰ Suttner, 'Review'.

⁸¹ Vale and Maseko, 'Renaissance', p. 279; Daniel, Naidoo, and Naidu, 'The South Africans have arrived', p. 375.

stretching from neighbouring Swaziland, to Egypt in the north.⁸² These figures were extremely positive for South Africa, helping to assist economic growth, but many other African nations were not so enthusiastic about this rapid expansion. This is not the place for a full discussion on this topic, but many observers have analysed the widespread fears that South Africa was acting as a selfish hegemon in sub-Saharan Africa and damaging its neighbour's economies as a result.⁸³

The best illustration of South African investment in another Southern African country is Mozambique. Mark Ashurst, the Director of the Africa Research Institute think-tank, argues that this was South Africa's most successful interaction in Southern Africa, proving Pretoria's commitment to regional stability and prosperity.⁸⁴ South Africa became particularly active in Mozambique, helping to stabilise the country after its civil war and embarking upon several ambitious joint projects with the FRELIMO government to rebuild the nation's war-torn infrastructure. By the time of Mbeki's presidency, Mozambique had become South Africa's largest regional trading partner.⁸⁵ Two tangible examples, demonstrate the strength of this relationship. The first was an agreement on joint police cooperation (funded by South Africa) for cross-border seizure and destruction of small arms filtering into South Africa.⁸⁶ The second more concrete example, arose in May 1996, when the Maputo Corridor Project was announced. The project involved the upgrade of road and rail links, plus the expansion of Maputo harbour's capacity.⁸⁷ It was hoped that the project would act as a stimulus to the economies of both countries. By 1997, these links had expanded further to a bilateral agricultural agreement, and the construction of the Mozal aluminium smelter.⁸⁸ Mozal I, which has since been upgraded to Mozal II, was South Africa's largest foreign investment, standing at US \$1.3 billion, funded by both state and private enterprise, and was the country's first economic venture beyond its borders under Mandela.⁸⁹ South Africa also acted

⁸² A. Habib, 'South Africa's foreign policy: hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 16 (2009), p. 149.

⁸³ Examples include: J. Cilliers, 'An emerging South African Foreign Policy Identity', *Institute for Security Studies*, Occasional Paper 39, April 1999; Daniel, Naidoo, and Naidu, 'The South Africans have arrived'.

⁸⁴ Interview with Mark Ashurst, London, 3 March 2010.

⁸⁵ Daniel, Naidoo, and Naidu, 'The South Africans have arrived', p. 384.

⁸⁶ Email correspondence with Dr. Gary Littlejohn, 24 June 2011.

⁸⁷ Speech by AB Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs Budget Vote, Senate, 16 May 1996.

⁸⁸ Foreign Affairs Budget Vote Remarks by Nzo, House of Assembly, 24 April 1997.

⁸⁹ Daniel, Naidoo, and Naidu, 'The South Africans have arrived', p. 384.

swiftly to provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief to Mozambique in 1999 after severe flooding, with Pretoria sending SANDF soldiers and helicopters to assist in the rescue efforts.⁹⁰ These were all important initiatives for South Africa to pursue, and Mozambique stands as a practical example of South African assistance to the region.

War and Peace in Southern Africa

Having made peace and stability a core of its foreign policy, the ANC immediately engaged in various processes of conflict resolution. Starting in Angola and Mozambique, South Africa also became involved in mediation attempts in Burundi, Liberia and Zaire. The new government also became an active member of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, sending envoys and observers to conflict zones.⁹¹ Working closely with the UN and OAU, South Africa pursued all possible avenues to ensure its principles of peace were upheld on the continent. Despite these successful efforts, there were apparent contradictions in South Africa's initial forays into peacekeeping; only after the Defence White Paper was published did the country clarify its position on overseas peace missions. However, the pursuit of peace was nevertheless an essential component of the ANC's foreign policy, and one that encompassed several aspects of its overall vision, including work in multilateral forums and the enforcement of human rights.

After coming to power, South Africa was quick to join the SADC group (formerly the SADCC), the multilateral organisation of former Frontline States in the region. Originally designed as a means of combating racist settler regimes, SADC brought together many of the liberated countries of the region in a loose political alliance. After apartheid had ended its original remit was defunct, and SADC was redefined as a mechanism for stimulating economic development, promoting close cooperation on areas of mutual interest such as crime, and coordinating efforts at regional peace and stability. SADC members envisaged that post-apartheid South Africa would be a new powerful driving force behind these goals, and in 1996, its

⁹⁰ J. Barber, 'The new South Africa's foreign policy: principles and practise', *International Affairs*, 81 (2005), p. 1086.

⁹¹ Speech by AB Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs Budget Vote, Senate, 16 May 1996.

member states elected Mandela to the Chair of SADC.⁹² Much has already been written about SADC, its merits and deficiencies, but this study, will confine itself to an examination of the controversies surrounding the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, and the political infighting this caused within the region, worsening the ANC's and South Africa's already poor relations with many of its neighbours (see Chapter Three).⁹³

Joining SADC was a natural decision for South Africa. First, its members were generally the ANC's longstanding allies during exile, including the governments of Angola, Mozambique and Namibia, and others with which it could empathise with, such as Zimbabwe. Secondly, SADC provided a means through which the ANC could begin to repay its perceived debts to the region. Thirdly, the recommendations of the SCFA had placed a strong emphasis on SADC, because in its view, a stable and prosperous region was vital to the fortunes of South Africa, an objective the ANC was keen to promote. Finally, it offered South Africa a forum in which it could pursue its declared aim of dedicating itself to Africa's renewal. From 1994 onwards, Southern and Central Africa had witnessed a number of conflicts including those in Angola, Burundi, Lesotho and Zaire.⁹⁴ It was therefore of immense importance for these crises to be solved; not only for regional stability, but also for South Africa's own self interest. Pretoria was increasingly concerned that continuing instability in its own region would scare off foreign investors, jeopardising South African development, and also damaging its chances of gaining a seat in a reformed UN Security Council. As a means of addressing these problems, working closely within SADC to find peaceful solutions became a key priority for South Africa.

