ADAPT OR DIE

Southern Africa’s Struggle for Survival in the Face of Cold War and Apartheid, 1975-1990

Including Practical Teaching Examples

Diploma Thesis

Submitted to the
LEOPOLD-FRANZENS-UNIVERSITY OF INNSBRUCK

To Obtain the Academic Degree
MAGISTER DER PHILOSOPHIE

Supervising Tutor:
Priv.-Doz. Mag. Dr. Wolfgang Weber MA (UCL) MAS
Department of Contemporary History

Innsbruck, January 2016
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this diploma thesis would not have been possible without the strong support, the repeating encouragement and, above all, the countless useful tips of numerous people. Although I cannot mention everyone who contributed in any form to this thesis, I wish to thank at least a few.

A special thanks belongs to my advisor, Dr. Wolfgang Weber, who supported me in an uncomplicated and straightforward way and provided me with countless critical comments and suggestions throughout the past year.

I also wish to thank my godfather Johannes Dorner, my colleague Michaela Schmid and my mother Magdalena Schwärzler for proofreading this thesis.

When dealing with a topic that fascinating for nearly a year, there is a certain danger of getting lost in the entire matter. A big thankyou belongs therefore to all my “library companions” for their mind-off-taking and encouraging coffee- and lunchbreaks which often helped putting things back into perspective. Moreover, I would like to thank my flatmates and all my friends, who continuously reminded me that life also exists outside of history books and countless hours in the library.

The greatest deal, however, I owe to my family, who, through their generous support, enabled my university education in the first place and gave me the great opportunity to experience life as a student. What has been even more important was their tremendous support, motivating reassurance and staunch belief that my studies in general and this thesis in particular would eventually come to a successful end.

Above all, I would like to thank my father. It has been his infectious passion for history that inspired me to pursue this most fascinating academic field.
# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .................................................................................................................................. III

ABBREVIATIONS ......................................................................................................................................... IX

MAPS ........................................................................................................................................................... XI

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................................ XV

## CHAPTER I - HISTORICAL OUTLINE

1.1. The Last European Empire – Portugal in Southern Africa ................................................................. 1

1.1.1. The Beginnings of Colonialism ......................................................................................................... 1

1.1.2. Estado Novo & Lusotropicalism ......................................................................................................... 2

1.1.3. Portugal’s colonial wars ...................................................................................................................... 4

1.1.4. The end of an empire .......................................................................................................................... 9

1.2. The Emergence of a Hegemonic Power – South Africa until 1977 ...................................................... 11

1.2.1. The Arrival of Great Britain ............................................................................................................ 11

1.2.2. Empire vs. Republics ......................................................................................................................... 12

1.2.3. Establishment of Apartheid ............................................................................................................. 14

1.2.4. Economic Strive, Growing tensions and escalation ........................................................................ 16

1.3. Namibia – “Southern Africa’s Last Colony” ......................................................................................... 17

1.3.1. Pre-German Era ................................................................................................................................. 17

1.3.2. German South-West Africa ............................................................................................................... 18

1.3.3. Namibia under a League of nations Mandate ............................................................................... 19

1.3.4. South Africa’s “Fifth Province” ...................................................................................................... 20

1.3.5. Hegemonic Struggle ......................................................................................................................... 22

## CHAPTER II - SOUTH AFRICA: THE AMBIGUOUS HEGEMON?

2.1. Defining South African Hegemony ..................................................................................................... 23

2.1.1. A Threedimensional Approach ........................................................................................................ 24

2.2. South Africa’s Hegemonic Strategies ................................................................................................. 27

2.2.1. Looking Outward .............................................................................................................................. 27

2.2.2. Total Onslaught ................................................................................................................................ 29

2.2.3. Total National Strategy ..................................................................................................................... 31
2.3. Pretoria’s Praetorians – Applying TNS .......................................................... 39
  2.3.1. Phase 1: Constellation of States .......................................................... 39
  2.3.2. Phase 2: Policy of Destabilization ...................................................... 44
  2.3.3. Phase 3: Pax Pretoriana? ..................................................................... 54
2.4. Taming the “Groot Krokodil” – The Superpowers and South Africa .......... 75
  2.4.1. A Bishop, a President and the US congress ......................................... 75
  2.4.2. Moscow and the ANC ......................................................................... 83
2.5. TNS – “Total National Screw-Up?” ....................................................... 89

CHAPTER III – MOZAMBIQUE: THE CHANCELESS COUNTRY?
3.1. Setting a Course – Strategies and Aims of Mozambique ......................... 91
  3.1.1. New Rulers and a New System ............................................................ 91
  3.1.2. Social Engineering and Economic Development ............................... 95
  3.1.3. International Orientation .................................................................. 100
3.2. Going Astray – Developments within Mozambique ................................. 104
  3.2.1. Phase I: From Independence to Nkomati ......................................... 104
  3.2.2. Phase II: From Nkomati until 1989 .................................................... 107
3.3. Trying to Get Back on Track .................................................................. 110
  3.3.1. Responding to RENAMO .................................................................. 110
  3.3.2. An Undesired Alliance – Moscow and Maputo: ............................... 113
  3.3.3. Crocker vs. Reaganites: Part II – Washington and Maputo ............... 114
3.4. A Lost Cause? – Mozambique in 1989 .................................................... 117

CHAPTER IV – ANGOLA: THE COLD WAR MICROCosM?
4.1. From War To War – The Period of Independence ................................. 121
  4.1.1. Broken Promises – The Treaty of Alvor .............................................. 121
  4.1.2. Seizing Power – The MPLA Takes Over ........................................... 123
  4.1.3. Retreat and Defeat – UNITA and FNLA ........................................... 129
4.2. The Civil War Becomes International ..................................................... 134
  4.2.1. Cuban Backup ................................................................................... 134
  4.2.2. South Africa Invades ......................................................................... 137
  4.2.3. Repercussions .................................................................................... 141
4.3. The Cold War Joins the Conflict ............................................................. 144
  4.3.1. Washington, Pretoria and UNITA .................................................... 144
  4.3.2. Moscow, Havana and MPLA ............................................................. 152
4.4. Failures, Escalations and Realizations – The Late 1980s.................................160
4.4.1. Failures ........................................................................................................160
4.4.2. Escalations ..................................................................................................163
4.4.3. Realizations ..................................................................................................169
4.5. A Hot Theater of the Cold War? ....................................................................174

CHAPTER V – NAMIBIA: THE GORDIAN KNOT?
5.1. Pretoria, Windhoek and Resolution 435..........................................................179
  5.1.1. Rejected Liberation .....................................................................................179
  5.1.2. SWAPO’s Struggle ......................................................................................184
5.2. Conflicting Strategies ......................................................................................187
  5.2.1. Searching a Loophole ................................................................................187
  5.2.2. Procrastinations ..........................................................................................189
5.3. The Gordian Knot? .........................................................................................192

CHAPTER VI – ADAPT OR DIE
6.1. Transition ........................................................................................................195
  6.1.1. A New World Order – Superpower Relations in 1989...............................195
  6.1.2. Walking into Freedom – The End of Apartheid ........................................197
  6.1.3. Peace at Last? ............................................................................................199
6.2. The Balance Sheet ..........................................................................................204
6.3. Adapt or Die ....................................................................................................207

KAPITEL VII – PÄDAGOGISCH-DIDAKTISCHER TEIL
7.1. Theoretische Aspekte ......................................................................................213
7.2. Praktische Anwendung ....................................................................................221

INDEX OF PERSONS ..........................................................................................231
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................235
ABBREVIATIONS

AAC: Anglo-American Corporation
ANC: African National Congress
Armscor: Armaments Corporation of South Africa
BCP: Basutoland Congress Party
BLA: Black Local Authority
BLS: Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland
BNP: Basutoland National Party
CAAA: Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986
CIA: Central Intelligence Agency
COMECON: Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CONSAS: Constellation of Southern African States
CP: Conservative Party
DBSA: Development Bank of Southern Africa
DTA: Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
EPG: Eminent Person Group
FLS: Frontline States
FNLA: Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
FRELIMO: Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
ICBM: Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
ICJ: International Court of Justice
IMF: International Monetary Fund
LIC: Low Intensity Conflict
LLA: Lesotho Liberation Army
LPF: Lesotho Paramilitary Force
MDM: Mass Democratic Movement
MK: Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the People) - military wing of the ANC
MNR: Mozambique National Resistance (=RENAMO)
MPLA: Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NP: National Party
NSMS: National Security Management System
OAU: Organization of African Unity
PAC: Pan African Congress
PFP: Progressive Federal Party
PIDE: Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (Portuguese Secret Police
POD: Policy of Destabilization
RENAMO: Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (=MNR)
SAAF: South African Air Force
SACP: South African Communist Party
SACU: South African Customs Union
SADCC: Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SADF: South African Defense Force
SAP: South African Police
SSC: State Security Council
SWAPO: South West Africa People's Organization
SWATF: South-West African Territory Force
TBVC-States: The four "independent" homelands Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei
TNS: Total National Strategy
UANC: United African National Council
UDF: United Democratic Front
UDI: Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
UNITA: União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UNSC: United Nations Security Council
UNTAG: United Nations Transition Assistance Group
USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union)
ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People's Union
INTRODUCTION

1960 went down in history as the “Year of Africa”. Within the course of only a few months, no less than seventeen countries, mostly in central and western Africa, achieved independence. The swiftness of European abdication surprised many and awakened the hope of others that the remnants of European colonialism in southern Africa would soon yield to the newborn African nationalism as well. However, this process took another fifteen years, but then, with the independence of Mozambique and Angola following the collapse of the Portuguese Empire, the last European colonial power withdrew from Africa. The wave of decolonization finally hit southern Africa, bringing an end to the centuries-lasting European domination of the black continent.

While this drastically altered situation in (southern) Africa caused many to celebrate, uneasiness grew among others. Until the collapse of the Portuguese Empire in 1975, southern Africa was in the firm hands of colonial domination and white minority rule, with apartheid South Africa, by far the most preponderant power, enthroned over the region. The Portuguese Empire had provided a cordon sanitaire for the racist minority regime at the tip of the continent, which protected it from the majority ruled countries of northern and central Africa, whom Pretoria regarded as a direct threat to its own sociopolitical system. Now, with the collapse of Lisbon’s Empire, this cordon sanitaire got its first large fissures. Majority rule arrived in the immediate backyard of South Africa and Pretoria’s hitherto unquestioned domination over the region was no longer a guaranteed fact. At the outset of the 1980s, South Africa was the last stronghold of white minority rule in southern Africa, therefore facing unprecedented adversary from its neighbors.

It was against this backdrop when South African Prime Minister Pieter Willem Botha was reported to have said: “We are moving into a changing world, we must adapt otherwise we shall die.” The leader of apartheid had realized that his country would need to take extraordinary measures if its racist system wanted to prevail. Although Botha was referring to his own country that had to adapt, this slogan became symptomatic for the events that transpired in the southern African region from 1975 to 1990. Pretoria adapted by embarking on an utmost aggressive policy in order to protect its own apartheid-regime and prevent the new majority ruled countries from consolidating their power. The newly independent countries adapted by taking up arms to counter South Africa’s aggression and defend their independence. A regional struggle of white minority oppression versus black majority rule emerged.

This regional struggle emerged at a time when world politics was dominated by the Cold War. By 1975, the global struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union transitioned into its final phase,

---

a period which would be characterized by the end of détente and renewed tensions between the two superpowers which got discharged in several Cold War theaters in the so-called Third World. It did not take long until the two superpowers adapted their global strategy to the altered circumstances in southern Africa and began to treat the region as a new theater of the global Cold War. As their direct and indirect involvement in the conflict grew over the years, the regional struggle of majority rule versus minority rule gradually became part of the global struggle between the United States against the Soviet Union.

This fusion of global Cold War and regional struggle over majority rule created a lethal mixture that poisoned the climate in southern Africa from the collapse of the Portuguese Empire in 1975 until the end of the Cold War and the beginning transition to majority rule in South Africa in 1989/90. In this climate a dynamic got unleashed which dragged the entire southern African region into a devastating conflict that lasted for fifteen years, killing hundreds of thousands of people and bringing several countries to the brink of collapse.

The analysis of this dynamic constitutes the content of the following thesis. It not only aims at providing a detailed description of the dynamic itself, but also attempts to find out by which factors it was being propelled. The aforementioned geopolitical context suggests two possible hypotheses: Either this process was driven by a regional or a global factor.

The regional factor was the struggle of black majority rule versus white minority rule. In its desperate efforts to defend white minority rule, South Africa, heavily relying on its hegemonic preponderance in the region, unleashed a wide range of economic and military measures of repression, which brought the southern African states at the brink of economic and political collapse. The global factor was characterized by the global Cold War, the fifty-years-lasting ideological power-play between the United States and the Soviet Union. In an attempt to fill the large power vacuum created by the collapse of the Portuguese Empire, the two superpowers increasingly involved themselves in the regional conflict. This did not only raise the stakes of the conflict, it also provided access to a vast pool of economic and military resources for the other warring factions.

In addition to finding out whether the Cold War or South Africa’s efforts to secure its apartheid-regime was primarily propelling the conflicts in southern Africa, the following thesis also tries to determine in which way the involved countries tried to adapt to the continuously changing environment in the region.

In order to offer a profound investigation of the dynamic taking place in southern Africa and its driving forces, the following methodological approach has been applied: First, the strategies, actions and goals of each of the main actors in the region are probed, with the main actors being South Africa, its northwestern neighbor Namibia and the two former Portuguese colonies Angola and Mozambique. While the reasons why South Africa was a main actor in the region are straightforward, the other three countries were identified as main actors since it was there that South African and Cold War involvement
had the biggest impact and vice versa. Of course, this does not imply that the southern African conflict was confined to these four countries. Yet, for reasons of scope, the events that transpired in the other southern African countries are only explored in the details necessary to understand the developments in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

The strategies, actions and goals of these main actors are then juxtaposed to the global and regional factors (i.e. apartheid and Cold War) and any interdependencies are analyzed at the end of each chapter. The results of each chapter analysis are finally interpreted in a comprehensive conclusion at the end of the thesis.

From a structural point of view, the thesis is divided into six major chapters. A comprehensive historical outline of the events in southern Africa leading up to the year 1975 is provided in the first chapter. Chapter two to five then probe each of the main actors respectively. In general, each chapter deals with one country specifically, yet, due to the strong interdependence of these countries, a strict “geographical division” was not always possible nor sensible. As a consequence, developments that affected two or more countries are extensively elaborated in only one chapter, while the other chapters will then account for an opposing point of view. That the chapters significantly differ in length is thus due to how the thesis is structured and does not reflect the significance of the countries they deal with. Part six then provides the aforementioned comprehensive conclusion. As this thesis is written in the course of a teacher training program, it concludes with a mandatory didactic-pedagogical chapter on this topic. For practical reasons, this final chapter is written in German.

Dealing with such an extensive topic in the context of a diploma thesis certainly strains the acceptable length of such a publication to the utmost. To not completely overstate the case, the scope of the topic had to be narrowed on several issues. As already mentioned, the focus is primarily on those four countries that were affected the most by the struggle in southern Africa. Moreover, some aspects, such as the impact of child soldiers and blood diamonds on the conflict are only mentioned briefly, although reference to further literature is made in the corresponding footnotes. Furthermore, it is important to point out how this thesis should not be understood. First, it is not a detailed description of the conflicts from a military point of view; in other words, it is not a military history of the southern African conflict. Second, this paper clearly focuses on the foreign policy of the respective countries and does therefore not provide a detailed evaluation of the apartheid system itself. The issue of apartheid is picked up only in the details necessary to understand the impact it had on the region in general and on the conflict in particular.
CHAPTER I

Historical Outline

1.1. The Last European Empire – Portugal in Southern Africa

“The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.”

(British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1960)

1.1.1. THE BEGINNINGS OF COLONIALISM

Portuguese claims on southern and central African territory date back as far as the early Age of Discoveries at the end of the 15th century. Anxious to find a shipping route to India, Portuguese explorers established several outposts both at the west and east coast of Africa. During the following centuries, these outposts were gradually transformed into Portuguese territories which the colonial motherland regarded as nothing more than a vast supplier of slaves for its far more important colony of Brazil. Thus, Lisbon invested little money into these territories and left the tribal system of the indigenous people mostly untouched.

In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, two events brought decisive change to Portugal's colonial policy. First, liberal elements from both aristocracy and bourgeoisie took over power in Lisbon. Determined to liberalize the country's institutions, they adopted the doctrines of laissez-fair and free trade Britain was so successfully advocating. It was under their auspices that slave trade was abolished, trading monopolies banned and old feudal tenures of land were brought to an end. Additionally, major changes to the conduct of industries were introduced.

Second, with the final independence of Brazil, Lisbon was in need for a fundamental reorientation of its colonial policy. It was the vision of the aforementioned liberals that the African colonies would replace Brazil, thus providing markets for Portuguese products and helping to generate money it so

---

signally lacked. They started a reform in Africa, encouraging investment and schemes to promote imperialism.  

Not only were these ambitions marked by just modest success, the beginning "Scramble for Africa" brought additional challenges to the Portuguese Empire. This “Scramble for Africa” provoked a severe clash of interests among the European colonial powers which led to the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, initiated by German chancellor Otto von Bismarck in an attempt to settle the differences among the major colonial powers.

The outcome of this conference dramatically hampered Lisbon’s endeavors. First, it had to cease its centuries-old dream of linking its Atlantic colonies with those at the Indian Ocean for the benefit of Britain's Cape-to-Cairo-plan. Second, a new principle emanated from the conference, ruling that there must be "effective occupation before any portion of the African coast was annexed or declared a protectorate". Therefore, Portugal had to replace its feudal system with that of a much more expensive military occupation. Lacking both manpower and money Lisbon proved not to be able to imply effective occupation on all the territories it laid claim to – in the case of Angola, in fact only one-tenth of the Angolan territory was under effective control from Lisbon.

### 1.1.2. ESTADO NOVO & LUSOTROPICALISM

Nonetheless, by the end of the 19th century, the territories which today comprise Angola and Mozambique, were internationally recognized as parts of Portugal’s colonial empire. Yet, economic and administrative mismanagement, led the colonies to the brink of bankruptcy, despite their vast natural resources. Thus, the military saw itself forced to look for civilian help and appointed António de Oliveira Salazar first as Minister of Finance and eventually as Prime Minister. It was his government that established a corporatist authoritarian regime called “Estado Novo” and ushered in a new colonial policy called “Lusotropicalism”, which, in retrospect, proved to be the underpinnings of the events that took place in 1961 and provides a certain explanation, why Portugal tried so fiercely to stick to its overseas territories.

This colonial policy, based on a theory by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, is propagating a moral and historical superiority of the Portuguese empire over any other European empire due to a “distinct mode of ‘assimilation’ engendered by the Portuguese colonial presence in the tropics based on the three pillars of miscegenation, cultural fusion and absence of racial prejudices.” This notion, which for obvious reasons was anything but true, led to a Portuguese assessment that their colonial policy was not only superior, but also differed radically from European imperialism, because it worked “not by exploitation, often iniquitous, by oppression of a vanquished people, or by systematic devastation, but by

---

altruism, abnegation, faith and a historic responsibility of civilization.” 8 With the additional circumstance that the Portuguese overseas territories, in contrast to Britain’s and Belgium’s colonial possessions, were of no economic advantage for Lisbon, this aforementioned historic responsibility became the primary motive for Portugal to keep its overseas territories. From Portugal’s perspective, its empire provided a living link with its own glorious past of epic voyages of discoveries which spread Western civilization and evangelism to the “heathen” black people of Africa. Consequently, Lisbon’s foremost reason for clinching to its empire was not an economic consideration but an ideological conviction.9

By 1930, a trend of increasing economic and political independence in the colonies was perceivable. By adopting the so-called “Colonial Act”, Salazar tried to reverse this course. This act decisively altered the legal status of the territories by changing it from that of colonies to that of provinces. Therefore, Salazar had a strong argument to oppose decolonization by saying that the overseas territories were not colonies but an integral part of Portugal itself.10 This change of status may have centralized the administration even further and gave the impression of reversing increasing independence, yet it only fueled criticism of Portugal’s colonial policy in its overseas territories. This criticism gained further momentum when it was brought to an international level after the admission of Portugal to the United Nation in 1955 provided a platform for Afro-Asian and Soviet attacks on Lisbon’s Africa policy. As more and more newly independent states joined the UN, they formed an alliance with the Soviet Union and became an active anti-colonial pressure group. Portugal thus had to rely heavily on its NATO-partners to avoid drastic actions by the international community.

However, as the new Kennedy administration took office in 1960, the United States bailed on Portugal and sided with the USSR in its anti-colonial stand. Furthermore the good relation with Brazil came to an end as a new president took office who strongly supported African nationalism, and relations with India came to a near breaking point when India invaded Goa, which inflicted a severe blow to Portugal’s military prestige. These drastic changes in the international political landscape did not only lead to the isolation of Portugal, also steadily increasing pressure in the UN brought activism of radical independence movements to an unprecedented level.11

The socioeconomic situation in the colonies did little to defuse these tensions. Despite an enormous upswing in the Angolan economy after World War II, the majority of the Angolan population did not benefit from the increasing revenues. This is best indicated by looking at the export rates of coffee produced in Angola. Between 1946 and 1961, coffee production increased sixteen-fold, making Angola the third largest coffee exporting country in the world. Significantly, 74 percent of this coffee was produced on plantations owned by white people12, which comprised not even 5 percent of the total population in the fateful year of 1961.13

9 Ibid., pp. 51–52.
10 Ibid., p. 53.
11 Ibid., p. 62-73.
12 Ibid., p. 57-58.
13 Bernecker/Herbers, Geschichte Portugals, p. 287.
The situation of the educational system was even worse. By 1960, only 7.5 percent of the population of school-age was registered at either primary or secondary schools, an UNESCO report put illiteracy among the native population as high as 98 percent. Higher education was reserved for whites, preventing natives from getting access to the political and economic elite.  

The economic situation in Mozambique resembled closely that of Angola. More than 90 percent of the entire population were subsistent peasants who had no benefits from the economic developments initiated by the colonizers after World War II. Parallel to this a commercial market economy emerged which was geographically concentrated on the coastal towns and oriented towards the urban and export markets. It was run, administratively and technically, by Europeans, Asians and some assimilated Africans (“assimilados”), who gained enormous revenues. The establishment of this economic dualism had devastating consequences for the entire economy of Mozambique after it reached independence in 1975. A further indication for the bad overall situation is the annual growth rate of the population, which was at 1.3 percent compared to an average of 2.4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa in 1960. The educational system granted access to only a quarter of all children of school age while the education itself barely allowed for the acquisition of literacy. Pupils often spent more time working on mission farms than in classrooms and in 1964 only one African in over 12,000 received academic secondary education.

In addition to this unequal distribution of wealth and access to education, forced labor, widespread unemployment, racial discrimination, brutal tax laws and no prospect of self-determination made both Angola and Mozambique by 1961 the proverbial powder keg with a ready fuse.

1.1.3. PORTUGAL’S COLONIAL WARS

The spark which finally ignited the powder keg occurred on February 1961 when several hundred blacks from Luanda’s slums armed with knives and clubs went on rampage. Due to a large contingent of foreign correspondents present in Luanda, this, internationally speaking rather minor event, became publicly known around the world within a very short time. The rampage was more like a suicide mission but it triggered off a thirteen-years-lasting war which ended in the independence of Angola and the dissolution of the Portuguese empire.

---

16 Ibid., here p. 80.
18 Ibid., p. 480.
20 It was anticipated that on this date the “Santa Maria”, a cruise ship which was hijacked some days previously, would arrive in Luanda on this day. The MPLA calculated that it could obtain considerable publicity by launching its insurrection to coincide with the presence of the international press corps (ibid.). It is thus hardly believable that the hijacking of the cruise ship was a mere coincidence and had no involvement of the MPLA at all.
While the situation in Angola was about to escalate, things stayed strangely quiet on the other side of the continent. Since the beginning of decolonization in Africa, Lisbon looked with some skepticism towards Africa and its colonies. The Salazar regime tried to draw lessons from the actions taken by France and Britain during their process of decolonization, yet these lessons did not point into one single direction. Thus, while publicly claiming that any form of insurrection was unlikely to occur, the Salazar regime set up a system of meticulous surveillance to counter any dissident movements. Additionally, a network of military air bases and naval facilities was built and plans for a local militia, in which white settlers would serve, were drawn up. These low-profile preparations proved to be highly successful as the colonizers were able to suppress any insurgencies during the early 1960s.21

Yet, increasing tensions in Mozambique and Portugal’s distraction with Angola and Guinea led to the outbreak of the first conflicts in 1964. At this time, there still existed disagreement regarding the nature of the campaign (insurrection vs. guerrilla warfare) among the leadership of FRELIMO.22 This uncertainty paralyzed FRELIMO and enabled PIDE (Portugal’s state security police) to arrest 1,500 FRELIMO activists, basically destroying the party in the south before it had even fully emerged and with this the possibility of nationwide insurrection. Internal division within FRELIMO led to further military setbacks and by 1968 the party was virtually at war with itself. In July of the same year a second party congress was held during which Eduardo Mondlane came out on top. Mondlane immediately extradited his opponents to the Portuguese hoping to end internal differences once and for all. However, this move backfired, it stimulated even more infightings and led to his own assassination in 1969. The following struggle for leadership lasted for another two years during which Samora Machel prevailed. He was installed as party leader in May 1970, brought a certain unity into the party, led FRELIMO through the final years of the independence war and eventually became the first president of independent Mozambique. 23

Up to the end of Salazar’s reign in 1968, Portugal’s policy to counter FRELIMO was to contain insurrection in the rural northern areas and exploit ethnic and ideological differences within the movement. Though this tactic fully served its purpose, it was met with considerable critique within the general staff, most notably from General Kaulza de Arriaga. He had urged a hard-line military solution for a long time and believed that Lisbon’s defensive stand undermined both the credibility and moral of the Portuguese troops.

Marcello Caetano, who succeeded Salazar as prime minister in 1968, finally ordered Arriaga to carry out the nock-out blow against FRELIMO. Arriaga launched a massive operation in May 1970, involving 35,000 troops, assisted by 100 helicopters and aircrafts. By September almost the entire north of Mozambique was back under Portuguese control, with officially only 132 dead Portuguese soldiers.

22 FRELIMO = Frente de Libertação de Moçambique. For further details on this movement see Chapter 3.
23 Ibid., pp. 520–527.
Despite the surprise FRELIMO was taken with by the largest attack the colonial army has ever attempted, the guerrilla forces decided not to try and hold the attack but to withdraw and counter the offensive with what proved to be a strategic masterpiece. After a quick withdrawal, the guerrilla forces were redeployed through Malawi to Tete district in the northwestern part of Mozambique forcing Arriaga to switch the scene of operation to the Zambezi river where an onset of rain brought an abrupt end to his operation. This reopening of the Tete front proved to be the crucial breakthrough for FRELIMO and started the final phase of the war. The speed with which FRELIMO moved south caught the Portuguese of guard and contributed to the rapid crumbling of the colonial structure. Despite having more than 60,000 combat troops in Mozambique, the Portuguese army did not succeed in neutralizing FRELIMO’s operations to the same extent as they did in Angola by 1974.

Contrary to the war in Mozambique, where FRELIMO was the only independence movement to confront Portugal, the situation in Angola proved to be far more complex. There, three different movements (MPLA, UNITA and UPA/FNLAs), all representing one of the leading ethnic groups, not only fought for the independence of their country, but also against each other over who would lead post-independent Angola. The thirteen years of war can be divided broadly into three distinct phases, with the first phase taking place in 1961 and being characterized by local insurgencies like those of February 1961.

The events of February 1961 caught the colonial power by complete surprise and it took the Portuguese several months to reinforce and regroup their troops.25 Meanwhile, Holden Roberto, the leader of UPA (which was later subsequently absorbed by the FNLA), launched a massive attack from its bases in Zaire26 involving 4,000 to 5,000 militants. The UPA entered northern Angola, committing massacres among the population by killing over 7,000 civilians including women and children of both African and European decent. The Portuguese countered the attack and by September they regained control over the last UPA-base in Angola, killing between 20,000 and 30,000 civilians while more than 50,000 were seeking refuge in Zaire.27 These horrible atrocities on both sides led to a massive escalation of the war and thus to the second phase.