In the early 1990s, SADC leaders had started to discuss the idea of a regional security system, with peacekeeping capabilities. This peacekeeping force was envisaged to be an African-led initiative, in keeping with the principles of the

⁹² SADC, <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/Multilateral/africa/sadc.htm> (10/9/10).

⁹³ Examples include: L Nathan, 'The Absence of Common Values and Failure of Common Security in Southern Africa, 1992-2003', *Working Paper no. 50, Crisis States Programme* (LSE, July 2004), pp. 1-29; M. Malan, 'Regional Power Politics Under Cover of SADC: Running amok with a mythical organ', *Institute for Security Studies* (ISS), Occasional Paper 35 (October 1998); V. Kent and M. Malan, 'Decisions, Decisions: South Africa's foray into regional peace operations', *Institute of Security Studies* (ISS), Occasional Paper 72 (April 2003).

⁹⁴ Zaire became the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1997 after Laurent Kabila overthrew the rule of kleptocratic President Mobutu. The DRC was invited to join SADC, although it is not located in Southern Africa.

African Renaissance, and out of the control of western powers. The proposal to establish an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security was formulated and accepted in principle at the SADC Heads of State meeting in June 1996, in Gaborone.⁹⁵ However, while the concept had been accepted in principle by the Heads of State, the practicalities for establishing such a capability had not been addressed. The negotiations were seriously compromised by a long standing feud between Presidents Mugabe and Mandela that subsequently spilled over into SADC, threatening to split the organisation. The mutual dislike between the two presidents had developed since 1994, with South African and Zimbabwean relations coming close to breaking point. This was in part the legacy of divisions during the exile period (see Chapters Two and Three), but it was magnified by the abrasive personalities of the two leaders.⁹⁶ After Zimbabwean independence in 1980, Mugabe had been feted as an international liberation hero, and the country stood out as Southern Africa's most prominent independent nation. However, after 1994, Zimbabwe's international position changed drastically. Mandela's charismatic personality, moral authority, and South Africa's successful democratic transition knocked Mugabe from this pedestal, which infuriated him.⁹⁷ Mandela personally disliked Mugabe, regarding him as a relic of poor African leadership, who was desperately holding onto power.⁹⁸ These tensions came to the fore in the SADC negotiations with each leader offering their own alternative vision for the SADC Organ. It resulted in an impasse in the discussions and a failure to reach a definitive agreement by SADC members.

The conflict between South Africa and Zimbabwe reflects a wider division in SADC between democratic and authoritarian systems of government in the region. The SADC region was split into two camps; authoritarian governments such as Angola and Zimbabwe which preferred a militaristic foreign policy, and democratic governments such as South Africa and Botswana which favoured peaceful,

⁹⁵ Communiqué: Summit of Heads of State or Governments of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), 28 June 1996, Gaborone, http://www.iss.co.za/af/regorg/unity_to_union/pdfs/sadc/communiques/HoS%2096x.pdf (5/7/11); M. Malan, 'Regional Power Politics Under Cover of SADC: Running Amok with a Mythical Organ', *Institute for Security Studies*, Occasional Paper 35, October 1998.

⁹⁶ During exile the ANC was allied with the Soviet backed liberation movement the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) led by Joshua Nkomo, who had a bitter rivalry with Robert Mugabe's, Chinese supported organisation, ZANU. In 1987, ZAPU merged into ZANU, forming ZANU PF, and establishing Zimbabwe as a one party state.

⁹⁷ Barber, 'principles and practise', p. 1086.

⁹⁸ Interview with Andrew Feinstein, London, 1 July 2009; Interview with Tom Wheeler, Johannesburg, 31 March 2010.

negotiated approaches. Also due to the centralised nature of most SADC states, the majority were unwilling to lose part of their sovereignty to a multilateral organisation specifically concerning security matters. Furthermore, Southern African countries, are relatively poor, and do not possess the capacity to practically support ventures like the SADC Organ.⁹⁹ By the end of Mandela's presidency the issue of regional security had still not been resolved, partly because, as Nathan has argued, 'SADC was polarised around incompatible pacific and militaristic visions of the Organ'.¹⁰⁰ Matters were not helped by Mandela's uncompromising attitude towards the need for political reforms in other African nations; he was personally inclined to pursue his own perceived 'right path' with little concern for the political fallout that might occur. The Goedgedacht Forum noted that 'at a SADC heads of country meeting in 1997, Mandela called Mugabe and Chiluba [the Zambian President] dictators... the consequences of this were that South Africa became isolated and its neighbours became hostile, forming anti-South African alliances'.¹⁰¹ South Africa's poor regional relations with Angola (see Chapter Six) also continued. This was primarily because the MPLA 'has long felt unacknowledged by South Africa for the support it provided to the ANC since 1975'.¹⁰² The sense of ingratitude was not helped by Mbeki's personal view of the MPLA leader Dos Santos, whom he regarded as a kleptocratic thug.¹⁰³ Furthermore, these relations with Angola were soured by Mbeki's decision to invite the UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, branded by the MPLA as a 'war criminal', to South Africa in 1997, for talks.¹⁰⁴

Former *Financial Times* Africa editor, Michael Holman, believes that South Africa's poor relations with its neighbours were, in part, due to its grandiose self-defined image, combined with a complete ignorance of its own excessive power. Holman depicted the ANC-led South Africa's actions towards Southern Africa as being 'like a huge muscular adolescent, who is willing to help old ladies across the street, even if they didn't want to'.¹⁰⁵ Ultimately the ANC government failed to unite the region behind its vision. The ANC found that its poor relations with political

⁹⁹ Nathan, 'common values', July 2004.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ 'Evaluating the effectiveness of South Africa's foreign policy since 1994', Goedgedacht Forum for Social Reflection, 12 April 2003.

¹⁰² *City Press (South Africa)*, 25 April 2010.

¹⁰³ M. Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* (Johannesburg, 2007), p. 445.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

¹⁰⁵ Telephone interview with Michael Holman, former African editor for the *Financial Times*, 1 July 2009.

parties in South Africa's neighbours had continued through from exile. Many SADC leaders still had underlying suspicions of South African intentions, with some accusing it of devoting its attentions elsewhere and neglecting the countries it had pledged to assist the most.¹⁰⁶ It was also seen as interfering with the internal affairs of these nations, rather than simply providing economic assistance.

These unresolved problems, and South Africa's increasing isolation in the region, profoundly affected Pretoria's reactions to two different conflicts in Southern Africa. The summer of 1998 witnessed two major challenges for South Africa's foreign policy, involving two SADC members, namely the DRC and Lesotho. The reactions of Pretoria to these separate incidents publicly demonstrated the tensions between South Africa's foreign policy ideals and that of its closest neighbours. It also brought into sharp relief the deep divisions within SADC, and the accompanying problems this caused for South African foreign policy.

In July 1998, the DRC President Laurent Kabila was confronted by an invasion from the rebel movement the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), backed by Rwanda and Uganda (countries which had only a year previously helped him overthrow the Zairian dictator President Mobutu).¹⁰⁷ Facing a well equipped invading force advancing on the capital Kinshasa, Kabila urgently requested military assistance to repel the invasion. On 8 August 1998, Mugabe convened a special meeting of the SADC Heads of States to discuss the request, but he excluded the chair, South Africa, from its deliberations, due to the on-going tension between the two nations.¹⁰⁸ South Africa's embarrassment about being excluded from a meeting of the SADC, of which it was chair, was heightened by Pretoria's failure to publicly condemn the invasion of the DRC by two African countries. South Africa's failure to do so went against its own principle of condemning military aggression.¹⁰⁹ It was a setback to South Africa's authority and political leverage in Southern Africa, because as Chris Landsberg argues, 'its neutrality and sincerity as peacemaker [were]

¹⁰⁶ L. Nathan, 'Consistency and inconsistencies in South African Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, 81 (2005), p. 366.

¹⁰⁷ *Mail and Guardian*, 21 January 2009.

¹⁰⁸ 'Foreign Affairs Tries to Deny Mugabe's snub', *Southern Africa Report*, 16 (August 1994), pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ C. Landsberg, 'The impossible neutrality? South Africa's policy in the Congo War', in J. Clark (ed.), *The African Stakes of the Congo War* (New York, 2004), p. 174.

questioned'.¹¹⁰ South Africa's dilemma worsened when Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia jointly announced that they would send troops to the DRC on behalf of SADC.¹¹¹ Mugabe claimed SADC had come to a unanimous decision to assist Kabila, but his statement prompted Mandela to publicly reproach the Zimbabwean leader for his pre-emptive move into the conflict.¹¹² The fact that the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security was not even in place yet meant that these three countries had justified and legalised their decision in the name of SADC, despite not having the mandate or the full support of its member states, including the chair. It brought into question the very survival of SADC, prompting Landsberg to describe it as 'a highly balkanised organisation'.¹¹³ South Africa continued to pursue a peaceful, diplomatic path in the DRC, but its efforts were undermined by the belligerent actions of its neighbours. In the course of the DRC conflict, the ANC-government managed to further alienate some of its former allies, and failed to contribute to resolving the conflict.

What made South Africa's non-intervention in DRC inexplicable was its policy stance concerning Lesotho. In September 1998, elections in Lesotho were once again in dispute, and fears of an impending military coup mounted. With tensions rising in the country, on 21 September, the Lesotho government appealed to South Africa for assistance. The next day South African troops, accompanied by a small contingent of soldiers from Botswana, crossed into Lesotho to prevent a coup.¹¹⁴ The mission was a complete disaster. Expecting no resistance, South African troops were shocked by the reaction from Lesotho's civilians and military forces. The capital Maseru was looted, South African businesses were destroyed, and the Lesotho Defence Force killed eight SANDF soldiers during the mission. To make matters worse, South Africa was accused of acting illegally under international law, and criticised for undermining the ANC's own expressed commitment to non-intervention.¹¹⁵ The pledge which Mandela had personally made to African leaders at the OAU meeting in Tunis in 1994, in which he had stated his desire to oppose the domination of another country through the force of arms in any circumstance, had

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹¹¹ *The Times*, 20 August 1998.

¹¹² Kent and Malan, 'Decisions, Decisions', ISS (April, 2003).

¹¹³ Landsberg, 'Impossible neutrality', p. 170.

¹¹⁴ R. Southall, 'SADC's Intervention into Lesotho: an illegal defence of democracy?', in O. Furley and R. May (ed.), *African Interventionist States* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 157.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

been shattered (see Chapter Six). South Africa's insistence on a political settlement in the DRC had isolated it from some of the SADC's most powerful members, yet within weeks its apparently principled stance had been contradicted, after it had invaded Lesotho. South Africa's contrasting actions in these two very different conflicts confused its neighbours and the wider international community, who were left unsure of exactly what the country stood for.

Although the invasion of Lesotho was an apparent anomaly in South African foreign policy, it once again saw its approach to external relations brought into question. The intervention in Lesotho, at the request of the government, had prevented a coup and maintained a semblance of democracy in the country, but it had done little to dampen criticism of South African inconsistency. Both incidents were striking examples of South Africa's inability to influence its own neighbours, raising questions about the country's 'middle power' status. Although South Africa was the economic powerhouse on the continent, and one that promoted multilateralism as the preferred means of interaction, it had failed to unite the region around a solution to the DRC crisis, and was unable to resolve the electoral conflict in Lesotho without resorting to arms.¹¹⁶ This brought renewed domestic and international criticism over its foreign policy and, most importantly, damaged relations with SADC. Echoing the Nigerian crisis, South Africa found itself accused by the Southern African leaders Kabila, Mugabe, Dos Santos and Nujoma of double standards and of 'promoting regional apartheid policies'.¹¹⁷ The DRC went as far as to describe South Africa as 'puppets of the aggressors'.¹¹⁸ The ANC, and more pertinently Thabo Mbeki, learnt important lessons from these two episodes which had important implications for the country's future regional policies. By the end of Mandela's presidency, South African attitudes to Southern Africa was characterised as being one of 'neglect – we have the objectives, but there is no strategy, therefore the objectives are not met'.¹¹⁹ This was a damning indictment of how one of the centre pieces of the ANC's foreign policy failed.