---

24 MPLA = Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola/ UNITA = União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola/ FNLA = Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola. For more details on these three movements see Chapter 4.
26 Although the country was named Zaire only from 1971-1997, this name will be used throughout this paper for the nation which today is known as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) to avoid confusion with its western neighbor and former French colony which today is known as the “Republic of Congo”. Zaire gained independence from Belgium in 1960 and was named “Republic of Congo” until 1965 (commonly known as Congo-Leopoldville to distinguish it from its western neighbor Congo-Brazzaville, which, upon receiving independence, also gave itself the name “Republic of Congo”). From 1965 until 1971 it was named DR Congo (as it is today). Joseph Mobutu renamed the country into Republic of Zaire in 1971.
27 Inge Tvedten, Angola. Struggle for Peace and Reconstruction, Boulder, Colo. 1997, pp. 29-36. The exact numbers are still unclear and subject to debate. W. Martin James estimates the casualties at 20,000 killed Africans and 750 killed Portuguese, while 150,000 Angolans fled to the Congo by the end 1961 (W. Martin James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, New Brunswick [N.J.] 2011, p. 43).
This second phase lasted from 1962 to 1966 and saw revolutionary action just short of an all-out war. They were carried out by the UPA and the MPLA, with the UPA being regarded as the main combatant for the MPLA was not well enough equipped at this time. During this period, the MPLA and UPA/FNLA improved their organizational, ideological and military structures and foreign support for these revolutionary movements took clearer form. The FNLA established close ties to Mobutu’s Zaire, Roberto even divorced his wife and married one of Mobutu’s close friends. By 1974 these ties became so close that US intelligence noted: “The FNLA is Holden Roberto and Holden Roberto belongs to Mobutu, to whom he is connected by an umbilical cord”.28

While things seemed to work out for the FNLA, the fortunes for the MPLA were at a low ebb by 1962. Yet, despite the forced move to Congo-Brazzaville caused by the Portuguese military advance, the leadership staged a remarkable recovery. Agostinho Neto, the MPLA’s outstanding intellectual figure, managed to escape from Portuguese house arrest, returned to Kinshasa and immediately confirmed his leadership. By 1965, Portugal came to the conclusion that Neto’s communist-inspired MPLA starts to become the real danger for its colony. The MPLA’s public commitment to communism resulted in her recognition by the Soviet Union and its satellite states as Angola’s only legitimate power. In 1964, after Neto’s visit to Moscow, the MPLA received its first shipment of arms and a strong relationship with Castro’s Cuba was about to begin. With such connections, the Marxist-Leninist standpoint of the party became more emphasized, the ideology more radical.29 In addition to international recognition and support, the independence of Zambia in 1964 proved to be the other crucial development for the MPLA. After the British have ceased their presence, the new government allowed the MPLA to establish bases along its western border with Angola, eventually enabling Neto to open an eastern front not only against the Portuguese but also to challenge Roberto’s FNLA and later Savimbi’s UNITA.30 This opening of the eastern front in 1967 led to the third and final phase of war.

During the third phase (1966-1974) the entire situation had clearly shifted towards the MPLA’s advantage. With increasing support from the Soviet Union and later from Cuba and the establishment of the eastern front the MPLA took over the dominate role from the FNLA. The latter’s offensive had stalled when several leading members broke away and formed the UNITA under its charismatic leader Jonas Savimbi. Thus, the Portuguese got engaged in a three-front war bringing ominous implications to the entire subcontinent reaching far beyond 1974.

By mid-1970, 40 percent of Angolan territory was affected by guerrilla warfare, which was an increase of 35 percent since 196631. After several failed attempts to merge the FNLA with the MPLA, the OAU (Organization of African Unity, the precursor of the African Union) blamed Roberto for the non-existence of a united Angolan front. Thus the majority of financial and military support granted by the OAU was henceforth channeled to Neto’s MPLA. Therefore the MPLA was able to expand the eastern

30 Ibid., pp. 109-111.
31 Ibid., pp. 161.
front down south to the Namibian border. This increasing revolutionary action brought South Africa to the scene, leading to an involvement of the South African Defense Force (SADF) in the conflict.

However, rising disagreement in the political and military leadership of the MPLA led to a stagnation of military advances. By 1973, the MPLA’s offensive capability was on the decline. The Soviet Union, dissatisfied with Neto’s leadership (they characterized him as “an introverted, secretive, touchy, cold and proud man”\textsuperscript{32}), cancelled its support, making the MPLA an insignificant force within a short time. Large numbers of soldiers on both fronts surrender to Portuguese forces. These events brought disagreement within the leadership, which was severe anyway, to a breaking point where the MPLA’s military leader and commander of the eastern front, Daniel Chipenda, was in open rebellion against Neto and the northern front. After the OAU followed Moscow’s lead by terminating all aid at end of 1973, the MPLA has basically sunken into insignificance, giving Lisbon the option to transfer a large part of its Angolan forces to Mozambique, to address the deteriorating situation there.

The aforementioned condemnation by the OAU hit the FNLA hard at first, and its military wing basically came to a standstill. It was again Zaire’s Mobutu who spurred Roberto to reorganize and reinforce its troops. Mobutu compensated the lack of missing international aid for the FNLA and, coinciding with the leadership struggle within the MPLA, Roberto and his troops slowly got back on track, regaining the dominating role from the MPLA.\textsuperscript{33} If there was a militarily superior movement on the eve of the Lisbon coup, it was the FNLA.\textsuperscript{34}

In comparison to the FNLA and MPLA, UNITA, founded only in 1966, fought just a few battles during its early existence. Since UNITA was the only one of the three movements without significant foreign military support, its military capabilities remained limited. Although UNITA has been financially and militarily supported by the People’s Republic of China, the amounts of the aid were nothing compared to that received by the MPLA and FNLA. Thus Savimbi focused on mobilizing the masses first, avoiding MPLA units which were operating in the same area and calling for a national unity to face the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{35}

Yet, due to irreconcilable differences between the three movements, such a unity never came into existence. In fact, in the months leading up to the independence of Angola, they were heavier engaged in fighting each other than in combating the Portuguese. Without this unity, Portugal managed to gain the upper hand as the war went on. Wrong strategic decisions and organizational mismanagement, in both the FNLA and MPLA, played into Lisbon’s hands. Especially the MPLA tended to overextend their frontline without sufficiently defending its columns, which made it easy for the Portuguese to sustainably destroy the MPLA’s supply lines, thereby effectively neutralizing the eastern front. The same tactic was applied in the northern theater against the FNLA. Furthermore, the Portuguese army had more sophisticated weaponry.

\textsuperscript{32} James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{33} Van der Waals, W. S, Portugal’s War in Angola, 1961-1974, pp. 166-180.
\textsuperscript{34} James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., pp. 50-52.; Van der Waals, W. S, Portugal’s War in Angola, 1961-1974, pp. 186-189.
Therefore, Portugal’s army, contrary to the situation in Guinea and, to a far lesser extent, in Mozambique, was nowhere near defeat in its struggle against all three independent movements in Angola.

Although, by the beginning of Portugal’s fateful year of 1974, its military situation in Africa might not have been a cause for celebration, it certainly was not the main reason why Portugal lost its overseas territories. Nor was it the cause for the coup against the authoritarian regime in April of the same year. In order to explain the situation that led to the Carnation Revolution and consequently to Lisbon’s withdrawal from Africa, three domestic factors have to be taken into account.

First Lisbon had to change its economic policy due to its costly colonial wars and the aspiration to enter the European Economic Community (EEC). Associate status was granted in July 1970 but Portugal had to open its colonial markets to other countries. Portuguese investors immediately began to liquidate their investments leaving a vacuum which South Africa was lucky to fill and within only a year South Africa overtook Portugal as Mozambique’s major trading partner. Thus, the economic value of the colonies, which was almost nonexistent anyway, was eliminated from the equation.

Second, with the breakup of the old alliance between the papacy and Portugal, the regime lost a major supporter in its colonial efforts. The Concordat negotiated between the pope and Salazar in 1940 guaranteed the Catholic Church a major role in the colonies as the only recognized religion and as the sole provider of education. In 1970, however, Pope Paul VI invited the leadership of FERLIMO, MPLA, and PAIGC (Guinea and Cape Verde) into the Vatican and publicly sided with these movements supporting their wish for independence.36

Third, by 1974 one million Portuguese soldiers had served in Africa and every fourth adult male had been affected by conscription. This led the Portuguese people to question the purpose of continuous engagement in a colonial war which, in fact, could not be won. Discontent with the military campaign grew further when massacres committed by the Portuguese army in Mozambique were revealed.37

1.1.4. THE END OF AN EMPIRE

Without the backing of the major industries and colonial companies, the lost support of the Catholic Church, an almost complete isolation from the international community and the heavy burden of waging an unwinnable war, it became clear to many people of all sorts and ranks that a line has to be drawn under the Estado Novo and its empire.

This line was drawn on April 25, 1974, when two leading Portuguese generals, António de Spínola and Francisco da Costa Gomes took matters into their own hands and staged a coup against the regime. The coup, which became known as Carnation Revolution due to the red carnations which were put into the muzzles of the rifles and uniforms of the soldiers, ended the corporate dictatorship of the Estado

36 Newitt, A History of Mozambique, pp. 527–537.
37 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 230.
Novo and provided the foundation for a democratic Portugal. In the following, politically speaking rather chaotic months, a process was inaugurated which finally granted independence to all Portuguese possessions in Africa.

Once it became clear that the events in Lisbon will bring drastic changes to the territories in Africa, a mass exodus started. Between 600.000 and 800.000 people left Africa, mostly seeking refuge in Portugal, Brazil or South Africa. At first, Portugal was totally overwhelmed with the massive flow of refugees which comprised more than 5 percent of the entire Portuguese population in 1974/75. Surprisingly, the social and economic integration of the *repartos* succeeded without major complications and initial social tensions ceased within a few years. Thus, the process of decolonization occurred without any major implications for the Portuguese people. Also in Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tomé e Príncipe the transition from colonies to independent states occurred without any major troubles, both states kept close ties with Portugal.

In the two large territories in southern Africa, however, the revolution brought confusion and chaos. The mass exodus of nearly all Portuguese settlers led to a massive outflow of administrative and economic knowledge which increased the power vacuum, left by the hasty withdrawal of the Portuguese, even further.

On January 15, 1975, the Treaty of Alvor was signed which granted Angolan independence by November 11, 1975. The agreement called for a transitional government comprised of representatives from all three major movements. Additionally the armed forces of these groups should be merged into a national army and an immediate ceasefire was to take place. Yet, the ceasefire, the transitional government as well as the establishment of a national army failed because the ideological differences and mistrust between the movements was too big. By the end of June, fighting broke out in Luanda between the MPLA and FNLA, by mid-August UNITA-unites (now backed by South Africa) drove the FNLA and MPLA from the south to secure the vital seaport of Lobito. On November 11, the MPLA, backed by massive Cuban support, took over governmental power in Luanda. Thirteen years of independence war gradually blended over into a much more devastating Civil War.

The decolonization process in Mozambique resembled closely that of Angola. On September 7, 1974, the Lusaka Accord (not to be confused with the Lusaka Accords of 1984 signed between Angola and South Africa) was signed between FRELIMO and Portugal, handing over power to the former almost unconditionally. Without guaranteeing any rights to the Portuguese settlers, they too fled the country, taking all their knowledge and capital with them. FRELIMO tried to fill the resulting power vacuum, but got challenged immediately by the pro-Western RENAMO and within a short period of time, Mozambique also descended into a bitter Civil War.

---

39 Bernecker/Herbers, Geschichte Portugals, p. 314.
40 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 55-59.
The dissolution of the Portuguese empire brought not only an end to the oldest and longest-existing European empire in Africa. After Great Britain and France withdrew almost entirely from the continent (Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, Djibouti in 1977 and the Seychelles in 1976) during the “African year” in 1960, the withdrawal of the Portuguese also brought an end to a centuries-lasting dominance of European colonial powers over Africa. Yet, this did not imply that African matters were left entirely to the African people. During the following decades, as the next chapters will show, countries from all over the world continued to try and alter the course of the African continent for their own good, bringing devastating consequences to the African people.

1.2. The Emergence of a Hegemonic Power – South Africa until 1977

“...We as Whites in South Africa have a special duty towards the whole of Africa. We are the only White people of Africa. I make bold to say: no-one understands the soul of Africa better than we do.”

(South African Prime Minister John Vorster in 1969)

1.2.1. THE ARRIVAL OF GREAT BRITAIN

British influence over the southernmost part of the African continent began in 1795, when the Cape was seized by British troops due to strategic reasons during the French revolutionary war. During the following Congress of Vienna, the pentarchy decided that the Cape would remain in British possession. Within the next years, large-scaled British settlement began in the Eastern Cape region to help stabilizing and defending the frontier. However, English-speaking whites continued to remain outnumbered by those who spoke Afrikaans and to a far greater extend by the black population. From the beginning on, the British experienced difficulties in ruling such a large and complex colony. Most Dutch-Afrikaner, living in the rural areas, disapproved of British ruling and British immigrants, who largely settled in the coastal towns, did not assimilate into the Afrikaner population. This led to both an ethnic and geographical division of white settlers into two communities, similar to what happened in Canada between the Anglo- and Francophone population.

After London introduced further reforms in the 1820s and 1830s thousands of Afrikaners moved inland, away from British domination in what became known as the Great Trek. Britain, reluctant to

---

expand its anyway vast territory further north, refrained from following the trekkers, thus recognizing the independence of two new Boer republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State) by 1854. By the mid-1850s the area of South Africa under European ruling has doubled from that of 1800 with two Afrikaner republics in the interior and two British colonies (Cape Colony and Natal) dominating the coasts. The republics remained strongly depended on the colonies’ harbors, also strong cultural ties linked them closely to the coastal regions.

By 1870, the Cape colony was by far the largest, richest and most populous territory in southern Africa. Therefore, the British used the Cape to take the initiative towards uniting the four territories into one British dominion. In the view of the British government, a unified economy and communication system would further increase foreign investment and development and would strengthen Britain’s position in the south. The Boers, not willing to subordinate themselves under British rule again, rebuffed this plan immediately. In the light of the beginning “Scramble for Africa” and the visionary Cape-Cairo plan, Britain continued its endeavor without Afrikaner consent and annexed Transvaal in 1877. This annexation was of short duration only, and three years later, the Boers regained independence during the First Boer War, seriously damaging relations with Great Britain for years to come.

In the following twenty years, tensions between the Boers and the British over supremacy in the south grew in intensity. Determined to keep other powers out, Britain was stressing her paramountcy over South Africa all the more when in 1884 the newly established German empire appeared on the scene. Chancellor Bismarck challenged, mainly for domestic reasons, the British claim for supremacy by annexing what later became German South-West-Africa. Britain, seeing its colonies seriously threatened by the new German presence, pressed Berlin to accept its supremacy in an area regarded as its sphere of influence. After long negotiations, Germany eventually did so in the Anglo-German agreement of 1898 but without giving back its newly acquired territory. Thus, besides Portugal and Britain, a third European power has set foot in southern Africa.

1.2.2. EMPIRE VS. REPUBLICS

The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand brought unexpected wealth to the Boer republics. Its economic upswing challenged the mining industry of Britain, making the republics once again a primary target on British radar. The Anglo-German agreement as well as an internationally easing situation, freed up British resources to seriously consider another campaign against the republics. At first diplomatic pressure was exercised on Transvaal President Kruger who refused to give in and eventually declared war on the colonies in 1899. Being outnumbered four to one initially, the Second Boer War turned out to be one of the worst miscalculation in British military history. London estimated that the war would

---

last only a few months, involve about 75,000 troops, cost about 10 million pounds and result in – at worst – a few hundred casualties. In fact, the war lasted for almost three years, involved 450,000 Empire troops, cost 230 million pounds and resulted in the death of 22,000 British soldiers and 34,000 Boer civilians and combatants.45

By the turn of the century, Britain succeeded, with massive support from its Empire, in annexing both Transvaal and the Orange Free State as colonies of the British Crown. Yet, the war lasted for another two years with the Boers fighting the first guerrilla war of the 20th century. The British responded with a devastating scorched-earth campaign and the incarceration of tens of thousands Boer civilians into concentration camps. In April 1902 both sides agreed to peace talks which led to the Treaty of Vereeniging signed on May 31, 1902. The treaty called for an end of hostilities and the surrender of both republics to the British crown with the promise of eventual self-government. The British on their part guaranteed full amnesty for the Boers, the allowance of Dutch in courts and schools and, decisive for the following development of South Africa, not to extend the franchise to the black population. By 1910 the Union of South Africa was inaugurated within the Empire. Britain followed the course set out in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, transferring power to the dominant ruling elite, which were the Boers, thus guaranteeing its own interest. The new dominion would remain within the Empire-Commonwealth until the proclamation of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) in 1961 and return to it in 1994.46

The creation of the Union of South Africa under British sovereignty manifested the dominance of the Empire in the entire region. During the following decades, Britain was therefore capable of establishing an integrated, South Africa-centered and on South Africa depending economic area, thus laying the foundation for South Africa’s hegemony in the region. Nevertheless, the apparent strength of the Union should not be overestimated for it was rather a reflection of the weakness of its neighbors than of its own intrinsic strength. For much of the first half of the 20th century, South Africa was dependent on international capital and, in general, a poor and unstable country. The Carnegie Commission Report published in 1932, for example estimated that in 1930 almost half of the white population dwelled in extreme poverty.47

During the first four decades of the 20th century the gold mining industry was the main cart horse of South Africa’s economy. By 1920, it supplied half of the worlds’ gold demand, making the mining industry the wealthiest in the world but extremely parsimonious at the same time. South Africa’s vast gold resources were low grade and deep level, therefore making the costs of extraction high. An international price cap on gold meant that the higher price could not be passed on to the consumer and well organized and enfranchised white workers did well in protecting their wages and rights. Unfranchised,

47 This report was a study of poverty among the white population of South Africa that made recommendations about segrega-
tion. Some have argued later that this document served as blue print for the apartheid system.
unorganized and, above all, cheap black workers were the solution to this problem. Without almost any rights and nearly no possibility to get any of them, tens of thousands of black workers became the backbone of the mining industries. By 1920 around 21,000 white workers earned twice as much as the 180,000 black workers, by 1961 a white worker earned seventeen times as much. Thus, the entire industry, similar to the rest of the country in the following decades, came to be built on a huge disparity between blacks and whites.  

1.2.3. ESTABLISHMENT OF APARTHEID

Dissatisfaction with the wartime government of World War II, a rising fear of African militancy and increasing white poverty (for which ironically black low-wage competition was blamed) were the main reasons for the victory of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party in 1948, an election fought under the slogan of “apartheid”. The government takeover by this deeply racist party led to a drastic expansion of the aforementioned racial disparities laid out by the mining industry. Internationally, only three years after the allied victory over fascism, this takeover was viewed with skepticism, yet the entire world refrained from taking action, mindful of South Africa’s vast recourses of gold and, with the beginning of the nuclear age, the increasingly important uranium. Additionally, in light of the beginning Cold War, no one could questions Pretoria’s anticommunist stand which was of equal importance for Britain and the rest of the Western world. The National Party could therefore implement, without worrying about international opposition, a rigorous system of racial discrimination which would prevail until 1994.

The first step to implement this new system was the introduction of the 1950 “Population Registration Act”, categorizing the entire population into “whites”, “blacks” and “natives”. In 1952 the Native Act was passed which made the residence for blacks outside certain areas conditional on having a legal employment contract, otherwise it became illegal to stay in “white” areas for more than 72 hours. Restricting blacks to certain areas within the South African state was the NP’s first step in restructuring the entire society of South Africa. Especially Prime Minister and chief architect of apartheid, Henrik Verwoerd, dreamed of a society in which whites would be the demographic majority. The creation of so-called “Bantustans” or “homelands” was the central element to achieve this “new society”. The long-term goal was to grant these “homelands” independence, which would result in the loss of South African citizenship for blacks, allowing whites to remain in control of the country. The homelands should be established in those regions of South Africa which were considered to be the “original homes” of the black people. The “Bantu Authorities Act” of 1951 allocated 13 percent of South African territory to the black ethnic groups, the “Bantu Self-Government Act” of 1959 allowed the homelands to establish themselves as self-governing, quasi-independent states. This process was completed by the “Black


\[\text{Footnote 50: First used in the 1940s, the term “Bantustan” derives from the word Bantu (meaning “people” in some of the Bantu languages) and “stan”, a suffix in Persian language meaning “land”.}\]
Homelands Citizenship Act” of 1970, which made all black South Africans citizens of the homelands and deprived them of their South African one, regardless whether they lived in a homeland or in “white South Africa”. The homelands were administrated by cooperative tribal leaders and over time a black elite emerged which had a significant personal and financial interest in preserving these “states”. Until the end of apartheid in the early 1990s, Pretoria had granted “independence” to Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC-states), and six “self-governing entities”. In Namibia, ten homelands were established. Simultaneously, Pretoria started a massive program of relocating blacks from “white territory” into “black territory”. It is estimated that between the 1960s and 1980s, about 3.5 million black South Africans were forcefully relocated by South Africa’s authorities. Yet, Pretoria was the only country in the world to recognize these new “states”. Having nearly no infrastructure, all the Bantustans were entirely dependent on South Africa, thus, they were mere puppet states controlled by South Africa.\textsuperscript{51}

The “Bantu Education Act” of 1953 created an inferior school system for blacks, (the government spent 20 times the money to educate a white child compared to that of a black child) providing them with just enough education necessary to survive at the bottom end of the economy.\textsuperscript{52}

With this draconic legislations, Pretoria created a totalitarian, highly racist security state for the sole purpose of separating the “swart gevaar” from the white minority. Within ten years, the National Party had firmly secured its power and greatly improved the socio-economic situation of the Afrikaner at the expense of the black majority. It even succeeded in persuading many English-speaking South Africans that only the National Party is capable of preserving white supremacy. South African prime minister and chief architect of the apartheid system, Henrik Verwoerd, felt so confident that he put the long-desired nationalist republican ambitions to a referendum in 1960 asking the white South Africans whether their country should remain in the British Commonwealth. Despite British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s “wind of change” speech\textsuperscript{53}, a small majority voted in favor of leaving the British Commonwealth and on May 31, 1961 the Republic of South Africa was proclaimed, the country at the Cape left the Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51} Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 605-607.


\textsuperscript{53} Macmillan delivered this speech in front of the South African Parliament in February 1960. The historically significant speech made clear that London intended to grant independence to its African territories because “...the wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of political consciousness is a political fact” but also warned of the consequences of the speed of decolonization in Africa. He also urged the South Africans to create a society “in which individual merit, and individual merit alone, is the criteria for a man’s advancement.” This open criticism of the apartheid system marked a profound shift in London’s policy towards Pretoria. (Lamb, The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963, pp. 245-246)

\textsuperscript{54} Marks, Southern Africa, pp. 545–573, here pp. 566-567.
1.2.4. ECONOMIC STRIVE, GROWING TENSIONS AND ESCALATION

Verwoerd condemned Macmillan’s speech and basically ignored every aspect of it, sticking fiercely to his racist system. The past decade since the introduction of the apartheid had been characterized by a process during which the continuous expansion of the apartheid system (abolishing freedom of speech, extending the scope of action for security police and judicial authorities) on the one hand, and rising resistance among the black population on the other hand, goaded each other. The situation escalated in March 1960 when police units opened fire on unarmed protesters, killing 67 blacks\textsuperscript{55} in what became known as the “Sharpeville-massacre”.\textsuperscript{56} In the wake of the massacre, martial law was declared throughout the country, all black and antiracist organizations, including the ANC and PAC, were abolished, its leadership arrested (among which was Nelson Mandela) and thousands of its members went into exile. The massacre marked a major shift in the international perception of South Africa and the beginning of a thirty-year armed struggle against apartheid. Pretoria initiated an unprecedented wave of repression, crushing any resistance for the following ten years.\textsuperscript{57}

During this decade, South Africa’s economy was thriving, mostly because the Western world kept its strong economic ties with Pretoria, therefore enabling the country to finance its segregation in the first place. Enormous trade incomes, the raw materials provided by mining and agriculture as well as the government policy of protecting home industries has resulted in a rapid development in secondary industries. Contributing only 20 percent to South Africa’s GNP in 1945, its amount rose to 30 percent in 1960. By 1975, secondary industry was the largest contributor to the GNP enabling South Africa to supply 80 percent of its own industrial equipment.\textsuperscript{58} South Africa became the most developed country of the entire African continent and its GDP was by far the largest of all African states.\textsuperscript{59}

Between 1960 and 1985, about 3.5 million people were forcibly removed into territories with no jobs, no future and no land, often having not even a roof over their head. These severe grievances led to the emergence of a new resistance movement among young, urban blacks during the early 1970s. The primary goal of this “Black Consciousness Movement” was to overcome their inferiority complexes, indoctrinated into them since they were children. This movement, centered on Steve Biko, was immensely popular among students and pupils and was at least partly responsible for what happened in Soweto in 1976. On the morning of June 16, 1976 thousands of adolescences protested against South Africa’s segregated education system. The regime’s response was the same as in Sharpeville, killing hundreds of children within the first days. The riots lasted for months until the security apparatus was able to crush them, but South Africa did not come to rest afterwards. Pretoria was not able, despite several attempts, to gain back the initiative and fully control the future developments. The gamble of

\textsuperscript{55} Davenport and Saunders assume that 69 people were killed and over 180 injured. (Davenport/Saunders, South Africa, p. 413)
\textsuperscript{57} Marks, Southern Africa, pp. 545–573, here pp. 568-569.
the Black Consciousness paid off, a threshold was crossed and the political climate, nationally as well as abroad had changed.  

To say it in the words of Nelson Mandela, “the long walk to freedom” had begun.

1.3. Namibia – “Southern Africa’s Last Colony”

If ever there were a territory which was part of the Union [of South Africa] from every point of view, it is South West [Africa]… It was really the territory of the old Cape. Both historically and from the point of view of the defence of South-West Africa, it is an integral portion of South Africa.”

*(South African Prime Minister Jan Smut’s perception of Namibia in 1945)*

1.3.1. PRE-German Era

The first Europeans to explore the region which would become Namibia were the Portuguese during the late 15th century. Yet, the territory was not claimed by the Portuguese crown and it took the Europeans another 300 years to extensively explore the region. With increasing presence of the British Empire in the Cape Colony, Boers, Oorlam communities and adventurous explores started to penetrate the area north of the Orange River, drastically disturbing the well-established socio-economic structure of the native Nama and Herero people living there. This set off a series of tribal wars, mostly between the Oorlam and Herero in which the latter were eventually subjugated by the Oorlam people. British and German missionaries intervened to prevent further war, however, as the Herero tried to regain their independence around 1870, hostilities started anew. Against the backdrop of this tribal wars, settlers and missionaries increasingly longed for a takeover by Britain or Germany to reestablish peace among the feuding tribes. As Boer infiltration increased, the Oorlam people saw a threat to their own independence not only in the rival Herero tribe but also in the Boers. Maharero, the leader of the Oorlam, thus came to the conclusion that the only answer to this situation was to come under the protection of the Cape.

---


62 The Oorlams are a subtribe of the Nama people. Originally populating the frontier region of the native Cape Colony, they later moved inland from the Cape away from British presence. After their migration from the Cape Colony they largely assimilated to the Boer culture. The name Oorlam derives from the Nama language meaning “foreigner”.

63 Next to the Nama people, the Bantu people were another major ethnic group inhabiting the area at the Orange River. The main subtribe of the Bantu people are the Herero people.

Colony. The British, however, refused to take the territories under their protection, thus opening the way for Germany to extend its influence.\textsuperscript{65}

With the proclamation of the German Empire in 1871, a new major European power emerged, ambitious to get its share in the scramble for Africa. Therefore, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck did not hesitate when German merchants asked for protection for their trading post. He formally annexed what would henceforth be known as German South-West Africa in 1884.

\textbf{1.3.2. GERMAN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA}

Seeing its presence in southern Africa being threatened, Britain claimed that Germany was meddling in its sphere of influence. But having rejected the “Maharero Offer”, they were forced to recognize the new German colony.

While London recognized German presence, only three of the twelve Nama tribes accepted the Germans as their “protectors”. Thus Capt. von François, commander of the German forces in South-West Africa received orders to bring the tribes under Berlin’s control. What followed were more than ten years of brutal actions taken by Germans against the native population of the colony. On April 12, 1893 the little town of Hoornkraans was shelled by German soldiers in a surprise night attack, killing 150 people, mostly women and children. This massacre left its mark on the race relations in Namibia, breeding hatred and distrust among all tribes who were shocked that the Germans were able to kill unarmed women and children. By 1894 the situation in Namibia was explosive and almost all tribes were at war with the German occupiers. Berlin sent Theodore von Leutwein as new governor to Namibia to deal with the deteriorating situation. During his first years, von Leutwein continued to use force to gain control over the native tribes. By the late 1890s, he changed his tactic and negotiated treaties, mostly with the Herero tribe, over the use and possession of land. This treaties were marked by injustice, depriving the Herero step by step from their land and cattle. By 1903 the Herero owned only three and a half million hectares out of original twelve million and their vast herds of cattle had been depleted to 46.000.\textsuperscript{66}

The expulsion of the Herero from their own lands, the chief’s loss of power and the increasing fear of total German domination led the Herero into open rebellion in 1904. Samuel Maharero united the different Herero tribes and raised an army of about 7.000 men, yet only a third of them was armed with rifles. Having initial success in their rebellion, the situation quickly changed to the German’s advantage after they received reinforcement under Lieutenant Lothar von Trotha, a brutal commander who gained a reputation in crushing the Boxer Rebellion in China four years earlier. By August 1904 the Herero

\textsuperscript{65} Parker/Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, pp. 258-261.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., pp. 262-264.
were defeated, having lost hundreds of men, the rest fleeing towards the Botswana border. The path led through the vast Kalahari Desert, inflicting further suffering on the fugitives.67

Following the battle, von Trotha issued the infamous Extermination Order which decreed that all Herero were to be shot on sight. This order culminated in the first genocide of the 20th century, committed by the Germans between 1904 and 190768. Thousands of Herero were chased by the “Schutztruppe” into the Kalahari Desert where they died of thirst and starvation. Those who escaped the desert were sent to concentration camps, where many died from inhumane conditions.69 There are no reliable numbers on how many Herero were actually killed in the genocide but a 1911 census counted only 15,130 Herero survivors. There are estimates that before the war, the Herero people numbered about 80,000 people, thus 65,000 Herero (80 percent of the entire people) were killed. The Herero permanently lost their dominating position among the native tribes in Namibia and their land was handed over to German settlers.70

By 1907 most tribes had accepted German sovereignty and the tribal wars had come to an end. The atrocities were paralleled by similar happenings in German East Africa and Germany faced increasing world criticism for its colonial policy. General Trotha was condemned for his action and with the separation of the Colonial Office from the Foreign Office, several reforms were initiate. These reforms were still in progress when the entire world got shattered by the outbreak of World War I in 1914. A year later South Africa, as part of the British Empire and, thus, an enemy the German Empire, conquered German South-West Africa, effectively ending German rule over Namibia.71

### 1.3.3. NAMIBIA UNDER A LEAGUE OF NATIONS MANDATE

Signed in the aftermath of World War I, Article 119 of the Treaty of Versailles stated that “Germany renounces in favour of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers all her rights and titles over her oversea possessions”.72 While German East-Africa went to the United Kingdom, South Africa obtained German South-West Africa under a “Class C Mandate”. Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations classified this type of mandate as territories which “…can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population”. Additionally, the mandatory powers were required to submit

---

67 Marx, Geschichte Afrikas, pp. 143-145; Parker/Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, pp. 265-266.
70 Cooper, Reparations for the Herero Genocide, p. 114; Marx, Geschichte Afrikas, p. 147.
71 Parker/Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, pp. 266-267.
annual reports to the League of Nations to ensure that the terms of the mandate were being carried out. However, as the League of Nations had no power to enforce its own rulings if they were neglected, the mandatory power had almost complete control of the colony it had acquired.

No sooner did South Africa get control over Namibia than the rebellions of the natives started again. Depression and hopelessness had spread amongst the natives after it became clear that Pretoria would stick to the same ruling principles as Berlin did. Low wages, poor education and South Africa’s refusal to return the confiscated land to the natives were among the reasons for the Bondelsw arts to rebel. Pretoria faced severe condemnation from world opinion for its actions against the Bondelswarts and Rehobothers which included the aerial bombing of a Bondelswart settlement, killing more than a hundred civilians. Nonetheless, South Africa’s show of force fulfilled its purpose and the rebellions soon came to an end. The following decade brought material prosperity and increased settlement to South-West Africa. In 1921 the Namibian population numbered about 200,000 people of whom 133,000 lived in the Police Zone – the area that had been conquered by the Germans during the 1903-1907 rebellions. While the white population profited from the economic development, racist legislations severely restricted the civil rights of the black population. Africans were not allowed to own land, the Masters and Servants Proclamation of 1920 created slave-like working conditions, all movements by Africans in and out of the police zone were monitored and after the introduction of a Curfew Regulation, Africans were not allowed to remain in public areas from 9pm until 4pm. Thus by the mid-1920s the full force of South Africa’s discriminatory policies, which later would be introduced to the Union itself 20 years later, had been applied to the mandated territory.

The Great Depression brought an end to the economic boom and the outbreak of World War II saw a wave of sympathy to Hitler’s cause of reuniting the former German colonies with the “Fatherland”.  

1.3.4. SOUTH AFRICA’S “FIFTH PROVINCE”

The end of World War II saw the dissolution of the League of Nations and the creation of the United Nations as its successor. In the view of Pretoria, the end of the League of Nations brought also an end to its mandate obligations dictated by the Covenant. South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts therefore stated that “the mandate will have to be abolished and the territory can be incorporated as a province of the Union.” While the all-white national assembly of South-West Africa unanimously voted for an incorporation into the Union, the majority of the Namibians staunchly opposed Pretoria’s plan. The incorporation was also met with strong opposition within South Africa itself, most notably by the ANC and the Communist Party. Nonetheless, Pretoria formally sought United Nation’s approval for Namibia’s incorporation at the beginning of 1946. While the British government backing Pretoria’s request

---

74 Parker/Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, pp. 267-270.
75 Quoted in Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, p. 10.
at the UN General Assembly, it was mostly India\textsuperscript{76} who voiced Namibian and ANC concerns. Additionally, Smuts, a coauthor to the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations which “reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights” and called for “social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”\textsuperscript{77}, could not credibly defend his government’s position towards Namibia, thus weakening his country’s stand in the General Assembly. On December 14, 1946, the General Assembly rejected Pretoria’s claim. In 1950 the World Court backed the decision of the General Assembly by ruling that Namibia was still under the International Mandate and, since the United Nations was the legal successor to the League, the rightful supervisor of Namibian affairs. In 1956 the World Court ordered South Africa to progressively transfer political power to the Africans and abolish all forms of racial discrimination.\textsuperscript{78}

While Pretoria faced increasing international pressure for its position towards Namibia, the emergence of a nationalist movement increased internal pressure as well. In 1957 Namibian Contract Migrant workers in Cape Town formed the Ovamboland People’s Congress, followed by the Ovamboland People’s Organization (OPO) in Windhoek in 1959. Next to these two movements, ordinary Namibians continued to resist colonial rule and oppressive regulations. When South African authorities sought to forcibly remove residents from Windhoek’s black township and relocate them, the ensuing protest resulted in the shooting of eleven people and wounding of another 44. In the aftermath of the shooting, much of the nationalist leadership was arrested, banned or went into exile. OPO was rendered ineffective, its exile leadership renamed the organization into South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO). South Africa’s violent actions buried the anyway almost non-existent hope for a imminent handover of Namibia to the United Nations. Continuing to ignore all international verdicts, Pretoria had, now at the latest, started to treat Namibia as its de-facto fifth province.\textsuperscript{79}

With a UN sponsored diplomatic solution of the table, SWAPO decided in 1962 to take up arms against South Africa and began training combatants in Egypt. When South African security forces discovered the first SWAPO camp in northern Namibia in 1966, an armed struggle began. In the first days more than 200 SWAPO guerrillas got arrested, including almost all remaining SWAPO leaders in Namibia. By August of the same year, the South African Defense Forces (SADF) started to deploy armored troops and aircrafts into northern Namibia. In the following years, tensions and unrest increased dramatically, highlighted by the imposition of emergency regulations in Ovamboland in 1972.\textsuperscript{80}

Actually, it could be assumed that, compared to South Africa’s vast security apparatus, minor uprisings in northern Namibia would not have caused much of a headache in Pretoria. Yet, to understand why the events at the Namibian-Angolan border caused Pretoria in fact a migraine, a closer lock on South Africa’s national security strategy has to be taken. Heretofore, Pretoria’s entire national security strategy, and thus that of Namibia, was largely relying on Lisbon. It was the National Party’s notion that the

\textsuperscript{76} India was a staunch opponent of South Africa due to Pretoria’s policy towards the Indian minority in South Africa.

\textsuperscript{77} Quoted in ibid., p. 22.

\textsuperscript{78} Parker/Pfukani, History of Southern Africa, pp. 270-271; Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, pp. 7-23.


\textsuperscript{80} Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, pp. 54-55; Bauer/Taylor, Politics in Southern Africa, pp. 210-211.
biggest threat to their Apartheid-regime was not internal uprising, but communist-backed black insurgencies from abroad. Thus, Pretoria was largely counting on Lisbon to keep such movements well away from its own territory. As the Portuguese situation deteriorated in the first years of the 1970s, Pretoria saw itself confronted with the situation that precisely these movements could fill the power vacuum in Angola and Mozambique.\footnote{Jamie Miller, Things Fall Apart. South Africa and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire, 1973–74, in: \textit{Cold War History} 12 (2012), No. 2, pp. 183–204, here, pp. 192-194.} This was, at least partly, the case when the MPLA allowed SWAPO to establish its exile base in Angola and therefore bringing SWAPO to a much closer proximity to Namibia than when it had its bases in Tanzania. Chaos quickly swept from Angola and Mozambique to South-West Africa and Rhodesia as the liberation movements regrouped in Pretoria’s border regions.\footnote{Bauer/Taylor, Politics in Southern Africa, p. 211.} 

1.3.5. HEGEMONIC STRUGGLE

With an increasingly deteriorating domestic situation, these events overwhelmed the government of John Vorster, which succumbed into dysfunction and paralyzed South Africa until it left office in 1978. In combination with the hasty withdrawal of the Portuguese from southern Africa, this led to a drastic destabilization in the entire region, leaving the countries vulnerable to all sorts of influence from abroad, most notably from Moscow and Washington, who both had realized that a potential new theater in the Cold War was opening.

It was in this situation that Vorster’s secretary of defense, Pieter Willem Botha, took over control of the government. He realized that Pretoria’s influence in the entire region was severely threatened and therefore advocated “a drastically increased role for the military in policymaking across the board, an extensive rearmament campaign, and a renewed and uncompromising willingness to engage black-nationalist insurgents well beyond South Africa’s borders.” This shift in policy enabled South Africa to project force much faster and effectively than any distant Cold War superpower or disorganized liberation movement could do.\footnote{Miller, Things Fall Apart, here pp. 184-185.} In turn, South Africa was able to join the superpowers in their struggle over hegemonic dominance in the southern African region and, with its own hegemonic ambitions, Pretoria was about to challenge the superpower’s notion of a bipolar world order. This unleashed a dynamic which functioned not only as the main propulsion for driving the entire southern African region into and through the final fifteen years of the Cold War, but also turned out to be the last desperate grasp of South Africa’s minority regime to secure its position.

\footnotesize

82 Bauer/Taylor, Politics in Southern Africa, p. 211.
83 Miller, Things Fall Apart, here pp. 184-185.
CHAPTER II

South Africa – The Ambiguous Hegemon?

“South Africa faces a total onslaught [which] is an ideologically motivated struggle and the aim is the implacable and unconditional imposition of the aggressor’s will on the target state. The aim is therefore also total, not only in terms of the ideology, but also as regards the political, social, economic and technological areas.”

(General, and later Minister of Defense, Magnus Malan in 1978)

2.1. Defining South African Hegemony

The Sharpeville massacre of 1976 marked a decisive break in the history of South Africa. In combination with the assumption of power by Pieter Willem Botha two years later, it inaugurated a new form of domestic and foreign policy. The threshold of violence that was crossed in Sharpeville defined new standards of what was tolerable in conducting South African policy. In combination with Pretoria’s aggressive strive for hegemonic dominance in the southern African region during the Botha reign, these new standards turned out to have devastating consequences for the entire region, including South Africa itself.

As the previous chapter has shown, the country’s hegemonic endeavors date back almost as far as the unification of the country itself in 1910. While it was mostly Britain’s imperial agenda that drove these endeavors in the country’s early years, after the end of the “Age of Imperialism” and London’s slow withdrawal from the Cape in the aftermath of World War I, Pretoria developed its own hegemonic ambitions. In the decades that followed, both Pretoria’s domestic and foreign policies aimed at increasing and maintaining its hegemonic influence in the region. Since there are several notions and theories on how to define the term hegemony, for the purpose of clarification, the following pages take a closer look at how the term "hegemony" can be understood in the South African context.

While publications on hegemonic theories can fill entire bookshelves, it is possible to make a rough distinction among three approaches to the concept of hegemony, which all find their expression among

84 Barber/Barratt, South Africa's Foreign Policy, p. 254.
realists, institutionalists and constructivists. Succinctly, they address the questions of (1) what a
hegemon has, (2) what a hegemon does and (3) what a hegemon wants.85

2.1.1. A THREEDIMENSIONAL APPROACH

The first approach, asking what a hegemon has, analyzes the power capabilities necessary to be
called a hegemon. These power capabilities range from materialistic capabilities such as military
strength, access to natural resources, high labor productivity and economic efficiency to non-material-
istic ones such as political stability, know-how and the developmental stage of society.86

The following chart indicates both the materialistic and non-materialistic capabilities of South Africa
and its neighboring states in 1975.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materialistic capabilities</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Angola</th>
<th>Mozambique</th>
<th>Botswana</th>
<th>Rhodesia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP in billion US$</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force in million people</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>Gold, uranium, iron, diamonds, agricultural goods</td>
<td>Iron, oil, gold, diamonds</td>
<td>Agricultural products, limited amounts of petroleum,</td>
<td>Diamond, coal, copper, nickel</td>
<td>Diamond, coal, copper, nickel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Power</td>
<td>16.4% of GDP</td>
<td>...87</td>
<td>...87</td>
<td>...88</td>
<td>18.2% of GDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>~ 100% among white pop. 35% among black pop.</td>
<td>10-15%</td>
<td>7-10%</td>
<td>22-32%</td>
<td>~ 100% among white pop. 25-30% among black pop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Stable but repressive minority regime</td>
<td>Power vacuum (decolonization)</td>
<td>Power vacuum (decolonization)</td>
<td>South African “hostage-state”89</td>
<td>Stable but repressive minority regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know-how</td>
<td>Technol. most developed country in Africa</td>
<td>Despite mining industry no technol. know-how</td>
<td>Minimal technol. know-how</td>
<td>Minimal technol. Know-how</td>
<td>Reliable technol. infrastructure but only minimal know-how</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Hegemonic Capabilities of Southern African States in 197590

In terms of materialistic capabilities, South Africa outnumbered its neighboring countries multiple
times. Its GDP alone was six times higher than the GDP of the other four countries combined. This vast

86 Frank Schimmelfennig, Internationale Politik, Paderborn [u.a.] 20133, p. 75. Jesse/Lobell/Press-Barnathan/Williams, The Leaders Can’t Lead When the Followers Won’t Follow, pp. 1–30, pp. 4-5.
87 Due to the process of decolonization happening in both Angola and Mozambique in 1975, neither of the two states pos-
sessed any significant military power.
88 Patrick Best, Botswana President May Seek Defence Aid During Visit, in: The Citizen, No. 283, 3.6.1976, p. 36.
economic preponderance enabled Pretoria to maintain a powerful armed force, which surpassed the military strength of her neighbors even more than the GDP did. Apart from Mozambique, all countries had access to a significant amount of natural resources, yet only South Africa had the labor force and technological know-how necessary to fully exploit them. In addition, soaring illiteracy rates in all countries (it was only the ruling elite in South Africa and Rhodesia that was almost fully literate) made it almost impossible to acquire technological know-how. Due to political instability in Mozambique and Angola and increasing guerrilla activities in Rhodesia, the possibility of foreign know-how or investments were ruled out as well.

The chart clearly indicates that South Africa not only fulfilled all the criteria necessary to be called a hegemon but was also by far the most dominant power in the entire region, if not on the entire continent.

Yet, a hegemon is not only a preponderant power, it also needs the will to act as a leader in a system or a region. In other words, a hegemon is a country not only powerful enough to act as the leader in a system, but is also willing to do so. Whether a (potential) hegemon is willing to behave as such a leader, is first and foremost indicated by what the hegemon does. These actions, which comprise the second approach, are dichotomous, they are either benevolent or malevolent.91 Benevolent actions include economic aid, providing public goods and transfer of knowledge. Malevolent actions can range from issuing threats, over economic sanctions, to a full-scale military invasion. Depending on the hegemon’s means, motives and goals, he opts for either benevolent or malevolent actions towards a secondary state. It is also possible that a hegemon applies both benevolent and malevolent actions towards the same state. An example would be the steps taken by the Soviet Union against the CSSR. Prague received considerable amounts of aid from Moscow (which count as benevolent actions), yet during the Prague Uprising in 1968 the invasion of the Red Army was clearly a malevolent action.

In the case of South Africa we already came across a malevolent hegemonic (non-)action, namely the refusal to hand over South-West Africa to the United Nations. Yet, this was by far not the only action Pretoria took to extend or maintain its hegemonic influence in the region.

The third approach focuses on what a hegemon wants or in other words: what are the motives for a country to act as a hegemon? Not surprisingly, there are multiple reasons for a country to act as a hegemon. A first reason is given because of the, according to realists, anarchical structure of the international system, which compels states to compete for power in order to guarantee their own security and secure their own interests.92 Establishing hegemony is one way to compete for power. By dominating an entire region or system and thereby increasing one’s preponderance, a country can assure that no other nations or alliances would (in the ideal case) even think of challenging it. Guaranteeing its own security is therefore a major reason for states to seek hegemony. A second reason could be the

---

91 Jesse/Lobell/Press-Barnathan/Williams, The Leaders Can’t Lead When the Followers Won't Follow, pp. 1–30, here p. 6.
92 Robert H. Jackson/Georg Sørensen, Introduction to International Relations. Theories and Approaches, New York 20104, pp. 84-87. For details on the political theory of realism see Schimmelfennig, Internationale Politik, pp. 78-88; Jesse/Lobell/Press-Barnathan/Williams, The Leaders Can’t Lead When the Followers Won’t Follow, pp. 1–30; Chris Brown/Kirsten Ainley, Understanding International Relations, Basingstoke 20094, pp. 40-58 and 70-85.
hegemon’s will to propagate its own values and ideologies or to prevent other (potential) hegemons from spreading their (often adverse) ideologies. The most obvious example for this motive is the Cold War in which the United States, a hegemon propagating capitalist values, tried to prevent the Soviet Union, a hegemon propagating communism and thus the antithesis to capitalism, from propagating its own values. Securing its access to vital natural resources or strategic locations (harbors, water straights…) could be a third reason for a state to seek hegemony. If hegemon “A” has no oil resources on its own territory, but the smaller state “B” does, then “A” can exercise its dominate role over state” B” and persuade “B” to give “A” primary access to the oil resources to often favorable conditions.

In light of the preceding discussion, a hegemon can therefore be defined as a significantly stronger state that is aware of its preponderance of power, willing to use it and actively does so for its own good. The fact that South Africa was significantly stronger (approach 1) than its neighboring states has already been dealt with in more detail.

On the other side, the willingness of Pretoria to exercise its preponderance of power and the actions it took to ensure its hegemonic role (approach 2) have only been mentioned briefly. Yet, these two elements, the willingness and the actions, constitute fundamental parts in order to understand the hegemonic motives (approach 3) of a country. With regard to the paper’s research question, however, it is crucial to understand the underlying motives of Pretoria’s actions during the southern African conflict. The remaining part of this second chapter therefore aims to identify the hegemonic motives of South Africa – whether Pretoria was acting as a proxy in yet another Cold War theater or if it was pursuing its own ideologically motivated agenda. This is accomplished by dealing extensively with the actions Pretoria took to ensure its hegemonic status in southern Africa. Also, the reactions of the two superpowers towards these actions will be probed. Moreover, since a state’s domestic and foreign policy actions are generally not isolated events but part of a long-term “master plan”, the strategies and doctrines, which formed Pretoria’s foreign policy master plan and provided the bedrock for its actions, will be dealt with at first.
2.2. South Africa’s Hegemonic Strategies

2.2.1. LOOKING OUTWARD

When it established the Apartheid system in 1948, the National Party had little to worry about the impact this new policy might have on South Africa’s neighbors. Then, Africa was still predominantly under colonial rule and most countries governed by a small white elite. Criticism from other African states for creating a racist minority regime was unlikely to occur. The situation changed drastically when the “wind of change” blew through Africa and almost the entire continent was granted independence within a decade. Facing increasing pressure from the newly independent states but also from international organizations, the Vorster government was compelled to implement a new strategy in order to vamp up the regime’s image.

Yet, up until the mid-1960s South Africa could do little to stem the tide of hostilities from abroad and improve its image, since Pretoria was primarily occupied with consolidating the dominance of Afrikaner Nationalism in the country. With the consolidation being accomplished under the Verwoerd government in the late 1950s, mostly through painstaking segregation laws, and a “successful” defense of these laws in Sharpeville, South Africa felt confident enough to “accept its future role in Africa as a vocation and [therefore] must in all respects play its full part as an African Power.”

It therefore became the focus of the new government of John Vorster to add an international element to its predecessor’s policy of “conflict resolution”, which would secure the National Party’s stand in South Africa. It was realized that permanent stability – which was a prerequisite for white minority rule – in the southern African region can only be achieved by linking mutual interests of, and close cooperation with southern African states.

Out of this notion emerged Vorster’s foreign policy strategy, which would become known as “outward-looking policy”. The core of this strategy was, first, to end the self-imposed isolation and open up the country’s economy to a cooperation with black African states. Second, peace, based on cooperation and mutual respect, should be promoted in the southern African region. Yet, there was to be no interference in internal affairs of any state or attempts to create common political notions.

Up to this time, the OAU unanimously agreed that the Apartheid policy rendered South Africa completely unacceptable not only as economic partner but also as a legitimate African power in its own right. Several developments on the African continent, however, started to undermine this consensus. First, increasing disagreement within the OAU led to first cracks in the unified stand of the black gov-

---

95 Barber/Barratt, South Africa's Foreign Policy, pp. 124-125.
erned countries. Second, the events transpiring in the Congo (1963) and Rwanda (1965) and the obstruction of black majority rule’s southward expansion by Portugal and Rhodesia\(^{96}\), showed that black majority rule was not that powerful and flawless after all. Third, the already mentioned decisions made by the ICJ regarding South-West Africa, strengthened Pretoria’s international stand. Fourth, the granting of independence to Basutoland\(^{97}\) and Bechuanaland\(^{98}\) gave Pretoria the opportunity to demonstrate the country’s ability to assist its poor neighboring countries in their social and economic development.\(^{99}\) When Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai visited Tanzania in 1965, he concluded that Africa was “ripe for revolution”.\(^{100}\) He certainly was right with that, but part of the continent was also ripe for a dialogue with South Africa. In combination with Pretoria’s departure from (economic) isolationism, these developments led to several agreements between South Africa and other African states.

The first country to break the OAU consensus was Malawi. In 1967 Malawi President Banda stated that “being a good African does not mean cutting your economic throat”\(^{101}\) and signed a trade agreement with Pretoria in 1967. It was also the first and only southern African country to establish full diplomatic relations with Pretoria. With substantial diplomatic aid from France, Pretoria was able to at least start a dialogue with a handful other African countries including the Ivory Coast, Madagascar and the Senegal. This policy of dialogue (which became an integral part of the “outward-looking” policy) was further encouraged by the UN and OAU endorsed Lusaka Manifesto of 1969, which called for a commitment to change achieved “by talking rather than killing”.\(^{102}\)

Between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s the southern African nations saw a sharp increase in aid provided by South Africa and South African investments in neighboring countries. The largest and probably most spectacular investment undertaken was the construction of the Cahora Bassa Dam on the Zambezi River in Mozambique, which is still the largest hydroelectric power scheme in southern Africa today. Obviously, the dam was also a political investment, offering immediate help to the Portuguese and giving South Africa a stake in Mozambique’s future.\(^{103}\) In the upcoming civil war the dam would serve as a major basis of legitimacy for Pretoria’s interventions in Mozambique.

What Vorster and his government failed to realize was that despite the initial success of the “outward-looking” policy, the strict separation between economic arrangements and non-interference in internal affairs was utopian and that the willingness to receive aid does not come along with the (not even tacit) acceptance of Pretoria’s political system. This became apparent in the BLS-states and, most notably, in

---

\(^{96}\) Great Britain refused to grant Rhodesia independence unless some prerequisites, including future black majority rule, are met. Rhodesia’s white ruling elite refused to meet these terms and therefore unilaterally declared its independence (UDI) from Great Britain in 1965. The UDI was condemned by the UN and most countries did not recognize the independence. Black majority rule was only established in 1980 when Robert Mugabe came to power after several years of civil war.

\(^{97}\) Basutoland received its independence from Great Britain in 1966 and was renamed the Kingdom of Lesotho.

\(^{98}\) Bechuanaland received its independence from Great Britain in 1966 and was renamed Republic of Botswana.


\(^{100}\) Jorre, John de St., South Africa: Up Against the World, in: Foreign Policy (1977), No. 28, pp. 53–85, here p. 58.

\(^{101}\) Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 134.

\(^{102}\) Jorre, John de St., South Africa: Up Against the World, here p. 59; Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, pp. 146-147.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., 133.
Zambia. Being the largest black-governed country in the South African Bloc\textsuperscript{104}, it was a prime target of Pretoria’s policy. While receiving significant amounts of South African aid, President Kaunda strongly opposed apartheid, with the BLS states hopping on Lusaka’s bandwagon almost immediately. Only one year after the Lusaka Manifesto, the OAU repealed the manifesto, rejected a dialogue with South Africa and declared with twenty-eight votes to six, five abstentions and two absentees, that white minority regimes can only be overthrown by force.\textsuperscript{105} While the outcome of the vote was not surprising, it was all the more that the vote actually did take place and several countries voted in favor of South Africa.

African attitudes towards South Africa were hardening and by 1972 a consensus could not be reached even among the francophone states, which were generally inclined the most towards Pretoria. The momentum for Vorster’s policy, which had grown so quickly, disappeared equally quickly. By 1974 diplomatic representation was confined to Malawi, Angola and Mozambique and Rhodesia and in 1972 Vorster admitted that his outward strategy had not made much progress.

In the wake of the 1974 events, Vorster hastily tried to keep his policy alive. He launched a new initiative labeled “détente” whose objective was somewhat vaguely defined as drawing the states of Southern Africa into a “constellation of completely independent states” which would form a “strong bloc” and “present a united front against common enemies”. Based on secret diplomacy and bribery, détente desperately tried to find additional strong supporters within the OAU. However, any form of dialogue with Pretoria was ultimately destroyed during the brutal repression of the Soweto Uprising in 1976. Not even the most conservative regime in Africa could now afford to be seen doing business with a regime that was able to slaughter unarmed black school kids in the streets.\textsuperscript{106}

A major reason for the failure of the “outward-looking policy” can be found in the differences on how it was perceived. While several African states saw it as a means to achieve a peaceful change towards black majority rule, South Africa regarded it as an endorsement of the status quo. If the policy achieved something, it was that the wedge got driven deeper between the different factions within the OAU. However, even without the events of the watershed-year of 1974, this fundamental disagreement in perception would have made it impossible for the policy to prevail.