¹¹⁶ Nathan, *Consistency and Inconsistencies*, p. 365.

¹¹⁷ Landsberg, 'Impossible Neutrality', p. 174.

¹¹⁸ *The Citizen*, 10 December 1998.

¹¹⁹ 'Evaluating the effectiveness of South Africa's foreign policy since 1994', Goedgedacht Forum for Social Reflection, 12 April 1994.

Conclusion

A key problem for many observers has been identifying what South Africa's 'new' foreign policy during Mandela's presidency entailed. There is no simple answer to this, as South Africa outwardly projected many different approaches to its foreign policy. For example, after 1994, South African foreign policy had embraced tenets of western, neo-liberal ideology, yet simultaneously pursued a pro-developing world agenda. The contradictions in these polar opposite approaches are stark. However, the ANC-led government ambitiously set out to engage with the international community, and in its self-anointed position as global bridge-builder had believed it could overcome these contradictions. As the chapters covering Mandela's presidency have illustrated, there were a number of striking successes in its foreign policy. However, the problem of having to appeal to multiple international and domestic constituencies, and the intransigence of the global powers to support a reformist agenda, ultimately resulted in a widely oscillating foreign policy. The arguments developed in this and the previous chapter have elaborated upon these contradictions, and illustrated how they affected the ANC's foreign policy after 1994.

Following a troubled introduction to foreign affairs, 1996 marked the moment in which the ANC-led government attempted to rectify the challenges that had confronted it immediately after taking power. Although the ANC had explicitly expressed exactly what it wished to achieve internationally, set out in its seven guiding principles, the government had struggled to fulfil its highly ambitious plans. This inability to implement the ANC's ambitious plans was due in part to the constraints of the SCFA immediately after 1994, the nature of the international community, a serious degree of mistrust from African states concerning South African intentions (a legacy from the activities of apartheid state, and the ANC's exile), a lack of operational capacity and the divergent ideals of the movement's leaders and supporters. Despite the increasing inability to fulfil its principles, the ANC's foreign policy reviews failed to properly address the problems, and in turn had harnessed South Africa to an even more ambitious, yet unqualified vision for the future.

This chapter has also argued that some of the problems arose because the ANC began to reassert its control over South Africa's foreign policy, away from

some of the dictates of the SCFA and the transition. This process was smoothed by De Klerk's decision to withdraw the NP from the GNU in 1996, which granted more power to Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki. One of the first indications of a new direction for South Africa was his 'I am an African' speech, which was subsequently fleshed out in the transformative ideals of the African Renaissance. The human rights aspects of South Africa's foreign policy, although still included in its policy statements after 1996, were quietly dropped by the ANC-government. Furthermore, Mbeki's, and the ANC leadership's control over foreign policy was enhanced by the increasing centralisation of power in the South African government. Such centralisation allowed a small elite to control foreign policy, ignoring the recommendations of government committees and the DFA, with its decisions rubber-stamped by a largely subservient parliament. It meant that foreign policy objectives increasingly represented those of the party and not South Africa. Yet the ANC-government faced a dilemma. The ANC fully appreciated the need for western economic support for South African development, paying lip service to its demands and protocols; however, the ideals of the party were far more attuned to those of developing nations. Partially a product of its exile struggle, and also its wishes to reform the international status quo, the ANC-government increasingly championed the global South, and strengthened ties with some dubious regimes. However, as this chapter has illustrated, this eventuality increasingly agitated the west, given that it had thought that it had 'captured' South Africa's foreign policy during the transition. On the other hand, some of the ANC's initiatives aimed at developing countries and its allies were criticised by the intended recipients of such policies. The result was that South African foreign policy under Mandela was criticised for lacking coherence, as it failed to conform to either camp, angering many entrenched interests in the process.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

Throughout the ANC's existence, international activity has played an important role in the movement's historical trajectory. Utilising a wide-range of sources and approaches, this thesis has sought to chart and analyse the evolution of the ANC's foreign policy, from 1960 to 1999, focusing primarily on its interactions with Southern African states and liberation movements. In doing so, this thesis has gone beyond the current historiography on the ANC and post-apartheid South African foreign policy in a number of ways. To begin with, there have been no studies which have approached the history of the ANC through an analysis of its foreign policy activities from exile through to its accession of political power. A central purpose of this study has been to provide fresh insights into these international interactions. In part, it has done so by breaking from the tendency in the current literature to periodise the history of the ANC into compartmentalised time frames (exile, South Africa's transition, and political power). This has meant that important themes of continuity in the ANC's historical trajectory have been overlooked. One key consequence of this tendency has been that the impact of vital decisions made during the negotiated transition have been misunderstood where they have not been neglected. By taking a 'long-view' of the ANC's foreign policy, this study has provided a framework to link together previously disjointed periods of the movement's history. Although each distinct period has attracted scholarly interest, the integrated approach developed in this thesis has shed new light on the formulation and implementation of the ANC's foreign policy. Furthermore, by encompassing the movement's exile, South Africa's negotiated transition, and Mandela's presidency, the overview provided here allows for a deeper understanding of the continuities and discontinuities throughout these periods, offering new insights into the historic evolution of the ANC's foreign policy.

Pivotal to this study is South Africa's negotiated transition from apartheid to democracy, 1990-1994. During the transition, decisive foreign policy decisions were made by the ANC, and also the civil servants of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). These decisions had a significant influence on South Africa's immediate

international direction and perspectives after 1994. Yet, despite the importance of foreign policy formulation in this period to South African foreign policy, the significance of the transition is not reflected in the current literature. Due to the nature of South Africa's 'miracle' transition there has been a tendency in the historiography to focus on the dramatic domestic changes that occurred, rather than discussions concerning foreign policy issues. Very few studies have directly addressed foreign policy issues during the transition (see Chapter Four). Foreign policy in the Mandela era is thus often misleadingly represented as beginning 'anew' in May 1994, with the ANC-led government starting its international work with a clean slate. However, such an approach ignores the direct relevance of events that preceded the ANC's election to power and the considerable degree of continuity between the apartheid and democratic administrations. Furthermore, the legacy and experiences from the ANC's exile also had an influence on the formulation and implementation of post-apartheid foreign policy during the transition. This thesis goes beyond the current historiography by arguing that such an oversight has resulted in the ANC's foreign policy after 1994 being misunderstood. It therefore directly questions this prevailing oversimplification in the current political analysis, and through a different approach and new research, illustrates the significant impact both exile and the transition had upon the initial phases of South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy.

This study has argued that the ANC, despite being a non-governmental organisation possessed a foreign policy, because of its historic and deeply significant interactions and relationships with the international community. The notion that the ANC's activities constituted a foreign policy is a concept which is contested; nowhere else has such a claim been made before in the literature about the South African movement. Although the ANC clearly had an extensive international dimension to its activities, the current literature has hitherto failed to define the nature of the movement's international activities, with very few studies focusing on this aspect of the ANC's history. Furthermore, the ANC's foreign policy did not cease once it took power. In fact, there is a remarkable amount of continuity between the periods of exile and political power. It must of course be recognised that there is a distinction between South Africa's foreign policy as a sovereign country, the foreign policy perspectives of the DFA's civil servants, and those of the ANC as a

political party. However, during Mandela's presidency it became increasingly apparent that South Africa's 'national interests' increasingly came (as had occurred elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa) to replicate those of the ANC as a party, with all the associated problems this caused. This blurring of interests resulted in several problems for South Africa and there were a number of instances where the party pursued policies which clearly benefited itself and not the country as a whole. For example, while on official state visits to Indonesia and Taiwan, Mandela procured financial donations for the ANC, something which evidently blurred the boundaries between party and state (see Chapter Six).

The themes discussed above, when taken together, offer a distinctive historical analysis of the ANC and its international activities. One important aspect which emerges from this study is the complicated and fractious relationship between the ANC and the wider international community. Throughout the ANC's exile and current period of political power it relied enormously upon the international community in order to achieve its goals.¹ However, these longstanding relations with the world has brought with it conflicting pressures on the ANC once it was in power. The west, the African continent, and the wider developing world (while not discounting domestic interests) all had preconceptions about what the ANC and South Africa stood for internationally, and consequently what an ANC-led South Africa would offer to their disparate interests. Simultaneously, drawing on the experiences of its liberation struggle, the ANC developed its own self-perception of what it could offer the international community, one of which was as a bridge-builder between these different international cultures.

Yet, seeking to meet competing, even opposed interests, has been one fraught with complexity for the ANC in government. Each influential bloc, for example the west and the developing world, held widely divergent expectations and desires for the direction of post-apartheid South African foreign policy. The ANC found that in power it was unable to fulfil its own anointed self-image, let alone the expectations placed upon it domestically and internationally. The ANC's foreign policy thus fluctuated between these divergent audiences, trying to please them all at different

¹ During the ANC's exile, the international community refers chiefly to the socialist states of the Soviet Bloc; once international communism collapses in 1990, the term is taken to mean the 'west', epitomised by values of liberal democracy and neo-liberalism.

times and in different ways. For example, the ANC adopted a western friendly, neo-liberal economic policy, but also made contradictory political statements through the initiative of the African Renaissance, declaring its wish to represent progressive forces and oppose western-power (see Chapters Six and Seven). While in exile the ANC had been remarkably successful in interacting with protagonists on either side of the Cold War divide. This was a major success for its foreign policy and an impetus for its attempts to become an international bridge-builder. However, once in power such an approach proved impractical, resulting in criticism and confusion from either side. The ANC-government's foreign policy initiatives for South Africa failed to please the majority of its intended recipients and was subsequently extensively criticised.

Importantly, in Chapters Two and Three, this dissertation has illustrated a number of occurrences during the ANC's exile, which offer insights into the formulation of the movement's foreign policy in the transition, and the perspectives and policies it took once in government. The ANC's broad-based international support network, spanned the Cold War divide, yet it predominantly had a socialist orientation, influenced by its close relations with the Eastern Bloc.² Not only did this have implications for the ANC's future foreign policy, but also on the ideological perspectives of the movement's supporters. A vital aspect of the ANC's foreign policy in exile was establishing relationships with independent Southern African states and various Marxist inspired liberation movements. Without these links the very survival of the ANC as a viable liberation movement would have been in serious doubt. Materially and rhetorically, the ANC was supported by various Southern African nations throughout its exile, which allowed the movement to function organisationally, establish bases for its guerrilla fighters in their territories, and from which to launch armed attacks against South Africa. Although rhetorically these relations with Southern African nations and movements were strong, in reality they were fragile, and the ANC's position in the region was extremely tenuous at times. For example, by the end of the 1960s, the ANC had fallen out with its hosts in Tanzania and Zambia, with the former expelling the movement from its bases, and the latter threatening to do likewise (see Chapter Two). Later, during the 1980s, the

² The ANC positioned itself as to engage in both a socialist struggle, but also one for fundamental human rights and democracy, the latter appealing more to a western liberal audience. It was successful in doing both.

ANC was expelled from Mozambique after the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) government had signed the Nkomati Accords with apartheid South Africa. Swaziland had earlier signed a similar deal in 1982, and following the New York Accords in 1988, it was also banished from Angola (see Chapter Three).

The legacy of these poor relations survived the transition. Once the ANC took power in South Africa its notoriously poor relations with the region continued, typified by Mandela's conflict with President Mugabe over the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola's (MPLA) hostility towards the movement for not recognising and rewarding the enormous sacrifices of the region in general, and Angola in particular (see Chapter Seven). The South African government found it could do little to please regional governments. It was paradoxically criticised for not being active enough, but also for being too assertive. This no win situation demonstrated both the continuity of regional fears of South African hegemony, but also the inability of the ANC to overcome the legacy of its apartheid-era foreign relationships.