\subsection{2.2.2. TOTAL ONSLAUGHT}

With the drastic implications brought to the southern African region by the collapse of the Portuguese Empire, Vorster’s entire foreign policy endeavors were rendered obsolete almost overnight as South Africa’s “defense perimeter” was left severely damaged. With several of the newly independent states

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[104] The southern African bloc consisted of South Africa, the BLS-states, Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, Rhodesia, Zambia and Malawi. The bloc was not formalized by any form of treaty but rather by the joined commitment of the white members to white rules. The black states did not share, but were unable to challenge, it.
\item[105] Ib. id., 146-148.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
proclaiming themselves Marxist-Leninist during the mid-1970s, Pretoria now regarded itself as more vulnerable than ever to any kind of threats from abroad. While the notion of South Africa being besieged by what Pretoria considered to be “subversive elements” had already been present during the administrations of Vorster and Verwoerd, the new international setting in the southern African region certainly increased the gravity of these elements.

These threats, regardless of whether they were real or just perceived as such, got subsumed under the term “total onslaught”. Succinctly put, total onslaught described the threat that the “swart gevaar”, now substantially backed by the “red peril” radiating from Moscow, would launch a full-scale attack on South Africa to overthrow its current constitutional order. Since a direct military attack by any of these countries would have exceeded their military means, the Botha government, which succeeded Vorster in 1978, expected an “indirect” strategy, including economic boycotts, military subversion and psychological propaganda. Magnus Malan, a high ranking military official and later minister of defense, said in 1977 that the onslaught was “militaristic, political, diplomatic, religious, psychological, cultural and social.” In his view, it was directed against the Western world of which South Africa was a particular target because of its strategic location, wealth, resources and “Western” values. Botha went as far as to say that “South Africa is experiencing unprecedented intervention of the part of the superpowers. ... The Republic of South Africa is also experiencing double standards on the part of certain Western bodies in their behavior towards her. They are doing this in an attempt to pay a ransom to the [Russian] Bear whose hunger must be satisfied.” This perceived abandonment by opportunistic Western powers further reinforced the notion of South Africa as the last stronghold of Western “civilization” in the entire region, located right at the battle line between “the powers of chaos [Marxism] and the powers of order [capitalism].” Therefore, in the view of Pretoria, the struggle which was about to come was not only a racial conflict but a new theater in the global Cold War. The preposterous claim that the West would have been willing to sacrifice South Africa, is revealing a deep paranoia of white South Africans. The tumultuous events of the late 1970s, including Robert Mugabe’s victory in Zimbabwe in 1980, fed this paranoia further.

108 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 254.
110 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 254.
112 Ibid., p. 265.
113 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 267.
The fact that the total onslaught was an enormous exaggeration by the Botha government becomes apparent when looking at the aid provided by the superpowers during this time. While the Soviet Union invested a total of US$ 335 million in Africa between 1975 and 1980, the amount of Western aid was with US$ 35 billion ten times as much.\(^{114}\) This commitment not only indicated the continued significant support of the West, it also confutes Botha’s argument that the Western world was willing to sacrifice South Africa to the “Russian Bear”. A major reason why Pretoria so intensely warned of a total onslaught can be found in one of its ulterior motives: a senior government officials admitted that “there is a threat as perceived by government, but the concept of this threat is used for other reason than the real threat: to bring people together whom the government thinks should be together.”\(^ {115}\) By creating the notion of a powerful and dangerous external enemy, the administration hoped to unite especially the Afrikaans and English speaking white minority, an important prerequisite for the political doctrine which dominated the following decade.

For Pretoria, survival in the face of total onslaught meant to adopt a new security strategy, which affected every branch of South Africa’s vast security apparatus. This new strategy became known as “total national strategy” and transformed a defensive, repressive security police into an active security apparatus, who sought to “defuse explosive situations and avoid conflict through an effective information organization and spy network.”\(^{116}\) This apparatus operated almost abundantly and, as will be elaborated in more detail on the following pages, did not even regard international borders as a limit to its operations.

### 2.2.3. TOTAL NATIONAL STRATEGY

“Total National Strategy” (TNS) was first elaborated in the 1977 Defense White Paper issued by the South African Department of Defense.\(^ {117}\) Written by top military commanders, it was argued that the “mobilization of economic, political and psycho-social as well as military resources was necessary to defend and advance the interests of the apartheid state, both at the domestic and regional levels.”\(^ {118}\) The militarists’ argumentation was highly influenced by the writings of the French strategist of the Algerian War, André Beaufre. He perceived war in the modern age as a totalizing process, in which military and non-military elements are highly interdependent and in which the key struggle is the shaping of public opinion. Thus, if a state is faced with a total onslaught, he needs to align military policy with any other political aspect, including foreign, financial, economic and socio-cultural policy.\(^ {119}\) In Beaufre’s view, war had become a total form of social interaction, in which all aspects of state policy were mutually reinforcing each other to produce the desired results. Yet, the paralysis in international relations caused

---


\(^{115}\) O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 266.

\(^{116}\) Quoted in: ibid., p. 266-267.


by atomic weaponry, necessitates that “the intended outcome should be attained essentially by non-military means; thus where [sic!] military means play only a complementary role.” Being a strategic idealist, he defined strategy as “the art of using force [not necessarily military force] to resolve the conflict between dialectically opposed wills.” Therefore, designing the correct strategy was the essential moment in successfully achieving its desired results. Achieving these results should happen in a *planned* process, a process managed by an effective power base, adhering to the rational of the applied strategy. In terms of his view on total national strategy (a strategy with a clear military rationale), policy formation could no longer be left “to the cut und thrust of consensus-building within the Cabinet and between ministries”. Formulated and implemented by military technocrats, Beaufre’s strategy turned Clemenceau’s statement upside down – politics now had become too important to be left to the politicians.\(^\text{121}\)

The other main source of influence was American political scientist Samuel Huntington. If Beaufre provided the framework, Huntington gave the explanation on how such a strategy should be implemented. In an ultra-Machiavellian framework, he identified five key principles a successful reform is dependent on.

1. Expectations should be kept low and grand promises should be avoided
2. The process of implementing the reform is more important than defining the goals to which the reform should lead. Success depended more on the skillful control of the prolonged journey to reform than on its final destination.
3. Reform should only be made from a position of strength, never out of weakness
4. Maintenance of law and order is essential to counter the inevitable opposition forces
5. Revolutionary force should be used against the perpetrator itself using the fear it creates to increase the reformer’s support base.\(^\text{122}\)

Beaufre’s and Huntington’s theories were grist for the mills of Pieter Willem Botha and his generals. Following his accession to prime minister of South Africa in 1978, total national strategy became the official dictum of the new administration. According to Botha

> “A country which is facing a total onslaught has to have a total strategy to combat it. This onslaught is not just military but political, economic, and psychological. Against this background it was essential that South Africa’s strategy should be a total one, in which military, political, and economic factors all play a part.”\(^\text{123}\)

While Botha had been an ardent exponent of TNS already as Minister of Defense, it was only after he became Prime Minister that the concept became the framework of reference for almost every decision made by his administration. The concept was first introduced in the “twelve-point plan” presented by

---

\(^{120}\) Quoted in: O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 260.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., 267-268.

\(^{122}\) Ibid., pp. 263-264.

Botha in August 1979 before an NP Congress in Durban as the “answer to the total onslaught”. The implementation of a new doctrine that fundamental and overarching, required a radical restructuring of the entire governmental administration. Botha, a military expert and technocrat, was able to successfully restructure Pretoria’s administrative system within the first year of his prime ministry. The framework for this restructured administration was provided by the creation of the “national security management system” (NSMS). At the center of this system, whose implementation can be described as a “constitutional military coup d’état” or a “court revolution”, was the State Security Council (SSC). The SSC was established under Vorster in 1972 as a committee to coordinate the activities of various security agencies, serving only as an advisory body without any executive powers. Under the new Botha administration the role and importance of the SSC changed radically. Serving as kind of executive committee, it was chaired by the president, joined by the four leading cabinet ministers (Defense, Foreign Affairs, Law and Order and Senior Cabinet Minister) and the heads of military, police and national intelligence. Decisions were intended to be made by consensus, whilst consensus meant following the lead of the president. Yet, as Geldenhuys argues, it was clearly the military and the foreign ministry, the two most influential constituents of the SSC, who dominated the decision making process. As the name implies, all security matters were on the Council’s agenda and since, according to South Africa’s "National Strategy", security is open to very broad interpretation, basically all aspects of everyday governing had security implication and were therefore matters of the Council. Concentrating the most senior positions in one small non-elected circle, the SSC became the de-facto executive power of the Botha administration within a few years. Within the SSC, the military was at the core of the decision making process, a factor which proved to have a tremendous impact during the following years. Being responsible only to the State President, the SSC became the primary decision making body in South Africa with access to vast financial, military and intelligence resources. In the following decade, the SSC became the most integral body for implementing and executing South Africa’s total national strategy.

The NSMS, with the SSC at its center, therefore took away the administrative control of the country from both the legislative body and the cabinet and handed it over to the SSC. It created a quasi-secret bureaucracy, a “parallel administration” hidden behind the façade of ministries and departments, which operated outside any parliamentary control.
Having accomplished the structural reforms necessary to implement total national strategy, the new strategy became the framework of reference for Pretoria’s policymakers. The doctrine itself was based on two, in many aspects strongly interdependent pillars, an international and a domestic one.

The international pillar was defined by a three-dimensional strategy, consisting of a long, medium and short term goal. The long-term goal was to install Pretoria-friendly regimes in the neighboring countries and form a “Constellation of Southern African States” (CONSAS). The installation of these regimes was to be achieved by military subversion, economic coercion or negotiations. Success in this long-term goal would have four advantages for Pretoria: CONSAS would tie the neighboring states closer to South Africa and therefore (1) not only strengthen Pretoria’s economic hegemony but also inhibit these states from giving aid to various (anti-apartheid) liberation movements. This increased leverage in turn would entail, at a minimum, (2) the indirect recognition of the independence of the South African homelands by some black African states which would open the gates for Western countries to do the same.¹³² Winning over several countries for Pretoria’s side would (3) split the African continent, most notably the OAU in half, which would make it more difficult to organize and coordinate support for black liberation movements. These three advantages combined would be the basis for the fourth and most desirable – the creation of an international environment which would enable Pretoria to start rapprochement with the West.¹³³ Additionally, it was believed in Pretoria, the successful creation of CONSAS could function as prove that the apartheid system was a valid and more desirable alternative to black majority rule and therefore legitimate in its own right.¹³⁴

Yet, this long-term goal had one significant drawback. If Pretoria succeeded in overthrowing a hostile neighboring government, it would, at best, take only little time for a new government to consolidate. However, Pretoria had no guarantee that such a transitional process would be accomplished within a short period of time and, in general that a new regime would act in its favor. The new regime might either fail to consolidate or, in the worst case, might turn its back on Pretoria. Consequently, to avoid such a worst-case-scenario, Pretoria was in need for a policy capable of responding to these interim events. This is where the medium term goal came into play which was defined as the “neutralization” of neighboring states. It aimed at preventing neighboring countries from developing policies which were designed to undermine or end white minority ruling in South Africa. Additionally, any diplomatic efforts which were intended to isolate South Africa on any international level should be prevented as well. Achieving this “neutralization” should be accomplished in two ways: forward defense and economic leverage. Forward defense involved military strikes across international borders and against ANC camps in neighboring countries. These strikes, as the following chapters will show, had drastic ramifications

¹³² This international recognition is especially important in regard to Botha’s new grand political design for Apartheid. While stating a commitment to eventually end Apartheid, he was steadfast in sticking to the policy of separate development, whereby all black Africans would cease to be members of the South African state. International recognition would thereby accomplish something that the National Party failed to do until then – the international acceptance of Apartheid. ¹³³ Robert M. Price, Pretoria’s Southern African Strategy, in: African Affairs 83 (1984), No. 330, pp. 11–32, here pp. 14–21. ¹³⁴ Braun, Pretorias Totale Strategie im südlichen Afrika, here p. 9.
for the entire southern African region. Economic leverage foresaw South Africa’s vast economic superiority as a means to blackmail the neighboring countries into doing what Pretoria wants. Additionally, Pretoria tried to prevent the economic integration of the black countries, since this would have reduced their dependency on South Africa. The most notable example for this effort would be the sabotage of transport lines which could have bypassed South Africa, a primary goal of South African backed UNITA in the Angolan civil war.\(^{135}\)

Since the ultimate goal for South Africa was to seek Western and African acquiescence and security in the region, its long- and medium-term goals were highly counterproductive in their short-term repercussions. Pretoria’s economic and military actions, necessary to achieve both medium-term and long-term goals, could lead to a Western perception of South Africa as an aggressor, which would trigger off increased pressure on the country, something it desperately tried and needed to avoid. Thus, Pretoria was faced with a dilemma: on the one hand it needed to repress the black liberation movement both domestically as well as externally, on the other hand it needed to avoid increasing pressure from the West. The loophole for Pretoria was the increasing Soviet/Cuban presence in the Angolan civil war. This seeming projection of the Cold War into the southern African region ensured that at least the NATO-partners, above all the United States, would not bail on South Africa. It was therefore essential for South African policymaker to present the conflict in the southern African region not as a racial struggle but as part of the global Cold War. One example for this propaganda is a commentary of the official state controlled South African Broadcasting Company following a May 1983 raid on an ANC camp in Mozambique:

\[
\text{“The ANC is a self-declared revolutionary movement dedicated to the...imposition of a communist order on the Soviet pattern. The evidence of its control by the Soviet Union...is conclusive. As an instrument of the Kremlin its aims are...to achieve strategic dominance for the Soviets in Southern Africa... The Palestine Liberation Organization is a terrorist movement similar to the ANC in its operations and its affiliation with Moscow. There is close liaison between the two movements... The ANC like the PLO is not amenable to debate... The only answer...is to stop them.”}^{136}\]

It was vital for Pretoria to create the perception that the strategic Western interests (which included access to mineral resources and vital sea lanes around the Cape) were under communist threat. Therefore, the political and military presence of the Soviet Union and its allies was crucial, for it immensely complicated the relations of Western countries with the southern African region.

Yet even Pretoria realized that the "total communist onslaught" was not going to happen. The real threat to Pretoria was in Soviet training and material support for the liberation movements and to neighboring states. Pretoria’s response to this was its destabilization and forward defense policies. These have the ironic “virtue” of both countering the Soviet “threat” and, at the same time, maintaining the Soviet presence. Soviet presence in southern Africa would only not be needed after destabilization achieved its

\(^{136}\) Quoted in ibid., p. 26.
ultimate end – the installation of regimes beholden to Pretoria. Until then, the Botha administration had to perform the high-wire act of “allowing the right amount” of Soviet/Cuban presence in southern Africa.\textsuperscript{137}

To sum up, the foreign pillar of TNS is based on the classic principles of counterrevolutionary tactics – cooperation and coercion – in order to establish a “defensive empire” to ensure white dominance in the entire region.\textsuperscript{138}

While the international pillar of TNS seemed rather straight forward, the domestic pillar proved to be far more complex. One of the biggest dilemmas Botha and his administration saw themselves confronted with lay in the strategy’s holistic claim. Beaufre’s argumentation that a total national strategy necessarily must include all aspects of state policy and elements that constitute a state, was addressed in Pretoria’s Defensive White Paper of 1977. There it says that “the defense of the RSA is not solely the responsibility of the Department of Defense… [It] is the responsibility of the entire population, the nation and every population group.”\textsuperscript{139} This was especially important for South Africa, since, in the view of Pretoria, it was not the physical entity of the state that was in danger but the very idea of the state (i.e. the white-led capitalistic system) itself.\textsuperscript{140} Defending an idea generally requires a much broader and stronger support than defending a physical entity, which made it crucial to include the entire population of the RSA. In the case of South Africa, it is not difficult to see why this might have caused some confusion. The logic of TNS is directly contradicting with the logic of apartheid, since the vast majority of the people was excluded by the latter. Thus, the full implementation of TNS required a reorganization of South Africa’s socio-political system in order to bring these two logics into harmony. This was attempted in the Defense White Paper of 1979 which stated that

\begin{quote}
“the vision which the government of the Republic of South Africa has for southern Africa is based on those very qualities which will permit the full and orderly development of its various peoples, each through their own culture and customs and under their freely chosen government... Included in this vision is the concept of a mutual defense against a common enemy.”\textsuperscript{141}
\end{quote}

What is propagated here is to incorporate the South African Blacks into the referent object of security, without incorporating them socio-politically. In other words, the dogma had to be preserved that the various “population groups” could be held separate for most political purposes except security. One possibility to accomplish this was by further increasing the “autonomy” of the Bantustans.

The other crucial reason for reforming the apartheid system was Beaufre’s view of mutual reinforcement of state policies. Given the enormous tensions within South Africa’s society, fueled by events like

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., pp. 26–28.
\textsuperscript{138} Braun, Pretorias Totale Strategie im südlichen Afrika, here p. 23.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p. 156.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 154.
\end{flushright}
Sharpeville or the murder of Steve Biko, which culminated during the township uprising during the mid-1980s, Botha realized that the domestic situation in South Africa was hardly benefiting his total national strategy. He therefore initiated reforms in two broad areas: the relationship between whites, Coloreds and Indians and the socio-economic sphere, both aimed at defusing these tensions.\textsuperscript{142} The most significant reform in the socio-economic area was to give Blacks access to the new supply-side oriented economic system. Overt racism gave way to a discourse of economic growth, the old Verwoerdian maxim of “better poor and white than rich and mixed” was replaced by a vision of “power-sharing.”\textsuperscript{144} Statutory job reservations for whites were abolished and restrictions on the mobility and training of African labor eased. A gradual extension of trade union rights institutionalized black work struggles and, through tight control, it was tried to keep these unions isolated and depoliticized. Removing the constraints of apartheid on the operation of market forces was also a reaction to the increasing demand for manpower in South Africa’s industries in light of the booming economy during the late 1970s. A significant contributor to this economic upswing was Botha’s new defense policy. In the wake of a humiliating defeat of the SADF in the Angolan civil war in 1975/76, a massive armament program was initiated. Whilst government expenditures for military equipment were at 470 million Rand in 1973, they exploded to nearly two billion Rand in 1979-80.\textsuperscript{145} Almost coinciding with the UN Security Council’s mandatory arms embargo of November 1977\textsuperscript{146}, the government therefore needed its full industrial potential to manufacture weaponry on its own. This led to the emergence of a South African military-industrial complex, supervised and administrated by Armscor.\textsuperscript{147} Armscor outsourced most of the production to private industries, which further increased the demand in labor force.\textsuperscript{148} Regarding the relationship between whites, Coloreds and Indians, Botha envisioned a “division of power” between these three groups. This division foresaw that each of these three groups assumes responsibility for “own affair” (such as education and culture) while matters of common interests (such as foreign, security and financial policy) were regarded as “general affairs” covered by Pretoria. This principle was further supplemented by another, which stated that “where at all possible each population group should have its own schools, and live in its own community.”\textsuperscript{149} This underlines Botha’s intention not to end apartheid. The statement is just a different wording for the newly emerged leitmotif of “separate development”.

\textsuperscript{142} The term “Coloreds” refers to people of mixed ethnic origin who have ancestors from Europe, Asia and various ethnic southern African groups.
\textsuperscript{143} Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 257.
\textsuperscript{144} O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 266-267.
\textsuperscript{147} Armscor, founded in 1968, was charged with the modernization of the SADF. After the UN embargo of 1977 it pursued both covert arms deals and black market purchases. It was also responsible for issuing arms contracts to South African industries.
\textsuperscript{148} Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 258.
\textsuperscript{149} Quoted in ibid., p. 257.
In the overall conception of apartheid, important changes were made as well. The African population was divided into urban “insiders” and rural “outsiders”. The insiders were ultimately destined to be returned to their “national states”, which were the Bantustans, whose independence was still the ultimate goal of apartheid. At the same time the Bantustans had to be sealed off tighter through a new influx control system and penalties for violating the pass laws were drastically increased.

The real challenge, however, lay in the search for a “new political dispensation” of apartheid. Soweto had clearly shown that Verwoerd/Vorster-style apartheid was not working and that its maintenance not only threatened political stability but also white welfare. Botha thus tried to win the political collaboration of a small black elite and thereby defuse the massive opposition against apartheid in the country. The convoluted and complex policies involved can only be outlined briefly here. Basically, Botha tried to divide the black population into different ethnic, linguistic tribal groups, all antagonistic towards each other. Trying to play the one off against the others, he attempted to foster this antagonism and construct a domestic network of allies at the same time. Intense efforts were made to consolidate the rather fragmented territories of ten Bantustans and its leaders were pressured frantically to accept their “independence”.

Despite these reforms, still more than 30 million South Africans were disenfranchised and had no right for any form of political participation. Yet, NP reformists seemed to genuinely believe that their concept of “power sharing” would lead to an increased acceptance of apartheid, defuse mass opposition and would make the incorporation of a “black middleclass” as junior partner in the TNS possible. These hopes, however, did not become reality, they had in fact a contrary result. It only provoked outrage among NP hardliners, who saw themselves betrayed in their sacred privileges and Botha’s reforms faced increasing opposition within the party. Tinkering with the almost sacred principle of white power monopoly was seen by many Afrikaner nationalists as an absolute no-go. Within this context, the hardliners regarded Botha’s slogan of “adapt-or-die” more as “adapt-and-die”. And in a certain sense these hardliners were right. The concept of “power sharing” had unlocked the door to slowly enable the political participation of the black South African population, a factor which was decisive for the events that took place during the second half of the 1980s.

150 These pass laws were several regulations which defined who was allowed to leave the Bantustans to either work or live (temporarily) in “white areas”.
151 O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, pp. 273-275.
152 Ibid., 276-277.
2.3. Pretoria’s Praetorians – Applying TNS

Having laid out the strategic and administrative foundation within the first year of his administration, Pretoria’s Botha-centered elite from now on used the total national strategy as a framework of reference for almost every decision made in the following decade. In respect of the developments during Botha’s reign, three distinct phases characterized the application of TNS. The first phase was marked by Botha’s ambitious proposition to establish CONSAS. Fundamental changes in the region’s political environment, of which the victory of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe was certainly the most significant one, soon made CONSAS a task impossible to accomplish. During the second phase, Pretoria focused on a “policy of destabilization” (POD), doing everything to undermine the new majority ruled neighbors and increase their dependency on South Africa. The third phase began in the wake of several treaties signed between South Africa and its neighbors in the mid-1980s. While these treaties aimed at escalating and stabilizing the region, they were marked by only little success and the intended peace did not last long.

2.3.1. PHASE 1: CONSTELLATION OF STATES

Correlating with TNS’s long-term goal, the first step in implementing said strategy was to promote South Africa’s decades-old vision of a “Constellation of Southern African States”. The year 1959 can be regarded insofar as the birth of the constellation idea, as it was in this year that Verwoerd announced not only the withdrawal of South Africa from the British Commonwealth but also, with the passing of the “Bantu Self-Governing Act”, created the legal basis for establishing the Bantustans and, in combination with that, started to promote the idea of a regional “Commonwealth of Southern African States”. After the Vorster-administration took over, the commonwealth-idea became part of the bigger, yet unsuccessful “outward-looking policy”. When Botha inherited the concept, it had failed twice already, yet his administration gave fundamental substance to the idea and elevated it to the major foreign policy initiative during its first years. In his “twelve-point plan”, Botha addressed CONSAS as the “striving for a peaceful constellation of southern African states with respect for each other’s cultures, traditions and ideals.” Yet, upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that the motives behind CONSAS were more than just the strive for a peaceful constellation. In fact, as already outlined before, these motives did not differ fundamentally from those of Verwoerd’s commonwealth or Vorster’s “outward-looking policy”. They both aimed for an incorporation of South Africa’s neighboring states into a defense perimeter to prevent any sort of attack on South Africa and, second, to achieve international recognition of the South African homelands. What distinguished CONSAS from any previous approach, were the means by which it should have been achieved. While especially Vorster tried to influence key decision makers in foreign countries through secret diplomacy and bribery, Botha now tried to influence


154 Geldenhuys, The Diplomacy of Isolation, p. 41.

155 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 259.
the objective conditions within which decisions were made. In other words, contrary to Vorster, Botha did not make diplomatic concessions by the recipient states a prerequisite for receiving development aid. Instead, he viewed any form of aid as an investment into the future, which, so he hoped, would entrap South Africa’s neighbors economically, giving Pretoria leverage to influence their future political behavior.\footnote{156}

In late 1979 Botha called on South Africa’s leading capitalists for support from the “private sector” for a proposed Development Bank for Southern African (DBSA) to finance infrastructural projects.\footnote{157} Most of the business magnates responded positively to Botha’s call, Harry Oppenheimer, head of the giant Anglo-American Corporation (AAC)\footnote{158} described the initiative as possessing “charm and imagination”.\footnote{159} Among the proposed projects funded by the DBSA were large scale investments to improve the supply of water and electricity, the joint construction of new transportation routes and an increased cooperation in food production. For the recipient states, however, all these projects had a significant catch. Despite Pretoria’s claim to advance the development of its neighboring countries, the investments undertaken ran, with the full awareness of South Africa, counter to this claim. Over a long historic process, a division of labor had been created in the region in which the southern African states functioned as suppliers of raw materials and migrant workers for South Africa, whilst buying finished products from South Africa. This led to a significant trade deficit in the southern African states and to an accumulation of wealth in South Africa. In other words, the entire economy of the southern African region was characterized by an indirect transfer of resources from black majority states to South Africa, thus further boosting the latter’s economic hegemony. The sorts of investments undertaken by South Africa, further fueled this process, as it limited and arrested “the possibilities of development within neighboring countries by depriving these countries of the resources, labor power and markets necessary to build up their own productive capacities” and thereby increased their dependency on South Africa.\footnote{160}

In its original design the constellation was rather ambitious and envisaged between seven and ten members, comprising some 40 million people. These members would have been South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and the “independent” homelands Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. The reason for this ambitiousness can be found in a newly emerged optimism in Pretoria which was based on two events. First, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)\footnote{161}
had won with an overwhelming victory in a territory-wide election in December 1978.\textsuperscript{162} Second, similar events occurred in Rhodesia, where Bishop Abel Muzorewa’s “United African National Council” (UANC) won the 1979 national election, from which Mugabe’s ZANU\textsuperscript{163} and Nkomo’s ZAPU\textsuperscript{164} were excluded. Encouraged by these events, Botha and his government were led to the, as it turned out later, wrong assumption that they had found legitimate majority-based, Pretoria-friendly alternatives to the militant “Marxist” movements and can therefore aspire increased cooperation.\textsuperscript{165}

Botha and his strategists had divided the potential member states into different groups, based on the assumption on how difficult it was going to be to lure them into the CONSAS. According to them, Malawi and Swaziland were the easiest to be drawn into the constellation, since they already had strong economic ties with Pretoria. The position of Zimbabwe and Namibia, which formed the second group, was seen as depending on the group that took over power after the countries’ independence. The countries regarded as being the most difficult to incorporate were Angola, Mozambique and Tanzania.\textsuperscript{166} Zimbabwe was seen to have been the key to the whole project. If Salisbury could be brought to an internationally recognized independence under Muzorewa, it was calculated to be easy to bring the country into the constellation. With Zimbabwe secured, Malawi and Swaziland would be attracted easily, which in turn would compel the other members of the SACU to join. Then, pressure could be exercised on Zaire to affiliate which then would persuade Zambia. Only Angola and Mozambique were viewed as being too difficult to be incorporated into the constellation under the then present governments.\textsuperscript{167}

That CONSAS was going to be anything but successful became evident almost simultaneously with its official introduction. Geldenhuys wrote already in 1981 that “CONSAS is a far cry from what the South African Government initially envisaged.”\textsuperscript{168} Reasons for the failure of CONSAS can be found both in the conception of the constellation itself and in the region’s political environment. The biggest fault in the conception was Pretoria’s delusion that the political and ideological differences between the RSA and the international recognized black states could be negligible and thus a form of economic cooperation was possible. This delusion derives partly from Vorster’s “outward looking policy” and from the outcome of the “elections” in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Yet, the targeted countries regarded CONSAS from the beginning on as what it actually was, the economic-technical extension of Pretoria’s apartheid-

\textsuperscript{162} In the 1978 election the DTA won by a landslide, claiming 41 of the 50 seats. Despite SWAPO’s call for a boycott of the election (who was not allowed to participate), voters’ turnout was at 80%. Yet the election was held without UN supervision and the massive presence of the SADF, especially in the northern part of Namibia, and widespread intimidation were the reasons for both the high turnout and the victory of the DTA. Therefore, the elections were declared as null and void by the UN.