Most pertinent to foreign policy formulation during South Africa's transition was the ANC's overwhelming lack of strategic vision for the future. After thirty years in exile the ANC was remarkably unprepared for the transition and its subsequent negotiations. In exile the ANC had been forced to be pragmatic in accepting assistance from any group or nation that could help the struggle, although much of this aid was provided by the socialist bloc. However, as this thesis has illustrated, this was not conducted in a co-ordinated fashion, with the focus on the immediate need for material assistance and the overthrow of the apartheid regime. This was not just symptomatic of foreign policy issues, but all aspects of the future day-to-day running of government. The ANC had endlessly theorised about taking power, but never fully articulated its plans for South Africa once it had been achieved. The only two documents from the exile period with any immediate relevance to foreign policy were the Freedom Charter created in 1955, and the more detailed 'Final Report of the Commission on Foreign Policy' from the Kabwe Conference of 1985. These two documents could not be described as an adequate basis for foreign policy. The ANC's lack of readiness for the transition and the negotiations was further magnified by the collapse of international communism, removing the ideological lodestar of the movement, which seriously affected its

cadres' thinking. After the ANC was unbanned by De Klerk in 1990, these eventualities combined to put the movement at a marked disadvantage during the initial stages of the transition (see Chapter Four).

The arguments put forward in this study in Chapters Four and Five have emphasised the importance of two separate, yet intertwined initiatives during South Africa's transition, which are pivotal to understanding the evolution of the ANC's thinking and the initial stages of its post-apartheid foreign policy. The first, in Chapter Four, is the ANC's own process of policy formulation during the transition. The movement faced numerous difficulties after being unbanned: it entered the 1990s with no definitive foreign policy vision; it initially struggled to adapt to the immense global changes; it was forced to establish new international alliances; and it encountered unexpected competition from the NP government, which sought to re-establish its own international influence. The movement gradually adapted to these problems, but faced with more pressing domestic concerns the ANC subsequently delegated parts of the process of formulating foreign policy to academics. Through these processes, which certainly involved ANC leaders, these academics aligned the movement to the prevailing international norms of human rights, democracy and multilateralism. Although the ANC leadership accepted the bold and assertive proposals created for them, there were some misgivings about this direction, with notable dissent concerning the human rights aspects of the document from ANC leaders, particularly those allied to Mbeki. It was not only some of the leadership that was displeased with the ANC's direction; some of the movement's more militant supporters desired a more socialist-revolutionary approach to foreign policy, reflecting the ANC's own recent past. The ANC had widely publicised the human rights aspects of its future foreign policy, most notably in the ghost written *Foreign Affairs* journal article.³ However, these revelations have implications for the current literature about South Africa's international relations after 1994, because this thesis therefore, has raised important questions about the ANC's ownership of its stated foreign policy, and the effects that this had once it was in government.

Secondly, as Chapter Five illustrates, the question of foreign policy direction and ownership becomes even more complex, when the concurrent activities and

³ N. Mandela, 'South Africa's Future Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (1993), pp. 86-97.

recommendations of the Sub Council on Foreign Affairs (SCFA) are factored into the equation. The understudied Transitional Executive Council (TEC), and the neglected SCFA, as part of the final stage of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, was tasked with establishing a comprehensive set of recommendations on foreign policy for the new government. The significance of the SCFA was that its work had the ability to shape and influence the direction of post-apartheid foreign policy. The power of the SCFA to shape foreign policy was not lost on the DFA, and this study argues that its civil servants manipulated the process so that the final recommendations closely mirrored both its own, and the western international community's perspectives on the world. This thesis contends that entrenched elite interests thus partially 'captured' the 'new' South Africa's initial foreign policy, by ensuring that the recommendations of the SCFA were attuned to the international status quo of the early 1990s. As part of a wider-process of 'domestication' of the ANC underway in South Africa at this time, the process acted as a means of encouraging the SCFA, and the ANC, into conforming to international norms, as well as demonstrating the advantages that doing so would bring to South Africa. The new ANC-led government was essentially forced to accept these proposals in order to be accepted back into the fold of international respectability.

When the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU) came to power in May 1994, the new ANC dominated administration faced a number of cumulative pressures and constraints that arose both from exile and the transition period. However, as this study demonstrates in Chapters Six and Seven, these neglected aspects of the ANC's history are vital in explaining and understanding some of its foreign policy initiatives, and its policy successes and failures while in government. Firstly, the successes of the ANC's foreign policy. Stemming from the bold and clear assertions made in the ANC's foreign policy documents (albeit with the question of ownership hanging over it) created during the transition, demonstrated that the movement was clear in what it wished to achieve internationally during Mandela's presidency. It sought to pro-actively promote democracy, peace, development, and human rights across the world, as set out in its seven guiding principles. These principles were publicly outlined from the earliest moments of the ANC-led government. South African attempts to fulfil these principles were evident in the country's dynamic work within multilateral organisations; the key role it played in

several international treaties, most notably in the field of disarmament; efforts at bridging global divisions by adopting an all-encompassing universalistic policy towards all nations; active involvement in conflict resolution, especially in promoting peaceful, democratic solutions; and standing up to international abuses of power. Within five years, South Africa became a highly active and respected member of the international community. This in itself was a significant achievement. Moreover, the ANC was not afraid to speak out on issues which it thought should be placed on the global agenda, and refused to be deflected from its guiding philosophies, even if it meant upsetting its western or African allies. This commitment, in the face of hostility from entrenched interests, was admirable. The ANC did not wish to sit back, but to actively engage the international community with ambitious and challenging policies. All of these had been clearly elucidated by the ANC before and after taking power. Tom Lodge believes that these achievements offer a ‘strong case for representing the foreign policy of Mandela’s presidency as... more success than failure’.⁴ James Barber similarly argues that the ANC’s activities in government enabled South Africa ‘to punch above its weight’ in international affairs’ (see Chapter Seven).⁵

The ANC government has been very successful in this regard, as it is evident that South Africa, since 1999, under the leadership of Presidents’ Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, has continued to punch above its weight internationally. Despite South Africa’s well documented domestic and international problems (see below), the ANC government ensured that the country remained an active member of the international community. This is in part due its unrivalled economic and political position in Africa, allowing it to act in ways other similar sized or even larger nations cannot. For example, since 1999, (and outside the immediate confines of this study) the ANC government has played a strong role in the formation of the African Union (AU); successfully won a seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council; and (although it does not really fit in economically or politically) has since secured membership of the informal BRICs club (named after the initials of its members

⁴ T. Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life* (Oxford, 2006), p. 213.

⁵ J. Barber, *Mandela’s World: The international dimension of South Africa’s political revolution* (Oxford, 2004), p. 200.

Brazil, Russia, India, China and now South Africa).⁶ Mbeki was not wrong in 2000 when he announced that ‘South Africa’s voice is indeed listened to with a certain degree of attention by many on our Continent and the rest of the world’.⁷ This success illustrates that because of South Africa’s unique status on the continent, and the country’s own self-perceived ‘exceptionalism’, the ANC has been able to take advantage of its international position and the patronage of the global community to carve out opportunities for its foreign policy.

Despite the successes noted above, South African foreign policy has encountered a number of problems and constraints that stemmed from the ANC’s exile, the transition period, the nature and realities of the international environment, as well as the distinctive character of the ANC as a party and movement. The difficulty of having to reconcile the international expectations on the ANC-led administration has already been discussed above. This was however only one of a multitude of factors which conspired to constrain the ‘new’ South Africa after 1994.

Although the GNU adopted many of the recommendations of the SCFA, which enabled it to ‘hit the ground running’ in foreign policy matters and allowed South Africa to swiftly and easily reintegrate into the international community, it also brought about a number of problems for the ANC-led government. By accepting the recommendations of the SCFA, the ANC-led administration committed South Africa to an orthodox ‘realist’ path for its international interactions. In doing so, it had agreed to interact within the constraints of the normative practices of the international community of the time. This meant that the ANC’s own universalistic, and moralistic foreign policy positions clashed with the neo-liberal, western friendly recommendations of the SCFA. In the initial years of the GNU, these widely divergent and ultimately contradictory perspectives resulted in a foreign policy riddled with inconsistency and apparent incoherencies (see Chapter Six).

Another factor which contributed to this ‘clash’ was the very nature of the ANC as a movement. Although the ANC has and continues to speak as a monolithic organisation, stressing the over-riding need for unity, this is far from the reality. The

⁶ See: *Guardian*, 19 April 2011; *Business Day*, 10 December 2010; Birth of the African Union, <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2002/au0621.htm> (3/7/11).

⁷ T. Mbeki, ‘Speech on the occasion of the consideration of the budget vote of the presidency’, 13 June 2000.

ANC has always been a broad nationalist church, containing a vast spectrum of views within its structure, ranging from socialism to neo-liberalism.⁸ The result is that behind the external image of unity, the ANC is internally a divided movement. For example, during its exile, the ANC leadership found it difficult to match the demands of some of its more militant cadres, and in some instances worked closely with allied African governments, such as the MPLA in Angola, to quell internal dissent (see Chapters Two and Three). Furthermore, as this study has illustrated, the foreign policy that the ANC leadership had promoted at the end of the transition was not universally popular within the movement, and most strikingly amongst its leaders. What has become clear from this investigation is that through the SCFA, parts of the old regime and the western international community had succeeded in influencing a section of the ANC elite, which had promised that South Africa would adhere to the international status quo in its foreign policy. However, due to the characteristics of the ANC and its umbrella structure, this small (divided) elite was unable to contain all of the contradictory elements that resided within the party and its leadership, especially those who had during exile been influenced by socialist interpretations of the world. After May 1994, the ANC leadership were unable to placate all the demands of either the international community or its supporters' demands (see Chapters Six and Seven). For example, the new South African government maintained links with the ANC's former exile allies, some of which were regarded as 'pariah' nations by the international community. The result was a wildly oscillating foreign policy.

The fluctuations in South African foreign policy also emanated from the increasing centralisation of decision-making in the structures of the new government (see Chapter Seven). During the ANC's first term in office, presidential personality became a dominant feature and under Mandela, South Africa witnessed the increased centralisation of foreign policy decision-making amongst a small number of the ANC's leaders.⁹ As previously discussed, this study has shown that by ignoring the

⁸ Key to this is that the ANC is a nationalist movement, not just a political party, and thus ideological coherence does not necessarily come naturally to it.

⁹ Such an occurrence during Mandela's presidency arguably represents continuity with the apartheid era, when DFA officials were similarly marginalised by a small group of NP leaders and securocrats who controlled foreign policy. 'Both BOSS [Bureau of State Security] and the Department of Information outmanoeuvred the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) as the engine that drove South Africa's foreign policy', S. Ndlovu, 'The ANC's Diplomacy and International Relations', in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa. Volume 2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria, 2006), p. 630.

recommendations of parliamentary committees and marginalising the DFA, the ANC arguably conceptualised and pursued a foreign policy which suited its own needs rather than those of the country. Without either the guidance of experts or an effective process of accountability to the wider party, foreign policy increasingly depended on the personal perspectives of specific leaders, contributing to the ad hoc implementation of the ANC's guiding principles.

Furthermore, the ANC's bold but inherently contradictory foreign policy principles created during the transition led to numerous constraints. It proved impossible to pursue western-orientated economic policies, in tandem with a universalistic policy, while also trying to promote human rights and democracy. These contradictions became increasingly apparent in South Africa's interactions with countries like Indonesia and China, where economic matters took precedent over human rights concerns (see Chapter Six). This thesis has demonstrated in Chapter Four that the concept of a human rights-based foreign policy had been largely imposed upon the ANC leadership during the transition. Although the new South Africa did initially strive to implement this publicly declared policy, after Pretoria failed to change the attitudes of Nigeria (and the international community at large) in 1995, its leaders increasingly began to ignore it (see Chapters Six and Seven). Moreover, the ANC-led government repeatedly undermined its own stated principles by the party's willingness to accept donations from any willing nation or organisation; permitting continued arms sales to foreign regimes with dubious human rights records; acting internationally as if it was still a liberation movement, with little concern for the consequences of its actions; and frequently pursuing policies which resulted in confusion amongst both its western and African allies. The outcome was that there was (and continues to be) no apparent coherence in the ANC's approach to foreign policy, which has confounded many global actors. For example, *Prince Dr Seeiso Bereng Seeiso*, the *High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the United Kingdom*, remarked '*does South Africa even have a foreign policy?*'.¹⁰ *This demonstrates the confusion about South Africa's foreign policy, even amongst its immediate neighbours.* These problems were neatly summarised by Greg Mills, who argued that South Africa's foreign policy 'could be said to lack the