\textsuperscript{163} ZANU = Zimbabwe African National Union.

\textsuperscript{164} ZAPU = Zimbabwe African People’s Union. ZANU and ZAPU merged in 1988 into ZANU-PF, which is, under Robert Mugabe, still the ruling party of Zimbabwe today.

\textsuperscript{165} Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 259.

\textsuperscript{166} Centre for African Studies, Eduardo Mondlane University, The Constellation of Southern African States: A New Strategic Offensive by South Africa, here p. 103.


system into their own countries. There was no way they would have accepted a cooperation with South Africa based on threats and pressures.169

With regard to the political environment of the region, the constellation was thwarted because of two reasons. First, there was the victory of Robert Mugabe’s ZANU in the Zimbabwean independence elections. This election followed the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979, signed by representatives of the United Kingdom, the Patriotic Front (ZANU and ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe/Rhodesian government (represented by Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith). After neither Washington nor London accepted the internal settlement in Rhodesia of 1978 (which excluded the Patriotic Front), the British secretary of state convinced the new prime minister Margret Thatcher of the vital necessity to include the Patriotic Front in the negotiations over Zimbabwe’s independence. Fifteen years after Smith’s UDI in 1965, the Lancaster House Agreement led to an internationally recognized independent Zimbabwe, a new constitution and called for general elections held under British supervision. Mugabe’s victory at the polls came as a shock to Pretoria.170 On April 18, 1980 the new state of Zimbabwe gained its full, internationally recognized independence with Robert Mugabe as its first prime minister. By inviting SWAPO, the ANC and PAC to the independence ceremony instead of representatives of South Africa, the new leader clearly indicated his attitude towards the apartheid regime which was now the only remaining stronghold of white minority rule in southern Africa.

It was made plain clear to Pretoria that the new Zimbabwe had no intention of any form of cooperation with South Africa not only by the latter’s exclusion from the independence ceremony, but also by Mugabe’s enthusiasm for the proposed “Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference” (SADCC). SADCC was a counter-initiative to Pretoria’s CONSAS, ratified by Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe in April 1980 and later joined by Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia and Malawi. SADCC’s main goal was to reduce the southern African states’ dependency on South Africa’s economy. This should be achieved by regional co-operation, the equitable sharing of benefits, the mobilization of resources and by securing international support for the SADCC.171 One of the most ambitious co-operations by the SADCC-countries was the planned investment of at least US$ two billion into new rail and road networks which would bypass South Africa entirely and thus further decrease their dependency.172 Mugabe’s victory and the almost simultaneous introduction of the SADCC turned out to be one of the heaviest defeats for Pretoria in its long-term strategy. Botha was left with no other alternative but to reduce the initial grand design of CONSAS to South Africa and its “independent”

homelands. In its scaled down version, CONSAS had been formalized between South Africa, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda und Ciskei, basically covering the same territory as the Union of South Africa had in 1910.\textsuperscript{173}

While the SADCC looked somewhat promising at first, its members were soon caught up by reality. A severe draught in 1980 hampered food production, Mozambique and Angola got continuously driven deeper into a civil war and organizational and structural differences made the decision making process within the SADCC a complicated matter.\textsuperscript{174} SADCC could hardly reduce its dependency on South Africa, thus, viewed from an economic standpoint, it did not succeed in its early years. However, it has to be accounted for that the SADCC was, from the beginning on, a long-term project – to expect significant success in the short-term is therefore not an entirely valid point. No form of politics is capable of altering structures, shaped by a century-long process of South African-centered development, within only a few years.\textsuperscript{175}

To express the economic situation of the SADCC in numbers, a closer look on its trade balance gives a good impression. In 1982, the SADCC’s internal trade accounted for only 5 percent of its entire trade balance, while 17 percent of its total exports went to the RSA and 22 percent of its imports originated in the RSA. Yet, to assume that this economic dependency had been entirely one-sided would be wrong. Despite numerous attempts to be autarkic, Pretoria’s political economy had two significant shortages – a lack of international liquidity and a limited domestic market. Increasing its export rates was therefore a necessary, and at the same time sufficient condition to counter these shortages and avoid a reduction of import rates of vital goods such as technology, oil and weaponry. Pretoria’s economy was therefore, albeit to a far lesser extent, dependent on its neighboring states.\textsuperscript{176}

In political terms, however, SADCC succeeded insofar, as that Pretoria once again failed to tighten its political grasp on the Frontline States (FLS).\textsuperscript{177} Botha once again had to change his tactics in order to comply with his TNS and shifted from a superficial diplomacy of cooperation to a policy of coercion, based on the threat of military force and economic leverage. The view that “the gun and the maize train will speak louder than a hundred speeches”\textsuperscript{178} became the new dictum within the SSC and, henceforth, dominated any decision made by it.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{173} Davenport/Saunders, South Africa pp. 547-548; Geldenhuys, The Diplomacy of Isolation, pp. 41-42.
\footnote{175} Weimer, Das Ende der Weißen Vorherrschaft im Südlichen Afrika, pp. 289-290.
\footnote{176} Braun, Pretorias Totale Strategie im südlichen Afrika, here p. 10.
\footnote{177} An organization established to achieve majority rule in South Africa. It members were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
\footnote{178} Quoted in: Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 268.
\end{footnotes}
2.3.2. **PHASE 2: POLICY OF DESTABILIZATION**

The new “gun and maize train”-dictum marked a clear break between phase one and phase two; a break between attempted economic “cooperation” and a policy of military-economic destabilization. In other words, whilst there were some carrots during the first phase, henceforth, the second phase only had sticks.

While the failure of CONSAS, the creation of the SADCC and Zimbabwe’s independence were obvious events which led to this change in Pretoria’s tactic, the drastic escalation of the situation in the southern African region in the early 1980s was further propelled by developments on the international level. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was regarded by many of Pretoria’s strategists as the ultimate proof that the total onslaught was about to happen. Additionally, two election victories of conservative parties in 1979 decisively altered South Africa’s international stand. The first one brought Margaret Thatcher into Downing Street, the other one Ronald Reagan into the White House. While both were replacing “détente-focusing” administrations, especially the latter’s hardline approach towards the Soviet Union marked a significant break with his predecessors détente-policy and effectively gave South Africa, with the renewed tensions in the East-West Conflict, an international protective shield it so desperately tried to get.\(^{179}\)

The change in tactics at the beginning of the second phase also altered South Africa’s basic underlying motives and brought them into accordance with TNS’s mid-term goal – maintaining the region’s (economic) dependence on the RSA (i.e. eliminating SADCC) and neutralizing any dissident movements (ANC and SWAPO in particular). This new “policy of destabilization” was not only characterized by the drastic increase of violence but also by a significant increase in the actions’ sophistication and diversification in the course of the 1980s. Throughout the second phase, which lasted until the mid-1980s, the region saw increased military actions against the FLS, a substantial intensification of activities by RSA-sponsored dissident groups and the assassinations of leading ANC personal in foreign countries. Given this broad scope of possible tactics at Pretoria’s hands, Botha’s strategists had to figure out which tactics should be applied for which country. According to Davis and O’Meara, these decisions were made on the basis of the seriousness of the threat the respective states posed to South Africa.\(^{180}\) In other words, the bigger threat a country was, the more drastic the actions had to be to counter the threat. Thus, drastic escalation of violence in the mid-1980s became most visible in those countries considered to compose the biggest threat to Pretoria.

Yet, in the view of Botha’s strategists, there were still some states left with whom a limited form of collaboration was possible, thus a non-violent approach was regarded as being the most promising. Given the already mentioned overarching means South Africa had according to the TNS at its disposal, Botha and his generals had several options at hand to pursue their objectives in these countries. Many of these actions, as it became apparent in the course of the 1980s, were inspired by how the Israeli

---


operated in the Arab region.\(^{181}\) For example, the almost permanent occupation of southern Angola by the SADF resembled the occupation of the IDF in south-Lebanon and South Africa’s counter insurgency tactics against SWAPO and the ANC were in fact a carbon copy of Israel’s fight against the PLO.\(^{182}\) Yet, not all of the available options were equally responsible for the catastrophe that overtook the entire region throughout the 1980s. If these options were quantified on the basis of their “degree of violence”, economic warfare would certainly mark the bottom end of the scale while full scale military intervention marked the opposing end.

**Swaziland**

Swaziland was regarded as one of the countries, where a form of (forced) limited cooperation was possible. Exploiting Swaziland’s huge economic dependency, South Africa bribed and pressured the small kingdom into a secret non-aggression pact, signed in 1982. In the terms of this treaty, which were made public only two years later, both parties agreed to undertake “individual and joint” efforts to combat and eliminate “terrorism and subversion” from their territories. Basically, this treaty was an invitation for South African forces to operate on Swazi soil, which, in consequence, led to the expulsion of the ANC from the kingdom. Swaziland also diverted a significant amount of its export from its existing route to the port of Maputo (which became unusable due to South African sabotage) to the South African port of Richards Bay, hence acting in contradiction to SADCC principles. These decisions were not without domestic ramifications for Swaziland itself, it split the ruling elite into violent squabbling factions, severely undermining the ideological framework of Swazi “traditionalism”.\(^{183}\)

**Lesotho**

Since Lesotho was by far the country that was depending the most on South Africa’s economy, it is more than obvious that Botha’s strategists decided to exercise their suffocating economic leverage on the tiny enclave. The almost absolute dependency of the Basotho economy can be seen by the fact that South Africa not only had total control over the Lesotho borders, it also provided nearly 100 percent of the kingdom’s electricity and the entire transport facilities for Lesotho’s imports and exports. 45 percent of Lesotho’s GNP is derived from its nationals’ remittances earned in South Africa, and about two-thirds

\(^{181}\) During the 1980s, Israel and South Africa developed a particularly close relationship. South African leaders identified with Israel’s position as a “Wester state surrounded by backward and hostile neighbors”. Especially South Africa’s generals were impressed by the military performances of the Israeli army and increasing sought military advice and training. As Pretoria faced increasing pressure from the West and trading with European states and the US became difficult, Jerusalem became a middleman – RSA goods were shipped to Israel where minimal adaptions were made to allow companies to attach the label “made in Israel”; the goods were then easily sold in Europe and the US. At its peak, the relationship included mutual exchange of information regarding intelligence, the sales of weapon systems and, above all, the development of Pretoria’s own nuclear weapons program ( Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 294-296).


of government revenues come from the RSA-administered SACU. In May 1983, South Africa imposed a restriction on the movements of goods and people across the border. These restrictions were temporarily lifted in June only to be reintroduced in July. Yet, restrictions on goods were exempted this time, following complaints about the loss of business from South African capitalists in Bloemfontein. Pretoria also threatened to repatriate all of the 140,000 Basotho migrant workers. Given the aforementioned contribution of these workers to the Basotho GNP and the fact, that Lesotho only had about 1.3 million inhabitants at that time, this would have had devastating consequences for the country.

Zimbabwe

Economic coercions were also executed against Salisbury/Harare. The closeness of Zimbabwe’s economic ties with South Africa resulted from the relationship the two countries had in the UDI-era during which South African companies undertook vast investments in then Rhodesia. The enormous dependence of Zimbabwe becomes apparent by the fact that even in December 1980, thus after Zimbabwe’s independence, its delegate at the UN General Assembly abstained from voting on stricter economic sanctions against South Africa, arguing that his country was unable to cope with these sanctions. During the early 1980s, South African owned companies accounted for around 25 percent of Zimbabwe’s GDP and around 20 percent of Zimbabwe’s entire imports originated in its southern neighbor. Of equal significance was Zimbabwe’s dependency on South Africa’s transportation network, also a relic of both British colonialism and UDI-relations. Until the mid-1980s, Mugabe did little to nothing to reduce this dependency, perhaps due to a lack of alternatives or the fear of South African repercussions. Botha thus had a similar economic leverage at his disposal as he had in Lesotho. To further increase the economic pressure, Pretoria called back more than 20 locomotives Zimbabwe had borrowed and dozens of cargo wagons from Mozambique which both countries desperately needed in order to distribute their harvest. During the second half of the 1980s, however, Zimbabwe changed its passive stance when Mugabe announced, fully aware of its implications, that his country would fully implement the Commonwealth-sanctions (i.a. termination of all air traffic with South Africa and governmental support for investments in and trade with South Africa, a prohibition of any form of contact between the Zimbabwean government and South African owned companies), omitted however, to specify a date when these sanctions would become effective.

---

186 The Zimbabwean capital Salisbury was renamed into Harare in 1982.
187 Ibid., here p. 198.
188 Zimbabwe rejoined the Commonwealth of Nations in 1980.
Angola

The resistance of Zimbabwe indicates that despite South Africa’s overwhelming economic preponderance, its economic leverage was not always large enough to bring every FLS in line with TNS’s aspired goals. Botha, therefore increased the pressure on South Africa’s neighboring states by making a significant step upwards on the “scale of violence”. This was particularly true for Angola, since, of all the FLS, Angola was depending the least on Pretoria’s economy while at the same time it was regarded as the biggest threat for the RSA by South African strategists. Angola not only posed a “Marxist” threat (since the country was predominately ruled by the MPLA) but also rendered a significant amount of aid to the ANC and SWAPO.190 Although the SADF suffered a traumatic loss during its first intervention in the Angolan Civil war in 1975/76, Botha decided to once again put the Angolan issue into the hands of his generals.

After South Africa’s forced retreat from Angola in early 1976 (see Chapter 4.2.2), it did not completely disengage from the civil war. The remaining 1970s were marked by continued skirmishes along the Angolan-SWA border, mostly caused by SADF-units who crossed the border to raid SWAPO camps.191 These cross border raids were mainly executed by the infamous 32nd battalion192, then commanded by Colonel Jan Breytenbach who intended to “out-guerilla the guerillas”.193 The first full-scale military attack under the pretext of POD and TNS occurred on June 1980, when, according to Angolan officials, seven towns in the southern part of the country were occupied by the SADF. Botha continuously denied the charges of an invasion of Angola, claiming that there were only limited forces on a search-and-destroy mission against SWAPO in Angola. SWAPO, trying to secure its vital bases began to transfer northwards deeper into Angola. South Africa followed and penetrated Angolan territory up to 200 miles north of the border. Such far advances also allowed a resupply of UNITA forces located deep inside of Angola. Being backed by the United States in the UN (the US applied its veto in a Security Council resolution condemning the RSA), Pretoria was able to continue its military engagement without major international consequences. During the first months of the invasion, official reports from the RSA accounted for 1,000 Angolan deaths and over 3,000 tons of military equipment captured. Officials estimated that SWAPO’s ability to conduct any operation against SWA or the RSA got eliminated for at

---

191 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 74-75.
192 The 32nd battalion was the first military unit of the SADF which was not exclusively all-white. It comprised mostly of former black FNLA-fighters (those commanded by Daniel Chipenda who were sent south by FNLA-leader Holden Robert to challenge UNITA-leader Savimbi) and was more than an ordinary infantry battalion. It eventually grew into a fully motorized, heavily armed infantry battalion. Being mainly deployed in southern Angola, the unit was used as a counter-insurgency force to create a buffer between the MPLA and regular SADF-units, thus doing most of the fighting in the border war. The unit was disbanded on March 1993. (Leopold Scholtz, The Namibian Border War. An Appraisal of the South African Strategy, in: Scientia Militaria - South African Journal of Military Studies 34 (2011), No. 1, pp. 19–48, here p. 32).
193 Ibid., here p. 36.
least a year. What further increased the devastation of the SADF’s invasion was South Africa’s intention to establish a buffer zone along the SWA/Angolan border. In order to do so, SADF-forces killed all the livestock, poisoned wells, disrupted local communication and prevented the distribution of food in the entire border area, thereby further destabilizing the entire border region. In their view, this would alienate SWAPO and the local population, thereby depriving SWAPO from the vital support of the Angolan people. UNITA, on the other hand, could have been resupplied and a UNITA/SADF-controlled border would have eased tensions on Namibian independence. Contrary to South Africa’s previous cross-border operations, which were directed only at SWAPO, this invasion was now also targeting Angolan infrastructure and Angolan people.194 The engagement of the SADF, which soon became known in South Africa under the household term “Angolan Bush War” or “South African Border War”195, continued throughout 1982 and 1983 with the same intensity and ferocity.

In December 1983, the SADF once again launched an offensive, “Operation Askari”, deep into Angolan territory. This time, however, it met not only resistance from SWAPO, but also from official Cuban and Angolan forces. Nine days later, Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in the US State Department, met RSA Foreign Minister Pik Botha in Rome, where the latter agreed to a month-lasting ceasefire scheduled for January 1984. The negotiations for this ceasefire had already begun earlier on Luanda’s initiative as the country increasingly trembled under Pretoria’s continuous aggression. On February 16, 1984, Pretoria and Luanda signed the Lusaka Accords, an agreement that foresaw the withdrawal of all SADF-units from Angola by March 1984 in exchange for a Cuban commitment not to allow SWAPO and Cuban forces to operate in areas vacated by Pretoria [i.e. Namibia]. Following said withdrawal, officials from the US, RSA and Angola should establish a joint commission to oversee the disengagement in the region. Yet, the treaty had several crucial flaws, one being the fact that neither UNITA nor SWAPO were signatories. Moreover, by March 1984, South Africa had withdrawn only one half of its troops and Pretoria accused SWAPO and Luanda UNITA of breaking the agreement. Botha continued to make a Cuban departure from Angola a prerequisite for South African withdrawal from Angola and Namibia, terms which were continuously rejected by Luanda.196 Despite this stalemate, the United States, led by Chester Crocker, continued to work on the implementation throughout the next year.

All the efforts were, however, in vain. The agreement was ultimately dead by May 1985 when MPLA troops ambushed a three-man commando raid of South African forces in the Angolan exclave of Cacinda. South Africa was forced to admit that it had deployed “intelligence gathering units” into Angola despite its promise of a full withdrawal. The entire situation was particularly awkward for the Reagan administration, since the commando was just about to blow an oil pipeline of the American owned Gulf-Oil company. Crocker’s policy of “Constructive Engagement” (see chapter 2.4.1) suddenly seemed in-

194 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 149-153.
ffective and inappropriate and years of intense negotiations were nullified immediately. The entire negotiating process in southern Africa and the United States broke down and with it any hopes of an imminent end of the Angolan Civil War.\footnote{James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 153-161.}

Nonetheless, by mid-1985, SADF operations in Angola were, without a doubt, marked by a huge success in breaking SWAPO insurgency. As historian Susan Brown put it perceptively:

"Swapo’s ability to strike at will into the Ovambo area of Namibia now began to diminish rapidly. Plan combatants, previously based within a few kilometers of the Namibian border, were forced hundreds of kilometers back into the Angolan hinterland. The Plan headquarters and regional command points came under constant air and ground attack. Forward command posts from which guerrillas operated into Namibia became increasingly insecure if close to the border, with their lines of supply disrupted. When SWAPO could no longer establish bases close to the border, this imposed on combatants the need to carry land-mines, mortars, automatic rifles, medical equipment and so on hundreds of kilometers on their backs before they even entered Namibia, let alone crossed into white farming areas. This long trek south was impossible without water, so Plan operations became restricted to the rainy season between November and March... This cut into the time combatants were able to stay in Namibia. This crucially affected their ability to conduct political work among the local population. After 1982, the politicizing role of guerrillas who move continually and easily among the people of Ovamboland, often in civilian clothes, able to communicate and convince, began to wane. The role of combatants was increasingly forced into an exclusively military mould."\footnote{Brown, Diplomacy by Other Means, quoted in: Scholtz, The Namibian Border War, here p. 37-38.}

Lesotho

While it did not take long for South Africa to decide whether or not to launch a full-scale military attack against Angola, its hesitations were bigger whether or not to apply the same amount of force on other countries as well. One of these countries in question was Lesotho. Despite the aforementioned economic coercion, Lesotho continuously refused to surrender fully to Pretoria’s will (e.g. Lesotho still refused to extradite ANC members to South Africa). Pretoria thus shifted its tactics to a military version of destabilization and coercion. By applying armed actions, South Africa additionally hoped to replace the Jonathan-government with a pro-South African government and to force Lesotho into negotiations with the administrator of the neighboring Transkei Bantustan. Pretoria singled out the tourist industry and governmental officials for these attacks. The most spectacular of these was the offset of a bomb in the Hilton Hotel in Maseru (Lesotho’s capital) which killed several people and the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Jonathan with a car bomb in August 1983.\footnote{Davies/O’Meara, Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978, here pp. 200-201.} In December 1982, a SADF Commando made a brutal night time attack on ANC members and Lesotho nationals living in the capital. According to a statement by the Chief of the SADF, the attack was to neutralize the “planning and
control headquarters for ANC terrorist activities against South Africa, Transkei and Ciskei. In the attack 42 people were killed, including women and children. In the following year, the SADF undertook additional clandestine operations in Lesotho, of which nearly all were denied by Pretoria. Both the king of Lesotho and Jonathan heavily criticized Pretoria’s racial policy and stated that before Lesotho was willing to discuss any further security arrangements with South Africa, they first must talk to Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. Pretoria’s simple reaction to these demands was to tighten border controls around the kingdom to protect the republic from what was described as terrorist attacks by the ANC. South Africa’s military and intelligence services had played a key role in coordinating most of these attacks.

Besides these (clandestine) SADF operations, South Africa also sponsored attacks conducted by the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA). Formed in the mid-1970s as the military wing of the oppositional Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), the LLA aimed at overthrowing Jonathan’s Basutoland National Party (BNP) government. The BCP did not recognize Jonathan and his BNP government, because he refused to cede power after a clear loss in the 1970 national election, after which he staged a coup d’état and arrested most of the BCP leadership.

Despite the LLA’s close affiliation with the PAC, the RSA regarded the guerilla movement as a more than welcome surrogate for its carrots-and-sticks approach towards Lesotho. Collaborating with the RSA not only provided the LLA with the equipment necessary to conduct a guerilla warfare, it also eliminated the LLA’s biggest logistical obstacle which was how to get men and material into Lesotho. Earlier attempts to infiltrate Lesotho were all crushed by the South African Police (SAP), additionally it arrested almost the entire leadership of the LLA. With the help of South Africa. However the LLA became a highly successful guerilla force and inflicted severe damage on Lesotho and assassinated several (including high ranking) BNP officials during the first half of the 1980s. In August 1981, RSA Foreign Minister Pik Botha met his Lesotho counterpart Mooki Molapo in Cape Town, a meeting requested by the BNP. According to Molapo, who confronted Botha with pictures of LLA camps on RSA territory, Botha simply replied that there would be no LLA if Lesotho would remove all refugees from the kingdom. Lesotho still refused to comply, leading to an increase in violence both from the RSA/LLA and official Basotho forces. The attacks became bolder and bolder, in May 1982, the Lesotho minister of work was assassinated and bombs were planted at the US cultural center in Maseru and the West German ambassador’s car. Despite obvious evidence that South Africa had trained, equipped and deployed LLA fighters, Ntsu Mokhele, leader of the BCP and later Prime Minister of Lesotho, continuously denied any form of collaboration with the RSA.

200 Quoted in: Baynham/Mills, Lesotho: Between Dependence and Destabilisation, here p. 54.
201 Ibid., here p. 54.
203 Ibid., here pp. 270-272.
Mozambique

Supporting guerilla movements like the LLA, also became the predominant course of action against South Africa’s north-eastern neighbor Mozambique. In the wake of the 1975 Lusaka Accord, FRELIMO took over control of Mozambique almost without any conditions. The movement had already developed a revolutionary ideology, which reflected those of Cuba and Vietnam, during the final phase of the independence war, yet it was only in 1977 that FRELIMO declared itself to be Marxist-Leninist party. However, Pretoria had already, contrary to the MPLA in Angola, which the RSA did not recognize as the only legitimate liberation movement, fully recognized FRELIMO as the legitimate power in Mozambique. Yet, FRELIMO’s public commitment to the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc, perceptible by attempts to implement socialist policies, support given to Rhodesian insurgents, strong anti-apartheid rhetoric and, in particular, the use of Mozambique as a corridor for ANC infiltration in South Africa, caused severe worries in Pretoria. To the proponents of the total onslaught theory, Mozambique thus represented a case par excellence for communist inspired conspiracy. Yet it was only after Botha replaced Vorster, and thus détente and coexistence with TNS, that Pretoria seriously confronted the Mozambican “threat”.

The reasons for South Africa to opt for a counterinsurgency tactic in Mozambique were threefold. The first and most obvious was given by TNS, according to which the use of military force was necessary to counter a total onslaught. Yet, because of the increasing involvement of the SADF in the Angolan theater and the still ongoing recuperation-process from the traumatic loss of the 1975/76 intervention, the SADF’s generals hesitated to start another full-out military engagement and thus favored the, in their view, more convenient support of a surrogate force. The third reason lay in South Africa’s view of world politics. According to Pretoria, the Western world’s struggle in confronting communism, and Pretoria saw its own security problems as an offshoot of this struggle, had resulted from a refusal to meet threats at their own level. One of the major tenets of Leninism is that the end justifies the means. Thus in South Africa’s view it was perfectly legitimate to counter any insurgency attempts with equally devastating counterinsurgency. In other words, fire should be fought with fire.

Similar to the situation in Lesotho, South Africa came somewhat by accident to a surrogate force for its fight against Mozambique. During the already mentioned mass exodus caused by the FRELIMO takeover in 1975, people of all breed and creed left the country due to their opposition towards FRELIMO. Many of them found refuge in then racist Smith-led Rhodesia. There, the Rhodesian Special Branch formed, with the help of former members of the Portuguese secret police (PIDE) a movement which became known as Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) or synonymously under its Portuguese name Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO). RENAMO was to that effect different from any other resistance or liberation movement in Africa, as that it was founded by “white spy masters” rather than indigenous groups. Ian Smith then tried to establish some connections between South

204 Newitt, A History of Mozambique, p. 542.
205 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, pp. 268-269.
Africa and RENAMO, yet Vorster, always having his détente in mind, was reluctant to do so. Only after P. W. Botha became Prime Minister, did Pretoria establish serious, yet clandestine, ties with RENAMO. The months prior to the Zimbabwean independence were the nadir of RENAMO. Its leader got killed in assaults and the succession struggle led to a bloody gun battle between the different factions. In the end the losing faction surrendered to Mozambican authorities, leaving RENAMO with only 500 members left.\footnote{Ibid., here pp. 492-494.} Then, with the independence of Zimbabwe, new leader Robert Mugabe deprived RENAMO from any support, at which point South Africa took over full control and responsibility over RENAMO. Henceforth Pretoria decided to use RENAMO for its own ends and in late 1980 a meeting between representatives of the RSA and RENAMO took place.\footnote{Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 271.} From this meeting emerged a new strategy which aimed at the complete destabilization of Mozambique. Yet, within the apartheid-regime was still disagreement over what end the application of POD in Mozambique should have. While hardliners opted for an overthrow of FRELIMO and a replacement by RENAMO, moderates, especially in the foreign ministry, opted for a weakening of SADCC by sabotaging Maputo’s economy. By the end of 1982, Pretoria decided to go for the latter option, because bringing RENAMO to power and eventually support its regime would have been too costly and risky.\footnote{Davies/O'Meara, Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978, here p. 204.} As Dean Geldenhuys had put it, South Africa’s objectives towards Mozambique were the following:

“First and foremost, South Africa would want FRELIMO to abandon its active support for the ANC, which means denying it sanctuary. A more ambitious objective would be to influence Mozambique to loosen, if not cut, its close ties - particularly in the military field - with communist powers. South Africa would also welcome Mozambique toning down its revolutionary fervor and moderating its condemnation of the republic. What Pretoria essentially desires is a friendly cooperative neighbor instead of a Marxist state threatening its security. To achieve these objectives, support for the MNR and severe manipulation of economic ties are the two obvious means to apply. To talk of the MNR overthrowing FRELIMO, or even forcing it into a compromise, seems highly premature and indeed highly unrealistic. South Africa would therefore have to confine its objectives to changing political behavior, not political structures.”\footnote{Dean Geldenhuys, quoted in ibid., p. 203.}

South Africa thus shifted the tactics of RENAMO from gaining a popular base among the Mozambican people, which RENAMO attempted to do under Rhodesian supervision, to sheer destabilization and destruction.\footnote{Metz, The Mozambique National Resistance and South African Foreign Policy, pp. 494-496.} For that reason, RENAMO got drastically expanded to be capable of fulfilling the task, becoming a much bigger and effective operational force than Rhodesia had ever envisaged.