¹⁰ Discussion with *HRH Prince Dr Seeiso Bereng Seeiso High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the United Kingdom*, *States of Insecurity Conference*, Sheffield, 30 June 2011.

necessary broad orientation and strategic purpose', with the ANC promoting ambitious plans, but failing to plan how these could be practically implemented.¹¹

The dichotomy regarding South African foreign policy needs to be understood historically to provide an explanation for some of the outcomes for its foreign relations. It must be stressed that there was not an overwhelming 'capture' of South African foreign policy by western interests through the SCFA process. The western international community did in many respects capture South African economic and trade policies. A clear demonstration of this is the ANC led-government's adoption of neo-liberal principles, epitomised by Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) (see Chapter Six). It is typified by its international trade balances; although trade with SADC was important to South African initiatives, eight of its top ten trading partners in 1999 were western states.¹² This occurrence reflects the extent to which South Africa's continued integration with western partners during the 1990s made anything other than a free market, neo-liberal approach unlikely. Adherence to these economic principles led western leaders to believe that the ANC-led government also subscribed to the other basic tenets of western international thinking. However, post-apartheid South Africa disappointed the west by pursuing and maintaining links with nations such as Libya, Cuba and Iran, which did not fit with their view of the world. The west had believed that through the capture of trade relations, South Africa's foreign policy would simply follow suit. There was however a failure by the west to recognise or fully understand the principles and political culture of the ANC. The ANC's publicly stated desire to pursue a universalistic and moralistic foreign policy seems to have been disregarded, or treated as largely rhetorical. The west also failed to fully take into account the lack of homogeneity within the ANC. Despite having influenced a small number of ANC leaders, as a broad based movement the variance in ideals amongst its supporters was striking. In fact, after the withdrawal of the NP from the GNU in 1996, Mbeki began to assert personal control over South African foreign policy, directing it away from the recommendations of the SCFA and towards the earlier tenets of the ANC's principles. This trend continued throughout his presidency. The western-dominated international community, regardless of its own perceptions, had not therefore fully

¹¹ G. Mills, 'South Africa's Foreign Policy: From isolation to respectability?', in Simon, D., (ed.) *South Africa in Southern Africa: Reconfiguring the Region* (Oxford, 1998), p. 74.

¹² South Africa's Main Trading Partners by Value, 1997 – 2007, <http://www.sars.gov.za/> (3/7/11).

captured all elements of South Africa's foreign policy making. This has been starkly demonstrated by western surprise and anger towards South African foreign policy during the rebel uprising against Colonel Gaddafi's rule in Libya, in August 2011. As the rebel movement took control of the capital Tripoli, its leaders appealed to the UN to immediately release \$1.5 billion of frozen assets to provide humanitarian aid.¹³ However, South Africa's 'blocking tactics' in the UN Security Council towards its former ally, prevented the funds from being released, prompting a furious response from the US and British governments'.¹⁴ UK Defence Secretary, Liam Fox, urged South Africa to think again, arguing that 'there will be huge moral pressure on South Africa', adding that, 'they wanted the world at one point to stand with them against apartheid. I think they now need to stand with the Libyan people'.¹⁵ This thesis therefore demonstrates the importance of historical analysis and interpretation as a means of explaining the supposedly unpredictable direction of South African foreign policy.

However, many of the ANC's guiding principles ultimately failed to be implemented because they were far too ambitious for such a 'new' nation. The ANC demonstrated this inexperience in foreign affairs through many of its international activities. Former DFA Director General Jackie Selebi, himself a veteran of the exile struggle, acknowledged this inexperience:

South Africa went from pariah state to being a significant player on the world stage in the very short space of five years. This meant we were thrust into immediate action on the international stage, a situation not all of our own choice, but one dictated to us by the international community which forced the country to both plan and execute simultaneously.¹⁶

The new ANC-led government desperately wanted South Africa to match the high international expectations placed upon it. However, this meant that the ANC government engaged with the international community with little time for effective planning or reflection. Given the severe limitations on the new South Africa's operational capabilities, the ideals of the government could not always be matched in

¹³ *The New Age (SA)*, 25 August 2011.

¹⁴ *Business Day (SA)*, 25 August 2011.

¹⁵ BBC News Online, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14610722> (25/8/11).

¹⁶ J. Selebi, 'South African Foreign Policy: Setting new goals and strategies', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 6 (1999), p. 210. It must be noted that Jackie Selebi was subsequently sentenced in August 2010 to 15 years in prison, convicted on corruption charges.

practice. There was a tendency by the ANC to think 'big' internationally, epitomised by the notion of the African Renaissance and this trend continued through into Mbeki's presidency, exemplified later by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Parliament. However, the reality was that the government could not fulfil its own expectations, let alone those of other nations.

Many of the ANC's principles did not fit neatly with the realities of power, and were poorly or incoherently executed by the new administration. The 'new' South Africa came into being with an idealistic vision for the future, but also faced many constraints, as the western world pressured it to work within the dominant international parameters of the 1990s. The picture which emerges is that the initial, seemingly unconstrained possibilities for South African foreign policy were in fact highly constrained: by leading individuals in the ANC; the movement's experiences from exile; the nature of the international community; South Africa's transition; and the influence of the SCFA. The bright new dawn for South African foreign policy was further hampered by an overall lack of coherence amongst ANC decision makers. The ANC soon came to realise that it would be unable to freely pursue the policies it wished to.

By establishing continuities, by emphasising the pivotal moment of the transition, and by disaggregating 'the' ANC, this thesis has provided an interpretation of the ANC's foreign policy which can encompass its myriad twists and turns. In foreign policy, as in so much else, it was as Mark Gevisser rightly terms, 'the condition of the dream deferred'.¹⁷

¹⁷ M. Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* (Johannesburg, 2007), p. 658.

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