Mozambique’s economic structure and its significance for the entire SADCC made it an easy task for Pretoria to single out the most important targets for its POD. Given Mozambique’s strategic location at the sea, its harbors and transportation routes were vital for the SADCC’s plan to reduce its dependency

\footnote{Ibid., here pp. 492-494.}
on Pretoria. Thus, by targeting Mozambique’s economic and transport infrastructure, South Africa was able to kill two birds with one stone. RENAMO’s exclusive focus on destabilization manifested itself in the almost total reliance on random violence, sabotage and intimidation. Among the favorite targets were food distribution networks, harvest activities, rail lines and roads, telephone and telegraph facilities, schools, sawmills, cotton and tea processing plants, and state-farms. Geographically speaking, RENAMO activities in the early 1980s were concentrated in the Beira region, located in the mid-east of Mozambique. The heavy focus on this region is not only because the port of Beira (one of the biggest on most important harbors in Mozambique) is located in the province’s capital but also because of the transportation corridor between Mutare in Zimbabwe and the port of Beira which ran right through the country. Already in November 1980 was the Beira-Mutare oil pipeline destroyed, forcing Zimbabwe to rely entirely on South African oil. Additionally, numerous acts of sabotage made the entire port of Beira temporarily unusable in the end of 1981. While 54 percent of Zimbabwean traffic was passing through Mozambique at the beginning of 1983, this number had declined to under 30 percent by the end of the same year.212 Swaziland likewise had no alternative but to use South African transportation routes after its outlet to the port of Maputo was disrupted. Malawi was particularly hit hard because it had no alternative rail routes and the growing escalation in Mozambique made it necessary to use the long slow road transports to South Africa. Zambia had two alternative rail roads of which one had limited capacities and the other was closed by UNITA. In consequence, 30 percent of Zambia’s exports on 70 percent of its imports were dependent on South Africa.213 RENAMO’s acts of sabotage thus were not only highly successful in destabilizing Mozambique’s economy but also to nullify SADCC’s most important goal – the reduction of economic dependency on South Africa. As of 1982, RENAMO also began to attack small towns and its area of operation eventually included ten of Mozambique’s twelve provinces. Targeted assassinations of foreign technicians working on development project led to their withdrawal, while the number of RENAMO soldiers had risen to a force between 5,000 and 16,000 members by the end of 1983.214

However, despite RENAMO’s successful guerilla warfare, Pretoria did not exclusively rely on its surrogate. After an ANC-bomb killed seventeen people in Pretoria in May 1983, the South African Air Force launched an air strike against Maputo only a few days later, in which South Africa claimed to have killed 41 ANC members and seventeen FRELIMO soldiers. Previously, SADF-units had raided ANC houses in a suburb of Maputo. These attacks which were a clear violation of a state’s sovereignty were met by strong international condemnation, yet Pretoria regarded them as justified since the ANC was being allowed to use foreign territory to launch insurgencies against the RSA.215

While South Africa’s entire POD in Mozambique might look entirely successful at a first glance, it had one significant drawback. One consequence of the destabilization was that the official FRELIMO
government lost complete control over several of Mozambique’s provinces. Governmental laws thus could not be enforced anymore and social services, which were limited anyway, broke down completely. Thus, even if FRELIMO had wanted to limit ANC activities in these provinces, the given situation would have rendered it almost impossible to do so.

By the end of 1983 Mozambican president Samora Machel had realized that the only way out of the looming catastrophe was through negotiations. With significant help from foreign powers, most notably form Washington in the person of Chester Crocker, Pretoria and Maputo blundered together a treaty which gave cause to hope that the southern African situation might take a turn for the better.

2.3.3. PHASE 3: PAX PRETORIANA?

The timing of Maputo’s request for a return to the bargaining table was not particularly unfortunate for the Botha administration. The increasing escalation of South Africa’s policy of destabilization was not met with unanimous approval within the Botha’s administration. According to several members, POD clearly moved away from the goals defined by TNS and the action taken in the name of POD were nothing but military quick-fix solutions. A continuation of this “aimlessness”, so it was the critics’ view, would not only inflict severe destabilization on the target countries but also have repercussions on the RSA. Additionally, by the end of 1983, the RSA had accomplished a number of objectives in the southern African region, most notably the secret “non-aggression pact” with Swaziland, Lesotho had been coerced into denying refuge to several ANC members and heavy economic and political damage had been inflicted on Angola and Mozambique. Yet, this application of military and economic power drained Pretoria’s treasury and the casualty numbers were rising steadily. Equally significant, the sheer scale of Pretoria’s POD became less and less tolerable for Western governments, even the hitherto so pro-Pretoria oriented Reagan administration was beginning to get embarrassed by its ally’s actions.\footnote{Davies/O’Meara, Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978, here pp. 204-205.} For the United States it was still the major foreign policy objective in southern Africa to end South Africa’s diplomatic isolation, yet by mid-1983, the Regan administration began to worry that the US-backed POD was creating a greater danger to US interests in the region than it was delivering results.

Thus, the United States began in late 1983 to push for an active rapprochement between South Africa and the FLS. All these factors led to the signing of the already mentioned Lusaka Accords between Angola and South Africa in February 1984 and the Nkomati Accord signed between Mozambique and South Africa in March 1984. The signing of the latter took place at a highly publicized ceremony at the border of Mozambique and South Africa and constitutes Botha’s biggest diplomatic accomplishment.\footnote{Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 294.} Both parties committed themselves to “prohibit the use of their respective territories by any state, government, foreign military forces, organizations or individuals which plan or prepare to commit acts of violence, terrorism or aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other

---

\footnote{Davies/O’Meara, Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978, here pp. 204-205.}

\footnote{Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 294.}
or may threaten the security of its inhabitants.”

In short, the accord demanded from South Africa to end its support for REMANO and from Mozambique that of the ANC. For Botha, the accord was insofar a fundamental achievement, as that he regarded the non-aggression-pact with Mozambique as the rebirth of his CONSAS-idea. In fact, at the signing ceremony he pointedly referred to his vision of a “veritable constellation of states in Southern Africa.”

It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that the Nkomati accord had a strong focus on the economy of the two states. It was the apartheid-regime’s clear intention to demonstrate the advantages of cooperation with South Africa over any form of socialism. This should be accomplished basically on two levels. The first one was on the state-level, where a new agreement regarding the Cabora Bassa hydro-electric scheme with more favorable conditions for Mozambique was signed. On the private sector-level, Pretoria once again pursued its capitalists to involve themselves in Mozambique. A large numbers of leading South African capitalists was invited to the signing ceremony where they showed real interest to undertake significant investments in Mozambique. In the words of the Chief Executive of the South African Associated Chambers of Commerce (Assocom):

“Most businessmen today – in the aftermath of the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique, new arrangements with Swaziland, conciliatory remarks by President Kaunda of Zambia, and peace moves in South West Africa [Namibia] – stand closer to the Prime Minister’s goal [of a constellation of states] than ever before. Businessmen have an enormous stake in the success or otherwise of recent developments in Southern Africa, especially in Mozambique.”

The fact that the Botha administration viewed its relationship towards Maputo as the key factor to successfully accomplish its aspire goals in the region and the significant breakthroughs made in Nkomati and later in Lusaka, might lead to the conclusion that the RSA was really willing to uphold its end of the bargain and was turning away from its heavy use of military force. The dominant view of contemporary observers was that both treaties had ratified South African military dominance and, in their view, a calm and peaceful period lay ahead in the southern African region, since South Africa’s regional hegemonic claim had been accepted by the FLS. Thus, no one dared to challenge the apartheid-regime and a “Pax Pretoriana” was about to begin. Yet an increase in the RSA’s military spending of 20 percent in 1984/85 and South Africa’s continuous efforts to keep the FLS in their weak economic positions in order to still be capable of exercising its preponderance over them, casted doubt on this conclusion. Thus, the euphoria over Nkomati and Lusaka was not of long duration. Already by the end of the year it was fading since the return to military violence became more and more apparent. But Botha was able, by signing two non-aggression pacts (Mozambique and Swaziland) and a ceasefire with Angola, to significantly, yet temporarily, reduce his country’s isolation and, for a very brief moment, limit the pariah status of his country and his own reputation as the region’s enfant terrible.

---

220 Quoted in ibid., here p. 208.
The significant diplomatic developments of 1984/85 were accompanied by equally decisive changes made on the domestic level. The transformation process, initiated by Botha when he became prime minister in 1978, which altered the old, Verwoerden-style apartheid into the new technocratic “neo-apartheid”-system of the 1980s (a step which was a necessity for implementing TNS), has already been explained before. So far, one of the most significant of these structural reforms has only been mentioned briefly, namely the proclamation of a new constitution in 1984.

The reform process for a new South African constitution had already begun under the prime ministry of John Vorster. Yet, Vorster’s proposals all lacked agreement with Colored and Indian leaders and were thus referred to a commission, specifically set up to draft new constitutional proposals. In 1982, the commission, which was composed of white, Indian and Colored members, came up with a draft for South Africa’s new constitution. This new proposal was strongly based on the new notion of “neo-apartheid” and provided, first, for one parliament with three legislative bodies (instead of three separate parliaments as in the 1977 proposals): a House of Assembly for whites, a House of Representatives for Coloreds and a House of Delegates for Indians. Each house would be elected on separate ethnic rolls. Second, the offices of non-executive state president and prime minister were merged into that of an executive state president, indirectly elected by a college of MPs from the three houses on a ratio of 4:2:1. Since the majority party of each house sent all the delegates, it was assured that the white population would have the majority in the electoral vote. The cabinet would be appointed by the president which he was supposed to consult, yet not necessarily to follow its recommendations. “Separate development” got manifested insofar as that each House was responsible for its “own affairs” (i.a. culture, education, hospitals), while “general affairs” (defense, security and economic policy) would have to pass through all three houses. Joint committees with representatives from each house should deal with “general affairs” first and reach a consensus before the legislation was put to a vote in the houses. Additionally, the President’s council, with its members elected by the three Houses and a small minority appointed by the president himself, would continue to be advisory, but its role would be of substantial importance to overcome an impasse between the three houses. Most significantly, the new constitution concentrated an enormous amount of power within the office of the state president. For example, powers, normally vested to the legislative body (e.g. the right to declare war or make peace, declare a state of emergency or martial law) were henceforth entirely in the hands of the state president. Also, the new legislative system marked a departure from the Westminster system since it contained strong elements of “consociational democracy”, based on a pluralistic model of Dutch-American political scientist Arend Lijphart. The commission, however, completely ignored Lijphart’s argumentation that the exclusion of the majority from representation would be “not only unconsociational but also undemocratic” and “its greatest

---

222 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 289; Giliomee, The Afrikaners, pp. 603-604.
weakness.” With the complete exclusion of the black population from the franchise and any form of representation, this was, however, precisely the case. Thus, not surprisingly, the new constitution was met with severe criticism from the black population. More surprising might be that the proposal was also highly controversial within the NP caucus. The growing resistance towards Botha and his leadership became fully apparent, when Andries Treurnicht, leader of the Transvaal NP, and 21 other NP members categorically refused to support the motion, being opposed to the “power-sharing” elements of the proposed constitution. Treurnicht then was summarily expelled from the NP, who then launched the Conservative Party (CP). Frederick Willem de Klerk replaced him as NP leader in Transvaal and took over his initiative in opposing the constitutional draft. The CP and the anti-apartheid PFP (Progressive Federal Party) then attacked the new constitution both in and outside parliament. Eventually, on November 2nd, 1983, a referendum was held which resulted in 65 percent voting in favor of the new constitution while the voter turnout was at 76 percent. The bulk of the surprisingly strong opposition came from the conservatives. The constitution commenced on September 3rd, 1984 and was effective until it was repealed by the “Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 200 of 1993”.

Coinciding with the aforementioned diplomatic successes, the year 1984 thus certainly marked the peak of P. W. Botha’s power. There is a certain irony in it that the technocratic apartheid-regime reached its climax in the exact same year that George Orwell chose for his famous novel. Yet, unlike Orwell’s “Big Brother”, Botha and his “securocrats” would not emerge completely victorious from 1984 as their domestic triumph would vanish as quickly as their international did.

For the black population, the new constitution was a slap right into their faces. Not only were they once again excluded from any form of political representation, but were now the only large ethnic group (since Coloreds and Indians were granted limited representation) without nearly any political rights. The hypocritical concept of “power-sharing” was seen as the culmination of racial injustice and even less legitimate than the system it intended to replace. While the Soweto crisis of 1976/77 was a fulminating illustration of the illegitimacy of Verwoerd/Vorster-style apartheid and, with the resulting international consternation, led South Africa into a crisis of hegemony, this new constitution, an attempt to address this issue of illegitimacy, provoked a “full-blown crisis of physical control over the black population.”

This “crisis of physical control” was further aggravated by Botha’s conception of neo-apartheid, a factor that made the domestic crisis of the late 1980s significantly different from that during the Soweto-crisis. When Botha opened up South Africa’s job market for the black population in the course of his “neo-apartheid” reforms in response to the high labor demand, he approved unionized and organized black workers. With the ANC, PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement all banned, these workers organizations and unions turned out to be the initial backbone of the black uprisings that swept the entire country from the mid-1980s onwards. These opponents of the regime started to form decentralized

---

224 Quoted in: Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, here p. 288.
225 O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, pp. 276-277.
226 Ibid., p. 325.
227 Ibid., p. 324.
organizations, of which the United Democratic Front (UDF) was by far the largest. Founded in 1983 as a domestic front for the illegal ANC, it was a non-racial, enormously diverse organization. Among its members were trade unions, student organizations, church bodies and community organizations. Welcoming white participation and not opposing the capitalist system, it received the bulk of foreign funds that flowed to the organizations in the country.\textsuperscript{228}

While the new constitution certainly brought racial tensions in South Africa to a new boiling point, it was one specific incident which was the final straw that broke the camel’s back. In 1982, the government established the so-called “Black Local Authorities” (BLA). They had almost the same rights as their white counterparts, yet they had almost no possibility to make revenue to fund their activities since they were not allowed to collect taxes. It was the government’s intention, to raise a very small black elite which owed its position to the apartheid system. Seen as collaborators with the white racists, these BLAs were everything but well respected by the black majority.\textsuperscript{229} In 1984, a countrywide BLA election was held, which was largely boycotted by the people after a call by the ANC. The new councils then, seeing it as the only way to increase their revenue, sharply increased the prices for rent and electricity. This was the final trigger for the breakout of riots in the Sharpeville Township south of Johannesburg in 1984.\textsuperscript{230} As in 1976, the outbreak of these riots was neither planned nor triggered off by the ANC.

Although forced into the underground, or maybe precisely because of this, the ANC was nevertheless still the face of black resistance against apartheid. By 1985, its public prestige had risen so sharply, that even parts of the white population started to favor negotiations with the ANC. Thus, when its leaders called for a “people’s war” against the government in January 1985, it was answered with great enthusiasm. Additionally, in the wake of the Nkomati accord, many South Africans had realized that they had to rely on themselves to end apartheid since a foreign power would not bring liberation to them. It was the ANC’s declared goal to make the entire country ungovernable by initiating mass campaigns of civil disobedience. The black people should no longer be mere spectators but effectively undermine and sabotage the government in any way possible. They should go on strike, support the ANC cadres and resign from government posts. “The doors of the houses of our people should be open to our cadres. Everybody...has a role to play.”\textsuperscript{231}

The ANC combined this campaign of civil disobedience with high-profile armed attacks by trained units. Between 1976 and 1983 the ANC had already carried out 362 violent attacks on targets including the Keoberg nuclear power plant, a SASOL plant, a military base in Pretoria and the Air Force headquarters also in Pretoria.\textsuperscript{232} The immense success of the, unfortunately often violent, civil disobedience campaign can be explained by the fact that “it was much more broadly based than in 1976. Clergy,
students, teachers, lecturers, business people, women’s groups and workers mobilized for the dismantling of the apartheid system. There was better strategic thinking and far more successful mobilization of international opinion.”233

After the riots had broken out, they quickly spread to other areas of the Witwatersrand. The government sent the SADF into the township to regain control which triggered off South Africa’s then biggest political strike in November 1984. What started as a local school boycott quickly became a nationwide affair under the slogan “Liberation now, education later”.234 The organizers of the strike and the leadership of two unions got detained. Yet, the revolutionary train was already in motion and within a short time the riots spread from the Transvaal over Natal to the Eastern Cape. When a police unit opened fire on a peaceful march, the riots also reach the Western Cape. By mid-1985 the entire country was in turmoil which had a drastic psychological impact on the UDF and its members. For the first time did the broad majority of the black population realize that the Afrikaners could be shaken by organized political resistance.

Yet, both the ANC and the UDF underestimated the strength, but principally the will of Pretoria, to end the uprising. The government’s reaction was at first to once again adapt TNS and its rhetoric. According to the government, South Africa now faced, instead of a “total onslaught” a “revolutionary onslaught”.235 Pretoria responded by imposing a state of emergency in 36 districts and deployed 35,000 SADF troops into the townships. On a daily basis they sealed off entire townships and conducted house-to-house searches and maintained a provocative presence in and around school areas to prevent student mobilization. While the government’s official argumentation for the troop deployment was to protect blacks from criminals, an opinion poll conducted by a human right’s organization in 1985 claimed that roughly 90 percent of township residents in the Witwatersrand felt threatened by the presence of the military.236 By November more than 8,000 UDF-leaders were detained and more than 400 black people got killed since the riots had started in September 1984.237 Throughout 1985/86 Pretoria tightened its security actions and by the use of massive force was able to temporarily restore order by mid-1986. By the end of 1986, more than 2,000 Africans had lost their lives and political repression reached a new peak.238

Next to the unprecedented levels of uprisings, it was South Africa’s economy – experienced the worst crisis since the 1930s – that caused severe concern within the Botha administration. After an enormous boom in the late 1960s and early 1970s it was hit by a recession starting 1980 with a decline in GDP per capita between 0.8 percent and 2.5 percent each year. At the same time, foreign debts increased from US$ 16 billion in 1979 to US$ 25 billion in 1984. In relation to Pretoria’s GNP, these foreign debts

233 Ibid.
234 O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, pp. 325.
235 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 306.
237 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy; Giliomee, The Afrikaners; O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 326.
accounted for 20 percent of Pretoria’s GNP in 1980, by 1985 it was already at 38 percent. While 0.90 Rand equaled one US$ in 1980, the exchange rate of the Rand towards the US-dollar was falling, reaching an all-time low with 0.34 Rand per US$ in 1985. This drastic decline was caused on the one hand by the inherent weaknesses of South Africa’s economy, and, in connection with that, a loss of confidence of the international capital market in South Africa. The government’s vast expenditures into the military and the funding of its extremely expensive homeland policy led to a new indebtedness of three billion Rand or 12 percent of the entire budget in 1985. Pretoria tried to counteract by increasing the general sales tax, but only one year later the fiscal deficit exceeded seven billion Rand. A rapid increase of the unemployment rate (a plus of 164 percent on seasonal grounds between 1984 and 1985 among whites, Coloreds and Indians), a declining gold price and the accretion of the US$ further aggravated the situation.239

Being well on the way to lose even the last bit of both political and economic international confidence, the Botha-regime was forced to introduce further reforms in order to appease the international community. The government continued to adapt its racial policy to the demands of global capitalism. While the regime stuck to those principles it considered essential (population registration, segregated education, and the exclusion of blacks from Parliament), it abandoned those principles regarded as “unnecessary”. It repealed the racial sex laws, granted full residential rights across the country, scrapped all pass laws by 1986 and allowed blacks full freehold rights to property by 1987. Yet there was still a huge gap in governmental spending per capita between whites and blacks, but it was getting smaller (in 1971 governmental spending on education, for example, the difference was at 1:19, by the late 1980s it had dropped to reach 1:3.5).240 Yet, these reforms did little to nothing to change the entire situation in South Africa. This made the speech Botha was going to deliver before the NP-Congress in Durban in August 1985 all the more significant. The speech, which became known as the “Rubicon-speech”, had already attracted enormous international attention in the forefront, since the administration, most notably Foreign Minister Pik Botha, had briefed several foreign ministers, heads of states and governments that President Botha was going to announce several significant decisions (incl. the possible release of Nelson Mandela and the dismantling of apartheid241) in this address. Expectations could not have been higher and it was thus that the speech was broadcasted live by major TV networks in the US, UK and West-Germany.242 Yet, when Botha, well aware of the vast international audience, delivered his address it fell short of even the lowest expectations. Defensive in tone and defiant in style, the president announced no significant new initiatives. His tough stance not to give in to international pressure was well received by his party, however, his insensitivity to world opinion was inexplicable. The speech, which he called his “manifesto for the future of our country” and with which he believed that “we are today crossing the

239 Weimer, Das Ende der Weißen Vorherrschaft im Südlichen Afrika, pp. 192-198.
242 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 321.
Rubicon [...] there can be no turning back”243 (hence the name), was nothing more than a blueprint for the previously mentioned reforms of 1986 and 1987. The issue of how to proceed with the black population’s demand for political participation was only addressed in a highly unspecific way which left all options (including doing nothing) open for the administration. He rejected a fourth chamber representing black groups and avoided the question of restoring citizenship to blacks deprived of it by the regime’s Bantustan-policy.244 Not surprisingly, Botha’s speech was met with severe criticism, both at home and abroad.245

Now the question arises, whether President Botha had ever intended to announce the far reaching reforms his Foreign Minister had so enthusiastically promoted in the forefront, and if so, what made him change his mind? And if not, why then had Pik Botha fueled the expectations of the international community? An answer can be found within the SSC itself. The magnitude of the domestic crisis had not failed to leave its mark on the most powerful decision making body of the Botha administration. While it has already been mentioned that there was some disagreement within the SSC over the application of POD, the government’s diplomatic approach in 1984 increased the infightings between the “hawkish” SADF, led by Defense Minister General Malan, and the “dove-like” foreign ministry, led by Foreign Minister Pik Botha. Now, one explanation could be that President Botha first followed the advice of his foreign ministry and, literally in the last second, gave in to the pressure of the military which favored a hard line, military approach in the region. Given P. W. Botha’s tough stand and his hardline tendencies, it seems rather unlikely that the president would have altered his opinion at the last moment and cast doubt that he even truly wanted these far reaching reforms in the first place. So why did Pik Botha then spread rumors about the president’s intention in the Western world? Again the answer lies in the SSC’s internal crisis. Shortly after Nkomati was signed, FRELIMO-units found the so-called “Vaz-diary” in a raided RENAMO camp, which contained highly embarrassing details about the SADF’s deliberate intention to violate the accord. Now, although anything in connection with RENAMO was handled by the Defense Ministry and was therefore on Malan’s plate, it seemed highly unlikely that President Botha, given his autocratic and centralized leadership style (which brought him the nickname “Groot Kro-kodil”), was not aware of his Defense Minister’s intentions and thus must have given at least his implicit consent to the continued support of RENAMO. This assumption is further emphasized by the fact that President Botha promoted his Deputy Foreign Minister Louis Neil, after the latter had visited several RENAMO bases in Mozambique, without the knowledge of Pik Botha. The resignation of SADF-chief Constand Viljoen as a scapegoat for the “Vaz-diary” incident did little to ease Pik Botha’s public humiliation. Therefore, it can be argued that Pik Botha deliberately set up the Rubicon debacle as an act of revenge on the SADF and its commander-in-chief.246

---

243 Quoted in: ibid., p. 322.
245 Barber/Barratt, South Africa's Foreign Policy, pp. 322-323.
246 O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, pp. 332-333.
Whatever the reason eventually was, it is a fact that after the speech South Africa indeed had crossed the Rubicon, though not in the positive sense that Botha had envisaged. International disapproval reached a new peak and the “hawks” emerged victorious from the SSC’s infightings. The RSA had lost almost all its allies and was hit by a wave of new sanctions (this time including the United States and the Commonwealth except Great Britain) and disinvestment hit South Africa. Several large banks followed the lead of the Chase Manhattan Bank (which had already announced prior to the speech not to extend any loans to Pretoria), depriving the RSA of fresh foreign money. Yet, although trade rates with the Western world declined, economic sanctions proved not to be enough since Pretoria diverted its exports to Asia and was able to achieve a trade surplus of R15 billion in 1986.

In March 1986, the Commonwealth made a last-ditch effort to find a solution to avoid South Africa stumbling into a civil war. Its heads of government sent the “Eminent Person Group” (EPG) to Pretoria, which was received by President Botha after the regime temporarily had lifted the state of emergency. The EPG came up with a formula where the ANC should first renounce its violence, which Botha made a sine qua non for any form of negotiation. Then the RSA should get engaged into negotiations with the ANC “where everything would be on the table.” While both Mandela, imprisoned in Pollsmoor Prison, and ANC-president Oliver Tambo, exiled in Lusaka, quickly approved the formula, it ruptured whatever was left of the SSC consensus. Literally only a few hours before the EPG was scheduled to meet again with the RSA-government, the SADF attacked three of its neighboring commonwealth countries (Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia) at the same time to destroy what Pretoria deemed to be ANC-facilities. In fact, however, the SADF hit a UNHCR camp in Zambia and another refugee camp in Botswana. Only one of the targets, an office in downtown Harare, belonged to the ANC. The EPG was informed that South Africa was “not interested in negotiations about a transfer of power.” Evidence suggests that the decision to blow up the EPG formula was made in the innermost circle of the SSC.

This radical decision to launch yet another military attack manifested what had become apparent during the Rubicon incident – the “hawks” had finally taken over control in the SSC. P. W. Botha had assumed a more than ever autocratic and aggressive leadership which turned out to be the underlying pattern for his final years as state president. To understand this pattern, a look at Botha’s up-to-then legacy as to be taken. Since he had assumed the office of prime minister in 1978, Botha had altered South

---

248 The EPG members were essentially nominated by the more influential Commonwealth leaders. The group consisted of: Malcolm Fraser, the conservative Australian Prime Minister, 1975–83 (co-chair); General Olusegun Obasanjo, head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria 1976–79 (co-chair); Lord (Anthony) Barber of Wentridge, British Chancellor of the Exchequer during Edward Heath’s Conservative Party government, 1970–74, and since 1974, chairman of the Standard Chartered Bank; former Indian Defense Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh; former Tanzanian Foreign Minister, John Malecela; Dame Nita Barrow, President of the World Council of Churches since 1983; Archbishop Edward Scott, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada after 1971. Botha assumed that the group would never come to a unanimous decision, since some of its members were early supports of his regime while others were staunched opponents. As it turned out, this was a huge miscalculation (O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 340).
251 O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 340-341.
Africa at great costs for the NP and apartheid – both institutions he had worked on for almost his entire political life. In what were clearly radical steps for him, he gave in to the demands of what he considered to be the three great traditional enemies of Afrikaner nationalism – the English-speaking capitalists, the foreign governments (the uitlanders who had destroyed the Boer republics) and above all, South Africa’s black population – hoping to reduce the pressure on his administration and himself. And for the short period of 1982-1984, this plan worked, Botha was able to wear the coat of a statesman. Yet, by mid-1986, this image was shattered into pieces, instead of collecting the fruits of gratitude for reaching a settlement, he became an international persona non grata. Always hyper-sensitive, by June 1986 Botha had become a deeply embittered and withdrawn man. Seeing his position as state president threatened he became the proverbial animal that got pushed into a corner which regarded attack as the best form of defense. Thus he threw his weight behind Malan and the SADF, thereby further increasing the militarization of the South African society and extending the SADF’s control over basically every aspect of daily life. Henceforth, the SADF was primarily responsible for domestic law enforcement and as part of Malan’s new counter-insurgency tactics, a nationwide state of emergency was imposed on June 12, 1986 which remained in place until 1990 when it was lifted by F. W. de Klerk.

It was also at this point that the Botha administration realized that their TNS had utterly failed, that the teachings of Beaufre and Huntington were no longer useful and that a new strategy was needed. This new strategy, so it was the intention of the SSC, should provide better tools to handle the nationwide uprisings and should meet the goals of the nationwide state of emergency (restoration of law and order and bring the situation back to normality). The strategists of the SSC turned to the evolving theories of “Low-Intensity Conflict” (LIC), which had been developed by the US armed forces. The central premise of LIC is that revolution and counterrevolution develop their own ethics and own moral and therefore any means to counter it were justified (which is basically what Lenin said some 70 years earlier). According to LIC, success demanded that revolutionary strategy and principles should be applied in reverse. This new strategy changed Huntington’s Machiavellian top-down process into a bottom-up process of reorganizing and remodeling South African society. Again the approach was total, including constitutional, social, economic and, above all, security elements. Thus, the new “Total Counter-revolutionary Strategy” was born. Now, what at a first glance might only seem like a technocratic relabeling of old principles, had in fact devastating consequences for South Africa in particular and the southern African region in general. P. W. Botha’s and Malan’s renewed hardline stance terminated all intended reforms, while the implementation of state policy was effectively monopolized by the NSMS with a SADF-dominated SSC at its center.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{252}}\] O’Brien, The South African Intelligence Services, p. 143-144.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{253}}\] O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, pp. 345-346.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{254}}\] O’Brien, The South African Intelligence Services, pp. 144-145.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{255}}\] O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, pp. 322-344.
Of the four elements which comprised the new “Total Counter-revolutionary Strategy”, the security aspect again solicited the bulk of the regime’s attention. The crackdowns by SAP and SADF-units following the imposition of the nationwide state of emergency in late 1986 was, even for South Africa’s then sorry standards, unprecedented in its brutality and extensiveness. During the first year after the nationwide state of emergency was imposed, more than 26,000 people got detained, four times as many as in the preceding year. Almost half of them was younger than 18 years. Death squads appeared regularly in townships, vigilante activity escalated and prisoners, including children, were often subjected to torture. To effectively eliminate the structures of local street and area committees, which mushroomed during the uprising, the security apparatus applied a tactic which combined violent crack-downs and socio-economic upgrading, labelled “oil-spot technique” by O’Brien. The logic behind this approach was that, as the success of the revolutionaries was based on the exploitation of socio-economic grievances, the elimination of these grievances and the revolutionaries themselves would not only bring the country back under control but would also answer the biggest political question – the opposition to apartheid. The administration identified 34 key areas in about 200 townships and allocated 16 billion Rand in socio-economic upgrading projects such as housing developments, water and electricity supply and road works. More than 1,800 projects were initiated in the areas of the Vaal Triangle and the townships of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. By the beginning of 1987 the regime regained control over the situation in the country and nearly all the rebellions were crushed. A year later all extra-parliamentary oppositions, including the UDF, were banned and a deceptive calmness covered the country.

Yet, this calmness came at a price which was too high for Botha to pay. Instead of starting the long overdue honest negotiations over black political participation, his full implementation of the NSMS after June 1986 alienated large parts of the NP caucus. Botha and his “securocrates”, most notably Defense Minister Malan and SSC secretary Lloyd, had transformed South Africa into a country that was militarized to the core, with the SADF’s infiltration reaching into every single aspect of society (except, perhaps, the churches). All civilians within the SSC and other high ranking decision bodies were marginalized, even NP-mandarins like Pik Botha were isolated from the president. Any civilian oversight was de facto abolished, the NP caucus and the tri-cameral parliament only had to play a legitimizing role for Botha’s “Imperial Presidency.” Botha’s brutal and demeaning treatment of those how did not immediately bend to his wishes or even dared to contradict him made him a deeply loathed but highly feared person within the NP caucus. Many NP members regarded defection as the only option to elude themselves from the despotism of the, by aging and illness even more imperious, president. While the NP was able to win the 1987 election, it was Transvaal NP-leader F. W. de Klerk’s announcement that led many NP members to abandon the NP ship. By saying that “our [the NP’s] theory is on the rocks” he spoke out the thoughts of many and a poll conducted by the NP itself showed that up to 22 percent of...
the NP caucus was “prepared to take their coats and leave Botha’s party”. The defectors, among which were several senior NP-members, regrouped themselves in the Independent Movement which grew constantly in size and influence on the entire National Party. They were not only opposed to the preposterously large influence of the securocrates in the NSMS but also against the enormously blown up bureaucracy. Botha assumed prime ministry in 1978 with the intention to reduce the administrative apparatus of his predecessor, yet ten years of technocratic reforming had produced a bureaucratic monstrosity which consummated 25 percent of the nation’s GDP in 1988.

When Botha realized in December 1988 that his party was on the verge of breaking apart, he tried to change tack and, for the first time since 1986, shifted away from his generals when he agreed to the Brazzaville protocol which envisaged the removal of South African and Cuban forces from Angola. Yet, this move came too late. It was not nearly enough of a concession to appease the reformers within the NP, yet enough to trouble the close relationship between Botha and his hardline “securocrates”. His “Total Counter-revolutionary Strategy” only succeeded in crushing the riots and bring the country back under governmental control, yet it failed in all the other aspects. The socio-economic upgrading of the townships was not able to win over the “hearts and minds” of the black population since they would only accept total defeat of the NP at this time. The vision of “power-sharing” was no more advanced by the end of 1988 than it was in mid-1986 and the ban of the extra-parliamentary opposition worked for a short period only. The state of emergency began to crumble when the black population reorganized itself in the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), which organized the largest stay-away in RSA history in late 1989 and spearheaded the 1989 Defiance Campaign – a new explosion of mass resistance which no longer sought to make the country ungovernable but to clog to death the segregated system of their country. Ten years after taking over control of South Africa, Botha had maneuvered the country in a situation much worse than Vorster could have ever imagined in his worst nightmares.

Regarding the international situation of Pretoria, the events transpiring in the southern African region in the second half of the 1980s did nothing to ease Botha’s nightmares. While the Lusaka and Nkomati Accords caused a short optimistic outlook on the years to come, the situation in fact nosedived and hit, like its domestic counterpart, rock bottom at the end of the decade. In general, the five-year period following Nkomati and Lusaka brought the extent of violence to a level unprecedented in the entire

---

260 Ibid., p. 375.
261 The central government bureaucracy included the departments to manage “general affairs” as well as three parallel bureaucracies for “own affairs”. Each of the four “independent” and six “self-governing” Bantustans were likewise endowed with “national” bureaucracies and seconded white officials. Tens upon tens of thousands of additional functionaries served the networks of Regional Services Councils and Local Authorities. By 1988, South Africa was governed by five “presidents”, nine chief ministers or chairmen of councils of ministers (soon to be joined by a Prime Minister), 14 Cabinets or ministerial councils, close to 300 Cabinet ministers, more than 1500 Members of various Parliaments and/or legislative bodies.
262 Ibid., p. 380.
region. Not only did the RSA ignore basically every aspect of both treaties, it also expanded its interventionist policy both in intensity and scope.

Lesotho

First, this became apparent in Lesotho were the Botha administration increased the military and economic pressure to such an extent that it became almost impossible for the Jonathan government to administer the country. Economic coercion and constant guerrilla attacks by the RSA sponsored LLA led to an increased resistance among the people of Lesotho who were less and less content with Jonathan’s staunch opposition against South Africa. In January 1986, following an intensified blocking of the country, more than 1,600 soldiers of the Lesotho Parliamentary Force (LPF) surrounded the office block of Jonathan to express their grievances over his foreign policy course. Five days later, he was ousted in a bloodless military coup d’état and replaced by the commander of the LPF, Major-General Justin Lekhanya. There can be no doubt of the importance of the part Pretoria played in the insurrection, mostly because of the top level contacts that existed between the SADF and senior LPF-officers. In fact, these contacts were intensified in the days that led up to the coup when General Lekhanya was meeting high ranking SADF-officers in Pretoria. Within hours of the coup, South Africa reopened the railways into Lesotho and negotiations between the two countries started only one week later. The new military government adopted a pragmatic stance towards Pretoria and agreed to extradite ANC-refugees from its country. On January 25, only five days after the coup, the first 60 ANC members were airlifted out of Lesotho. South Africa, in return, lifted all economic restrictions on the same day. Lesotho thus was the only country were Pretoria’s securocrats were able to accomplish, at least for a short time, all the intended goals.

Zimbabwe

After Zimbabwe took over the leading role in the region in opposing the Botha regime in 1986, the country got pulled deeper into the region’s conflict as well. Pretoria stepped up its POD, including the support of guerrilla movements and targeted attacks against ANC facilities. As of mid-1987, RENAMO extended its operational theater into Zimbabwean territory and conducted raids and attacks on a regular basis. Already in May 1986, a bomb had destroyed the ANC-headquarter in Harare. Mugabe in return increased Zimbabwe’s presence in Mozambique to assist FRELIMO in its fight against RENAMO and to increase the protection of the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border. In 1985, the official Zimbabwean army had had around 2,000 soldiers in Mozambique to protect vital infrastructure, by 1988 this force had risen to more than 10,000 soldiers operating on Mozambican territory.

---

265 Baynham/Mills, Lesotho: Between Dependence and Destabilisation, p. 52.
266 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 291-297.
Angola

While the developments in Lesotho and Zimbabwe seriously challenged the notion of an existing “Pax Pretoriana”, it was rendered completely *ad absurdum* by the events transpiring in Angola and Mozambique in the second half of the 1980s. Again, it were the two former Portuguese colonies which became the region’s focal point and thus attracted most of South Africa’s foreign policy attention.

In Angola, the aforementioned “Cabinda incident”, where a SADF commando got ambushed by MPLA troops in the Angolan exclave of Cabinda, can be regarded as the catalyzing event that marked the beginning of the most violent and most “internationalized” phase of the country’s civil war. The “Cabinda incident” proved that South Africa was neither willing to give up UNITA by ending its vital support nor to withdraw from Namibia. Not only did Luanda and Havana immediately terminate all negotiations regarding a Cuban withdrawal from Angola, it even influenced Castro to increase the number of Cuban troops from an estimated 25,000 to 31,000 soldiers by the end of 1985. The increasing foreign presence in Angola, also led to some drastic changes in the way South Africa publicly presented its Angolan engagement. Up to that point, the RSA repeatedly claimed that its military actions on Angolan territory were only directed at destroying SWAPO’s ability to conduct significant operations in Namibia. In September 1985, however, Malan surprisingly announced that his country was not only hunting SWAPO but also providing UNITA with intelligence, hardware and advice in its fight against the MPLA. This assistance was, he said, of “material, humanitarian and moral nature”. Savimbi immediately confirmed Malan’s statement and added that, since any MPLA offensive was sponsored by the Soviet Union and/or Cuba, RSA support for UNITA was legitimate. The Security Council of the United Nations (UNSC) immediately condemned South Africa’s actions. Once again unimpressed by the international reactions, South Africa stepped up its support and committed one of its best battalions to assist UNITA. In turn, the Soviet Union responded by increasing its support for the MPLA both in the total amount and in the weaponry’s sophistication. Malan made his statement at a time when UNITA was facing the largest offensive every made by Angolan forces. Directed at the southeastern province of Mavinga, the MPLA had some initial success, yet, UNITA was able to halt the offensive. Savimbi claimed that the MPLA-offensive’s failure was entirely UNITA’s merit, a statement that was immediately confirmed by Pretoria. Yet, strong evidence suggests that UNITA received significant air support from the South African Air Force (SAAF) and equally important assistance by the 32nd battalion on the ground. The battle of Mavinga is in several ways decisive to understand the further development of the conflict in Angola. First, Jamba, the town where UNITA had set up its headquarters, is located within the province of Mavinga. The MPLA directed its largest offensive directly at the center of UNITA and was thus willing to escalate the war and bringing it to the next level. Second, it became apparent that UNITA would not have even been capable of defending its own headquarters against the MPLA if it had not been for South Africa’s massive support in troops and material. Savimbi’s movement again faced

---

267 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 313.
268 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 163.
269 Barber/Barratt, South Africa's Foreign Policy, p. 315.
increased infightings and large numbers of defections which were severely affecting UNITA’s strength. Third, South Africa’s direct engagement against MPLA troops exemplified the change in RSA-strategy Malan had publicly announced. By committing one of its best battalions and several of its scarce aircraft to a battle against the MPLA, South Africa underlined its intention not only to destroy SWAPO’s ability to conduct operations in Angola, but also to escalate its direct fight against the MPLA.²⁷⁰

By 1986, the situation in the Angolan war theater was tapering off and what until this point could have been classified as a guerilla war between UNITA and MPLA, was more and more amounting to a full-out conventional war between Cuba, the USSR and official Angolan forces on the one side and SADF and UNITA troops on the other side. The escalation of violence became also apparent in what the civilian population had to endure. While UNITA tried until 1984 to gain the support of the population in the territories under its control, the movement completely shifted away from this approach towards a “scorched earth policy” in the post-Lusaka period. UNITA units began to systematically destroy schools, hospitals, granaries, farms and any other infrastructure essential for a rural life. Roads and fields were covered with landmines, making the cultivation of vast acres of farmland impossible.²⁷¹ In one of these raids, UNITA massacred more than 100 civilians of a small town and injuring another 50.²⁷² This un-typical behavior of a guerilla movement can be explained only in one way – UNITA was no longer a guerilla movement, at least in the view of its “life support system” South Africa. Pretoria rather began to treat UNITA as a branch of its own armed forces, which proved to be useful to alienate Angola’s local population from supporting any guerilla movement. This would, so it was the intention of Pretoria’s strategists, also deprive SWAPO of its local support. Thus, not surprisingly, UNITA was at no point able to have more than 5 percent of the entire Angolan population under its direct “administration”²⁷³, making it difficult even for its leadership to argue, why UNITA had a legitimate claim to participate in a nationwide government. This contradiction was also reflected in the moral of the often forcefully conscripted UNITA troops and their general understanding of what this war was about, something that contrasted significantly from the political and military competences of MPLA troops.

The continuous escalation of violence went on in 1987. For Pretoria it had become apparent that a full military defeat of SWAPO would be impossible without a full military victory in Angola. It thus became more important than ever for South Africa to uphold its military presence in Angola in order to remain in control of Namibia.²⁷⁴ With the beginning of 1987, the SADF therefore launched several incursions into Angolan territory, primarily aimed at SWAPO bases. At the same time, both the SADF and UNITA were well aware that once the rainy season was over the MPLA would launch another attack on Mavinga and Jamba. At the beginning of July, the expected MPLA/Cuban offensive began. Through joint efforts by UNITA, the SADF and the SWATF (South-West African Territory Force), the MPLA

²⁷⁰ Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 154-155.
²⁷¹ Minter, Apartheid’s Contras, pp. 48-49.
²⁷² Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 157-159.
²⁷³ Ibid.
²⁷⁴ Minter, Apartheid’s Contras, p. 128.
once again failed to conquer the UNITA stronghold. The fact that the SADF alone sent four entire battalions into the battle further indicates that the guerrilla war had transformed into a conventional war. South Africa did, for the first time ever, claim the operation’s success for itself. It not only acknowledged that it was supporting UNITA but had committed four entire battalions under the command of SADF officers to fight the advancing MPLA units. Not wanting to repeat the mistake made two years earlier, the SADF was ordered to pursue the retreating MPLA-units.\(^{275}\) Despite this foray, by September South African intelligence had gathered several pieces of information which indicated an imminent massive assault on Mavinga. The MPLA had amassed some 29,000 men and more than 100 tanks, airplanes and helicopters. They were opposed by an 8,000 men strong UNITA force. In what became the largest military battle of Africa after World War II, UNITA/SADF units once again decisively defeated the MPLA troops. According to UNITA, the MPLA forces lost more than 2,000 men, 150 armored vehicles and 26 aircrafts. UNITA losses were 155 killed and 662 wounded, while both sides faced mass defection during the battle. Again, South Africa admitted its involvement publically with Magnus Malan saying that it was South Africa’s duty “to protect the region against Russian and Cuban destabilization and objectives of eventual takeover.”\(^{276}\) After their defeat, MPLA troops retreated to the city of Cuito Cuanavale, the MPLA’s most important transport and logistic hub besides the capital Luanda. UNITA pursued the retreating MPLA forces and began to lay siege to Cuito Cuanavale.

Meanwhile, the Botha administration saw itself increasingly confronted with questions as to what goals this massive SADF-involvement should lead. Also, the increasing loss of South African lives was seen as growing out of proportion by the South African population. Botha thus promised to return all SADF-soldiers back to the RSA, except those advancing to Cuito Cuanavale to assist UNITA in its siege. Botha also, accompanied by five cabinet members, traveled to southern Angola to emphasize the governments support for the security forces. At the same time Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos was reassured by his Cuban counterpart Fidel Castro who agreed to reinforce the Cuban contingent in Angola and ordered that the 50\(^{th}\) battalion, one of Cuba’s most battle-hardened units, should be airlifted into Angola. With Botha’s simultaneous decision to reduce the SADF contingent, the balance of power was considerably shifted to the MPLA’s favor.\(^{277}\) The battle of Cuito Cuanavale thus became a decisive event, not only determining the outcome of the “international phase” of the Angolan civil war, but also for the fate of South Africa in the entire region.

With both sides realizing the decisiveness of Cuito Cuanavale, the year 1988 marked the peak in war intensity.\(^{278}\) By January, the UNITA/SADF coalition was heavily pressing the attack on the besieged city. The amount of SADF-troops in Angola were estimated at more than 7,000 by UN officials, 2,000 of them were said to be advancing on Cuito Cuanavale. Both South Africa and UNITA rejected these accusations at first, UNITA later acknowledged the presence of SADF logistical units. By late January,

\(^{275}\) Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, 162-164; Minter, Apartheid's Contras, p. 130; James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 171-173.

\(^{276}\) Ibid., 174.

\(^{277}\) Ibid., p. 174-175.

\(^{278}\) Minter, Apartheid's Contras, p. 49.
UNITA claimed that it controlled half the city and that the MPLA was about to abandon the rest of it. However, the MPLA had not abandoned the city. In fact, it was only strategically withdrawing to regroup with the advancing Cuban reinforcement. With the reinforcement in place, by March it was clear that UNITA would be unable to seize the city. The battle had reached a stalemate, labeled as the “South African Verdun” by the MPLA. Indeed, the SADF suffered dramatic losses during its quest to seize the city, of which the loss of air superiority was the most crucial one. Due to the UN arms embargo, the South African Air Force had to rely on their outdated, yet irreplaceable Mirage fighter jets, which were vastly inferior to the Cuban MiG-23. In the battle of Cuito Cuanavale alone, the SAAF lost between five and 42 of its irreplaceable jets (the lower number comes from SADF sources, the higher from MPLA sources). SADF’s shortage on war equipment had already become a decisive factor in late 1987, not only because of the increasing impact of the UN arms embargo, but also due to overextended supply lines. By the end of 1987, about half of the SADF-units around Cuito Cuanavale were not fully operational due to a lack of supplies. Nevertheless, the fighting continued throughout 1988 and in March UNITA declared a provisional government at Jamba. South Africa’s loss of air superiority became more and more crucial, while the MPLA received continuous support from its Cuban ally. By May, both sides had realized that the military and political costs had become too high to take the entire city. Especially Pretoria had lost almost the entire domestic support for the SADF’s engagement in Angola. Cuito Cuanavale thus marked a decisive shift in the approach both the RSA and Angola took on the conflict. Returning to negotiating table became more attractive than ever.

The decision to return to the bargaining table was made easier by the fact that most of the involved parties were of the impression that they could enter the negotiations from a position of strength. While UNITA had not been able to completely defeat the MPLA militarily, it showed that it was a (political) force that could not be ignored any longer and therefore had to be included in the negotiations. The MPLA on the other side could argue that it had successfully withstood the UNITA attacks and was therefore a legitimate power in its own right. Things also improved for Cuba, when, due to the ongoing rapprochement between the two superpowers, the American’s stopped to categorically deny them any form of participation in the negotiations. Even South Africa was able to chalk up some points for itself. Its significant support for UNITA undoubtedly prevented the movement from being completely destroyed by the MPLA/Cuban coalition. Additionally, so it was believed in Pretoria, SWAPO had lost more ground than ever due to the massive campaign against it in Angola. The Botha administration thus believed that its allies in Windhoek (most significantly the DTA) might have a real chance against SWAPO, should a decision be made at the ballots. Yet, even these minor bonus points came at costs which were once again too high for Pretoria. Although not entirely defeated, the SADF again suffered

---

279 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 175-177.
280 O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, pp. 377-378.
281 Minter, Apartheid’s Contras, p. 131.
a serious blow in Angola and the war tied up soldiers in a foreign country which were actually desperately needed at home to quell the civil unrests. Also, the war devoured enormous amounts of money, which was, given the deteriorating economic situation, probably the biggest concern for Botha and his strategists. Thus, despite South Africa ability to sell the events of Cuito Cuanavale as a victory at least for a short time, the failure to beat the Cuban/MPLA alliance was yet another nail in apartheid’s coffin.

**Mozambique**

After the Nkomati treaty was signed, South African strategists assumed that Mozambique would be much less of a concern for Pretoria in the years to come than it had been so far. In the early 1980s South Africa defined several goals on what should be accomplished in its northeastern neighbor. The defining long term goal among the “hawks” was to replace the FRELIMO government by a Pretoria-friendly RENAMO administration. While the “doves” looked at this goal with skepticism, the two factions could agree on a mid-term goal – to pressure Maputo into denying refuge to the ANC in Mozambique. With the signing of the Nkomati Accord, South Africa had achieved this important objective. It thus seems all the more astonishing that a “Pax Pretoriana” also did not emerge in Mozambique, especially if a closer look is taken on which party broke the accord. As a matter of fact, it was Pretoria, which did not uphold its end of the bargain.

Raids conducted by RENAMO continued on a daily basis in the post-Nkomati period. While Pretoria categorically denied any involvement in these raids or having continued to support RENAMO, the aforementioned “Vaz-diaries” strongly indicate the contrary. Found by FRELIMO troops in an abandoned RENAMO camp the diaries explicitly state that RENAMO continued to receive support from South Africa. So how does one have to interpret this confusing situation? Why did South Africa continue to involve itself in Mozambican affairs, when it had already achieved one of its most import goals? Two major explanations can be identified to answer these questions.

The first explanation is that the continuous support of RENAMO in the post-Nkomati period had not been authorized at the highest level of government (i.e. the president’s office) but rather was an initiative by the “hawks” within the SSC. They still had not renounced their intentions to overthrow the FRELIMO government and therefore must have had a strong interest in a continued RSA support for RENAMO. This explanation is reinforced by the fact that in the month following the signing of the treaty there had been several contacts between top-level SADF officers and Afonso Dhlakama, the leader of RENAMO. Yet, as already pointed out, it does seem unlikely that, given the highly centralized bureaucracy within the NSMS, P.W. Botha was not aware of his generals’ continuous efforts to support RENAMO.

The second, more plausible explanation lies again in South Africa’s long term strategy towards Mozambique in particular and the entire FLS-region in general. While Nkomati solved the ANC-issue

---

284 Davenport/Saunders, South Africa, pp. 552-553.
in Mozambique, it did not provide an answer to Pretoria’s failed CONSAS idea. If Pretoria still had intentions to aspire the economic cooperation under its leadership, it could not have afforded to let Mozambique finally gain political and economic stability since this would only have strengthened the SADCC, the FLS’s counter-project to CONSAS. Thus it was necessary for Pretoria to continue its de-stabilization of Mozambique, both to weaken Maputo’s connections to the SADCC and to deprive the latter of Mozambique’s vital port infrastructure.

Regardless of the underlying motive, it is a fact that South Africa continued to substantially support RENAMO in the years after Nkomati. At most, Nkomati changed the logistics of the support, as the bulk of it was thereafter channeled through Malawi.\textsuperscript{285} In Malawian President Hastings Banda both South Africa and RENAMO found a supporter in their campaign against FRELIMO, for Banda had his own issues with Mozambique.\textsuperscript{286} Thus, Mozambique’s northern neighbor was a more than welcomed alternative for South Africa to funnel equipment for RENAMO through the country. Furthermore, Banda tolerated extensive RENAMO operations within Malawi’s territories. As a consequence, the situation again began to deteriorate, especially in the northern provinces of Mozambique in 1985.\textsuperscript{287} A year later, the situation had worsened to such an extent that Machel turned to Zimbabwe’s Mugabe and Zambia’s Kuanda in order to exercise pressure on Banda. Together, the three presidents issued an ultimatum that they would cut off all the supply lines between South Africa and Malawi, unless Banda would change his attitude towards RENAMO and evict the movement from Malawian territory. Banda eventually gave in to the pressure and expelled the guerilla movement from his country by September 1986. Yet, what at first might look like a victory for Machel and FRELIMO, had in fact devastating consequences. Being forced out of Malawi, RENAMO launched a large scale invasion into northern Mozambique which triggered off the “1986 year of disasters” (see chapter 3.2.2).\textsuperscript{288}

The RENAMO campaign that followed the eviction from Malawi led to what historian Malyn Newitt described as “some of the darkest moments in the history of any African country”.\textsuperscript{289} The primary aim of the invasion was to cut Mozambique into two parts. Yet, with substantial aid from Tanzania and Zimbabwe, FRELIMO was able to defeat this plan. Nonetheless, the strong RENAMO presence had devastating consequences for the local population. The rural population was at the utter mercy of the RENAMO soldiers which made it almost impossible for them to cultivate their land. In combination with a massive draught, this caused the outbreak of a massive famine, first in the north and then eventually affecting the entire country. The situation was further aggravated when the international community temporarily ceased the distribution of foreign aid as a result of RENAMO units attacking Red Cross convoys and planes.\textsuperscript{290}

\textsuperscript{285} Metz, The Mozambique National Resistance and South African Foreign Policy, here p. 498.
\textsuperscript{286} It had long been Banda’s intention to incorporate large parts of northern Mozambique into Malawian territory.
\textsuperscript{287} Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 243.
\textsuperscript{288} Minter, Apartheid’s Contras, p. 137; Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 248-249.
\textsuperscript{289} Newitt, A History of Mozambique, p. 569.
\textsuperscript{290} Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 249-250.
With RENAMO raging in the border region to Malawi, South Africa once again stepped up its POD in the southern part of the country. Probably the most ruthless attack by the RSA occurred on October 19, 1986, in the midst of a massive destabilization campaign. President Machel was returning from a summit meeting in Zambia, when his aircraft crashed in the mountainous border region between South Africa and Mozambique. Machel, two ministers and several senior advisors were among the casualties. While South Africa immediately denied all accusations of being responsible for the crash, investigations conducted by the Soviet Union and Mozambique concluded that the plane got deliberately diverted from its intended course by a radio beacon placed in the border region the plane eventually crashed into. This accusation is supported by the fact that the crash site was in a restricted military area and was under intensive South African radar surveillance. Additionally, all SADF-units in the area were put on full alert one day prior to the crash and an RENAMO spokesman in Lisbon was informed about an imminent assassination attempt on Machel the night before. A different investigation conducted by the RSA, the US and the UK naturally came to a different conclusion, however “liberal” newspaper such as the British “Guardian” strongly doubted the outcome of this investigation.291

Mozambique succeeded by mid-1987, with substantial help from the Zimbabwean and Tanzanian army to regain control over its central provinces. The center of RENAMO activities thus had shifted further south were it began to establish some sort of control system. By implementing such a rigid control system, RENAMO hindered the local population with brutal violence from escaping. People were literally worked to death. Most brutal acts of caprice ranging from manslaughter, over mutilation to rape occurred on a daily basis.292 At the end of 1987, RENAMO was offering negotiations over a ceasefire, which was categorically refused by FRELIMO on the basis that it would not engage into talks with people who were representing a movement capable of committing such massacres. The fighting therefore continued for another couple of years. Only when Botha was replaced by de Klerk did FRELIMO agree to engage in talks with RENAMO. By then, more people were affected by the civil war in Mozambique than ever before and nearly one third of the entire population were refugees within their own country.293

The horrific atrocities in Mozambique did not occur unnoticed by the Western government. Washington and London both began to refuse to treat RENAMO as a bona fide political ally (which they did for example with UNITA) which led to its growing isolation from Western countries. Also South Africa was increasingly under fire from all sides due to its continuous reckless support of RENAMO. The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa stated that what has been done to Mozambique “is the most brutal holocaust against ordinary human beings since the Nazis”. In the upcoming 1988 presidential elections, the Democratic Party publicly labelled South Africa a “terrorist state” and the outgoing Reagan administration became less and less willing to shield Pretoria.294

293 Ibid., pp. 572-573.
294 O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 378.
As the 1980s were coming to a close, the three pillars, on which apartheid according to historian Hermann Giliomee rested, were no longer able to carry the enormous weight of South Africa’s segregated system. Identified as ideological cohesion, black fragmentation and state superiority, the domestic and international events of the 1980s made these pillars to start crumbling, basically nullifying their carrying capacity. Ideological cohesion within the SSC and the NP was no longer given, since the enormous disagreements on basically every major decision only increased the massive infightings, effectively paralyzing the colossal bureaucracy apparatus. Black (political) fragmentation, the second pillar, was significantly undermined by the 1984-1986 uprising. It eliminated most of the black councilors while the ANC succeeded in establishing itself as the dominant and cohesive force in black representation. First organized in the UDF and later in the MDM, the united black majority was thus able to exercise an enormous pressure on the Botha administration, which was unprecedented in the history of apartheid. Finally, Pretoria’s failure in establishing CONSAS, not being able to break its neighboring states through a massive campaign of destabilization and its mostly unsuccessful efforts of military-economic coercion proved that the country was no longer able to alter the FLS’s development in its favor by applying its hegemonic preponderance. South Africa had lost its state superiority, the last of the three pillars. P.W. Botha had managed to maneuver his administration, his country and, above all, himself into a political, social and economic dead-end. Apartheid was nothing more than a crumbling ruin, its collapse prevented only by the President’s and his faithful’s ultimate, vicious and petulant cling to power.

This desperate cling to power was further challenged when the international environment started to change fundamentally due to the decision of the two most powerful men on earth to end the most dangerous standoff in human history by heralding in the end of the Cold War.
2.4. Taming the “Groot Krokodil” – The Superpowers and South Africa

2.4.1. A BISHOP, A PRESIDENT AND THE US CONGRESS

When the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize was about to be awarded, several South African newspapers seriously discussed to possibility that one of the Bothas (either Pieter Willem or Pik) might be the next laureate of the prestigious prize for the role they played in the accomplishment of the Nkomati Accord.\(^{296}\) While this was nothing but a preposterous possibility, the only thing they were right in was the fact that a South African citizen got awarded with the prize. On October 5, 1984, the Nobel Committee announced that Desmond Tutu, Bishop of Johannesburg and General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches will be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the importance of his role “as a unifying leader figure in the campaign to resolve the problem of apartheid in South Africa. The means by which this campaign is conducted is of vital importance for the whole of the continent of Africa and for the cause of peace in the world.”\(^{297}\) Awarding one of the most outstanding opponents of apartheid with the Nobel Peace Prize did not only send an immensely strong signal to Pretoria, it also had a tremendous impact on the world-wide anti-apartheid movement and on the relationship many countries had with South Africa, particularly on that with the United States.

The relationship between the United States and apartheid South Africa had always been of a complex nature. Between the poles of the global Cold War and South Africa’s apartheid system, the United States had to perform a continuous balancing act between the country’s strategic values and its aggressive domestic and regional policy. Thus, from Truman all the way to Bush Sr., each administration constantly found itself in the conflict of interests between the three competing key considerations of strategic interests, economic opportunities and human rights concerns.\(^{298}\)

South Africa’s first and foremost strategic value for the United States lay in its committed anti-communist stance, an immensely crucial factor during the Cold War. From 1945 until the 1980s, Pretoria proved to be a stable factor at the tip of a continent shaken by uncertainties, especially during the wave of decolonization, when the continent was drifting away from Western influence as several of the newborn countries associated themselves with the non-aligned movement, adopted ideologies which were alien to Washington’s capitalist ideals or even friendly towards Moscow’s version of global communism. Being the “power house” of southern Africa, Pretoria was, with its military and economic hegemony, also a guarantor for enforcing the US doctrines of containment and rollback. Second, South Africa’s location at the tip of Africa was also of global strategic relevance. Its proximity to one of the busiest shipping routes, the route around the Cape, made it an invaluable asset for the Western countries. This was especially significant during the late 1960s and early 1970s when the Suez Canal was blocked due to the Middle East conflict and the lion’s share of Western oil imports from the Persian Gulf had to

---

\(^{296}\) O’Meara, Forty Lost Years, p. 321.


be diverted around the Cape. Third, South Africa had vast resources of minerals making it the fourth largest producer of non-fuel minerals. On top were chromium and manganese (essential elements needed to produce steel), uranium (invaluable in the nuclear age) and platinum (important for the electronic industry).

The economic opportunities provided by Pretoria for Washington are best expressed by the following numbers. Between 1945 and 1980, US exports to the RSA increased from US$ 131 million to US$ 2,463 million. Imports equally rose from US$ 140 million in 1945 to US$ 3,321 million in 1980. The mining industry was especially profitable. Investments into the RSA mining industry were twice as lucrative as those in Latin America and quadrupled that of Canada. By 1980, which marked the peak in US-RSA economic relation, 57 percent of Fortune’s wealthiest 500 US industrial companies had direct investments in South Africa.299

Despite this huge mutual interest in containing communism and developing capitalistic commerce, Pretoria’s apartheid system prevented the relationship between the two countries from becoming a simple friendship.300 Over the course of the second half of the 20th century, the challenges of this complex relationship were tackled differently by the various incumbent administrations in Washington.

During the 1960s, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were the first to adopt a distinct anti-apartheid rhetoric. Since the United States was also going through a period of racial turmoil at this time, the two presidents had to be extremely careful of the ramification their course of action towards the RSA had on their own domestic situation. Thus, the two Democrats, despite their high ideals of human and civil rights, committed themselves to a policy of dissuasion only through diplomacy and not through coercion.301

With the inauguration of the Nixon administration in 1969, the United States started to pursue a different strategy, largely defined by NSSM (National Security Study Memorandum) 39. Drafted by then National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, this paper outlined five possible options for a new approach towards South Africa. The administration eventually opted for option two, which concentrated on building a close association with South Africa to support US economic interests and as a consequence, strengthen US anti-apartheid diplomacy. The administration relaxed the arms embargo and abstained from apartheid-condemning resolution in the UNSC.

While Ford more or less stuck to his predecessor’s policy, the Carter administration defined its southern Africa policy by its strong emphasize on human rights issues and not by the global bipolar struggle. Relations with Pretoria thus cooled off to a new low and the apartheid-regime was confronted with a strong anti-apartheid rhetoric coming from the White House. After 1975, the US ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, essentially guided Carter’s southern Africa approach and recom-

300 Ibid., pp. 5-16.
mended that the United States should recognize both Neto’s government in Angola and Machel’s government in Mozambique, otherwise the entire region would descend into chaos. However, with the end of détente and renewed Cold War tensions emerging at the end of his presidency, Carter started to treat southern Africa as a new theater in the Cold War and stepped away from his “human rights” approach back towards the strategy Nixon had utilized.302

The biggest impact on US-RSA relation, however, had the Reagan administration. Thus, the approach Ronald Reagan took towards South Africa during his eight year tenure from 1981 until 1989 will be probed in more detail on the following pages. Succinctly put, his foreign policy towards southern Africa was defined by three distinct phases, with the first ranging from 1981-1984, the second from 1984-1986 and the third from 1986 until the end of his presidency in 1989.

During his first presidential campaign in 1980, Reagan said, “the African problem is a Russian weapon aimed at us [the United States].”303 Yet, the new Republican president diverted remarkably less attention to the entire African continent and put the entire agenda into the very competent hands of his Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker. As a highly intellectual liberal conservative, Crocker, together with the State Department and its Secretary George Shultz, occupied the one end of the spectrum within the Reagan administration which was opposed to that of the hardline “Reaganites”, a group including Secretary of Defense Weinberg, White House Director of Communication Buchanan and White House Chief of Staff Don Reagan. This pack was led by Bill Casey, the ruthless Director of Central Intelligence.304

Since neither Congress, nor the executive branch nor the American public showed significant interest in southern Africa, Crocker had a relative free-hand in developing a “masterplan” for his administration named “Constructive Engagement”.305 Constructive Engagement marked, to a certain extent, a synthesis of Nixon’s NSSM 39 and Carter’s human rights focused approach. It was the policy’s key premise that a “window of opportunity” had arrived when P.W. Botha became the new prime minister of South Africa. Botha’s declaration that his country had to “adapt or die” was perceived by the administration in Washington that Pretoria was at the brink of introducing significant reforms. And indeed, the reforms introduced by Both initially marked a clear break from the rhetoric of the old “apartheid-grandes” Verwoerd and Vorster. Although no one in Washington seriously believed that these reforms would lead to an end of apartheid, they considered Botha’s efforts worth backing. In this respect, Constructive Engagement sought to back “reform from above”.306 Despite numerous charges to the contrary, Constructive Engagement did not try to preserve white domination in South Africa. It rather presented a genuine

---

303 Newsum/Abegunrin, United States Foreign Policy Towards Southern Africa, p. 89.
306 Thomson, U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, pp. 112-114.
attempt to assist the Botha administration in its endeavors and promote further change. Crocker had long realized that South Africa’s strategic and economic potentials could never be fully realized as long as Pretoria stuck to its segregated system. The racial conflict not only benefited Soviet opportunism, it also disrupted unlimited commercial relations. Until the mid-1980s the Reagan administration thus continuously eased the embargos imposed by its predecessors and protected Pretoria from significant UN-resolution with its veto in the Security Council.307

Ultimately, however, Constructive Engagement did not succeed in the first half of the 1980s, mostly for two reasons. First, Crocker put too much faith into Botha’s genuine will to implement reforms. The success of Constructive Engagement was entirely dependent on the National Party’s reform program. When these reforms failed to materialize in the desired extent, the United States therefore had no space for maneuvering. Additionally, given the opposition of Washington’s hardliners to Constructive Engagement, Botha had several possibilities to circumvent the official diplomatic channels with the State Department. By establishing a “backyard diplomacy” with hardliners in the Department of Defense, the CIA and the NSA, Botha could squeeze out the United States much more than it would have been possible through the Constructive Engagement approach, while giving Washington’s hardliners the possibility to undermine Constructive Engagement.

Second, the Reagan administration failed to communicate the real intentions behind Constructive Engagement, both to the black majority in South Africa and to their people at home. In South Africa, the Americans clearly failed to integrate the black majority into the entire process. Yet, these contacts would have been desperately necessary when Washington failed to adapt adequately to the worsening situation in South Africa in the mid-1980s. These contacts could have countered the charges that the United States was tilting towards an exclusively pro-apartheid stance and would have provided them with the opportunity to explain their strategy to the black representatives. When the White House welcomed South Africa’s new constitution, the Chief of the KwaZulu Bantustan, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, regarded as an ally in Washington, summed up the feelings of many black South Africans when he stated that the US support for the new constitution “was a slap in the face for black South Africa”. Bishop Tutu was even more skeptical. Asked by journalists if he thought Constructive Engagement was becoming more conservative, he replied, “I frankly don’t care… I have written off the American government”308

At home, Crocker’s policy failed for the same reason. The population’s unfamiliarity with the situation and Constructive Engagement’s failure to deliver results made it an easy target for both the hardliner’s within the executive branch as well as for the anti-apartheid movement. By the mid-1980s a consensus had developed outside the Reagan administration that Constructive Engagement, which was regarded as a “very optimistic and innocent view on South African psychology and policy” had failed.309

---

Yet, “despite the inherent difficulties of Constructive Engagement,” Crocker said, “the administration sees no reason to shift course and every reason to persevere.”

The beginning of the second phase was marked by Crocker’s efforts to relaunch Constructive Engagement. Yet, the township uprisings and domestic events eliminated any chance that this effort would succeed. The brutal methods with which the South African Security Forces tried to crack down the riots in their townships, left their mark on the American public. During the riots, most news programs in the US broadcasted an item on South Africa. The US public was now able to watch mass funerals, overturned cars aflame, stone-throwing adolescents and armored cars rolling through townships on a daily basis in their living rooms. An American anti-apartheid activist was of the opinion that “Americans have the impression something doesn’t exist unless it’s on television”. What was true during the Vietnam War was thus, albeit to a far lesser extent, also true for South Africa. The American population’s awareness of the grievances in South Africa had risen, yet, according to a CBS poll, still 58 percent of the population could not give an answer to the question whether they approve of apartheid or not due to a lack of information on the issue.

Yet, what changed dramatically was the opinion of the political elite in Washington, mostly for two reasons. First the visit of Desmond Tutu at the White House in December 1985 gave momentum to the leading anti-apartheid movements within the United States. The other reason was, ironically, Reagan’s landslide reelection win in the 1984 presidential election. While South Africa was not a major issue during the campaign, Constructive Engagement had been opposed by Reagan’s Democratic opponent, Walter Mondale. It was the Democrats’ opinion that this was an issue on which public opinion could be mobilized against the administration. Spearheaded by the Democratic senator and outspoken opponent of apartheid Ted Kennedy, Congress started to exercise increasing pressure on the Reagan administration. By the beginning of 1985, bipartisan consensus had been achieved in both the House and the Senate, which increased the pressure on the president even further. Moreover, disagreements within the executive branch reached a new level when the State Department refused to blindly follow the Reaganites’ foreign policy course which they regarded as fundamentally wrong and as a direct contradiction to Constructive Engagement.

Meanwhile, the anti-apartheid movement achieved tremendous success in its local divestment campaigns. These campaigns called on American companies to pull their investments out of South Africa, which resulted in a mass exodus of US companies in the second half of the 1980s, sharply reducing US private investments to only US$ 900 million in 1992.

---

111 Ibid., 132-134.
112 Barber/Barratt, South Africa’s Foreign Policy, p. 308.
113 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 298.
When Reagan got wind that Congress was about to pass a major bill involving sanctions against South Africa, he pre-empted the proposition by issuing an Executive Order which imposed mild sanctions on the RSA. The executive order included i.a. bans on new loans to South Africa, on the sale of computer hardware and software to the South African government and on the importation of military equipment from South Africa. With this order, the president made an attempt to water down the congressional legislation whilst keeping the South African issue within the jurisdiction of the executive. Although the executive order was not as strict as the legislation the Senate was going to propose, Reagan’s initiative succeeded as it was deemed satisfactory by a majority in Congress.

Whilst Reagan regained the initiative on the South African issue, Crocker regained some optimism that an adapted form of Constructive Engagement would still work after he met with Pik Botha in Vienna. There, the South African Foreign Minister grandiosely advertised an upcoming speech during which his president was going to announce major reforms in South Africa. Yet again, the Reagan administration put too much faith in Botha’s willingness for reform. After Botha delivered his speech and fell into the Rubicon instead of crossing it, a South African diplomat observed, “we did not give [Crocker] that political protection he needed, he was naked”. Pretoria once again failed to deliver the most essential ingredient for Constructive Engagement – reforms on which the United States could build on. Nevertheless, the State Department continued to support Constructive Engagement and only days before the 1986 crackdown Secretary Shultz stated that the United States “must recognize that in the past year the South African Government has begun meaningful reform. Our policy is based on the premise that South Africa is a society in transition.”

With opposition to the administration’s course immensely rising both in the public and on Capitol Hill, Reagan stated in a direct letter to P.W. Botha that it is required from “you to take bold initiatives if the current debilitating impasse in South Africa’s affairs is to be broken and the negotiations to which you committed your government on August 15 are to start. Without such initiatives, our Congress, the international banking community and governments in the West more broadly, will not be able to play a constructive role in South Africa’s future.” Reagan thus implicitly stated that Constructive Engagement would fail unless Botha was willing to present significant reforms, otherwise he could not prevent the United States from taking a more punitive course of action.

Yet, neither Botha nor Reagan were willing to change their respective code of conduct. When the SADF invaded Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe in May 1986, Botha acted contrary to the demands of Crocker and Reagan to apply a more moderate course of action. Reagan on the other hand failed to clearly condemn Pretoria’s latest move.

---

315 Ibid., pp.134-137.
The straw that finally broke the camel’s back was a speech delivered by Reagan in front of the United Nations during which he praised the reforms implemented by the Botha administration and heavily condemned the ANC for its “terrorist activities” and not South Africa for its outrageous human rights violations.317 This speech is also regarded as the birth-hour of the “Reagan Doctrine”, a policy that had significant ramifications on the development of southern Africa (see chapter 4.4.1). The American public was outraged, Desmond Tutu thundered: “The West, for my part, can go to hell.”318 With the administration clearly failing to meet the public demands, Capitol Hill once again took away the initiative from the White House and adopted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA). Initially vetoed by the president, the act passed the House with support from both sides of the isle with 313 to 83 and the Senate with 78 to 21 votes. It was the first override of a presidential veto in foreign policy matters since 1973.319 Among the punitive actions imposed by the act were the prohibition of new investments in the RSA, the termination of US trade assistance, a ban on imports from parastatal companies as well as on uranium, iron, steel, sugar and textiles from South Africa and a ban on the export of fossil products and military equipment to the RSA. Furthermore, the executive branch was required to report on the political situation in South Africa twelve months after the enactment of the bill.320 The passage of the CAAA marked the all-time peak of congressional involvement in the South Africa issue and also the end of the second phase, a phase defined mostly by the struggle between the executive and legislative branch in Washington.

The third phase was characterized by the Reagan administration’s numerous efforts to circumvent the CAAA and a declining involvement of US Congress in the matter. It also marked a clear shift in the overall approach of the Reagan administration.

After CAAA had been implemented, the Reagan administration tirelessly stressed that the bill was acting counter to US intentions. It would only harden white attitudes and weaken capitalism, what the administration regarded as the most powerful force to topple apartheid. As Secretary Shultz stated: “The administration’s doubts about the utility of punitive sanctions were, and are, serious. Nevertheless, they are the law of the land, and we will enforce them.”321 With a few important exceptions, this was true. Through acts of linguistic narrow-mindedness, the administration was able to circumvent several of the CAAA’s prohibitions. Since the import of uranium and uranium ore was restricted, the US Treasury Department simply classified uranium hexafluoride, an essential component in nuclear reactors, as a fuel and thus exempted from the embargo. The same principle was applied for loans. The legislation banned US banks from making new loans to the RSA, so the administration chose to continue to permit

318 Thomson, U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, p. 147.
“short-term credits” to Pretoria which were basically the same thing, only presented in a different wrapping.

Additionally, Reagan was instructed by the CAAA to propose to the UNSC to impose measures similar in scope and type as are imposed by this act. Reagan’s administration point-blankly refused to do this. Reagan also refused to deliver the requested comprehensive report over further punitive action one year after the bill was enacted. He just stated that “he was unable to report significant progress leading to the end of apartheid” and that “the reviews of events in South Africa since October 1986 provides little hope for optimism in the immediate future.”

The most significant change during the final years of Reagan’s tenure, however, was in his overall approach towards the southern African region. It has already been mentioned that Crocker was given a rather free hand in developing Constructive Engagement which resulted in a policy which focused exclusively on the southern African region during the early 1980s. Yet, this regional focus differed significantly from Reagan’s overall foreign policy understanding, which he, as a wholehearted “Cold Warrior”, based on the premise that each and every conflict is part of the bigger global struggle between the two superpowers. This difference was not only a result of Reagan’s initial lack of interest in the region and thus the free hand Crocker had, but also because Washington’s hands were tied to directly challenge Moscow’s proxies in the region. For the president it was beyond doubt that the strong Cuban presence in Angola composed the biggest threat to US interests in the region, yet an amendment to the US Arms Export Control Act of 1976 (sponsored by Democratic Senator Dick Clark, hence known under the name “Clark Amendment”) prohibited the US government from any direct involvement in the Angolan Civil War (see chapter 4.1.3). Whilst the amendment was bypassed by using Israel as a proxy supplier for UNITA, Reagan still had to rely mostly on South Africa to act as Washington’s proxy in the region.

Ironically, the same Congress that passed the CAAA, had also repealed the Clark amendment one year earlier in June 1985 after immense lobbying by the executive branch. This opened a new door for the White House since it was now able to directly support UNITA in its war against the MPLA/Cuban forces. Crocker’s regional approach thus was finally replaced when the southern African conflicts were, as any other foreign policy event, contextualized within the Cold War frame. As a consequence, not only had Pretoria’s significance as a proxy for Washington declined, it also deprived the National Party of its international legitimation. Ever since the Cold War had arrived in southern Africa, the NP portrayed itself as the last capitalist stronghold in the region. With the Cold War now being diverted away from Pretoria, and also its end approaching due to the rapprochement between Washington and Moscow, Botha’s administration lost a major argument for its own legitimation. On the other hand, a major reason that prevented Western governments from establishing close relations with the ANC was gone.

---

322 Ibid., pp. 152-154.
323 Wright, US Foreign Policy and Destabilisation in Southern Africa, p. 159.
324 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 163.
When Reagan left the White House in January 1989, he and his administration could look back at an ambiguous foreign policy towards South Africa. While Crocker’s Constructive Engagement was a sound proposal to deal with Pretoria, the policy’s inherent flaw was that its success was entirely depending on Botha’s will to reform the apartheid system. When Pretoria refused to deliver the necessary reforms, Reagan not only lost out on the opportunity to back Crocker’s approach by increasing the pressure on the Botha regime, he also tolerated its undermining by the hardliners within his own administration. These hardliners continued to exercise the strongest influence on the executive’s decision making progress. Reagan thus continued to deliver carrots to Pretoria whilst his people and an increasing number in Congress demanded the sticks. Seeing the regions conflict increasingly through the glasses of the Cold War, he refused to impose any form of sanctions which would have severely undermined Pretoria’s ability to act as America’s alleged proxy in the region. Ultimately it was Congress that put the leash around South Africa’s neck by imposing CAAA, but only while concurrently opening Reagan another door through the repeal of the Clark amendment. Being now able to challenge its communist opponents directly, the hardliners also agreed to a more punitively course of action against Pretoria. Yet it was not Reagan’s concerns over Pretoria’s increasing human rights violations but the changed setting in the Cold War that allowed him to significantly change his course of action at the end of his presidency. At the time vice president George H. W. Bush took over the Oval Office, Botha had more or less lost his last reliable powerful ally in the Western world. By his refusal to embark on Crocker’s Constructive Engagement, Botha had thrown away the most serious international offer of the 1980s, an offer intended to help his administration find a solution for its impossible domestic situation.

2.4.2. MOSCOW AND THE ANC

The Soviet Union gained a foothold in sub-Saharan Africa when the continent got hit by the first wave of decolonization during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Starting with the independence of Ghana, Guinea and Zaire, Soviet leaders immediately took black Africa for a new revolutionary front. Given the Soviet Union’s inherent anti-colonial stance, many of these revolting states turned towards Moscow looking for support during their struggles for independence and post-independence. Enhanced by the still prevalent euphoria of the Sputnik triumph and the launch of Moscow’s first ICBM the Soviets saw a clear shift of power in their favor. Yet, this euphoria was not of long duration, because when Khrushchev fell in 1964, so did Algeria, Ghana, Mali and Zaire. Thus the Soviet’s spent much of the 1960s coming to terms with African realities, when it became apparent that African militaries were pushing politicians aside and assuming power themselves.

---

By the mid-1970s, the pendulum swung again, released by the out-of-nowhere collapse of the Portuguese empire, giving the Kremlin a second chance in Africa. Angola and Mozambique declared themselves Marxist-Leninist and left-wing revolutions began to spark in Rhodesia, Namibia and as it seemed for a short time, in South Africa. With the United States traumatized by their debacle in Vietnam and outraged by the Watergate scandal, many were encouraged around the world that Western capitalism was on the defensive and the Third World was “inexorably marching towards socialism.”329 The peak of Soviet involvement was reached in 1975/76 when it was heavily engaged in the Angolan civil war and fought, or at least supported, proxy wars in Somalia/Ethiopia, Zaire and Zimbabwe. It seemed that by the end of the 1970s, Moscow had recovered from the disappointments of the late 1960s. Yet it was only the Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia that ended with a decisive victory for the “Soviet side” (see chapter 4.3.1.) While the MPLA seized power in Angola, it was still challenged by FNLA/UNITA, Zimbabwe was “lost” to Mugabe who was more leaning towards China and Mozambique started to look westwards for getting the help it so desperately needed.330

With the beginning of the 1980s the Soviet model of development had lost its appeal.331 The Soviet sponsored countries had realized that the Kremlin was primarily driven by its own ideologically motivated agenda, which was too often not in line with the interests of these African countries, whose primary goal was not the establishment of a socialist state.332 In turn, the “inexorable march towards socialism” turned out to be a costly imperial endeavor for Moscow.333

When Moscow’s overall situation in general and its financial capabilities in particular worsened throughout the 1980s, this endeavor turned into a plight. The African countries were looking increasingly in vain towards the Kremlin for loans and investments to boost their backward economies. With Mikhail Gorbachev’s takeover in 1985, the Soviet Union retreated from its confrontational stance with the West and embarked on a course which sought negotiated solutions to the numerous Cold War conflicts around the world. The Soviet leadership had realized that the Third World needed to go through a phase of capitalism before it could successfully join the socialist world. This realization came primarily out of financial considerations, since the USSR was simply not wealthy enough to carry these countries through the process of industrialization.334 As of 1985, the USSR began a slow but gradual retreat from the African continent, losing its leadership role in almost all the countries, even in Angola and Mozambique.335

329 O’Neill/Munslow, Ending the Cold War in Southern Africa, here p. 86.
333 Zubok, Soviet Foreign Policy from Détente to Gorbachev, 1975-1985, pp. 89–111, here, p. 98.
334 O’Neill/Munslow, Ending the Cold War in Southern Africa, here pp. 87-89.
Of all the endeavors the USSR had in Africa, the relationship with the ANC was the longest and, in hindsight, probably the most fruitful. Moscow acted exclusively through the ANC in South Africa and had a relationship far less complex compared to that between Washington and Pretoria. The Soviet Union was not caught in the dilemma of feeling the urge to support a country out of strategic interests while at the same time feeling the moral necessity to subject the same country to punitive actions because of the incomparability of that country’s ideals with its own ideals.

Ties between Moscow and the ANC date back to the time prior to World War II. Yet, when the ANC was founded in 1912, it was a rather genteel organization, its tactics were to lobby on behalf of the black people and had no ideology beyond a moderate nationalism. Only when the ANC began to establish a relationship with the South African Communist Party (SACP), which was founded in 1921 by white immigrants from the United Kingdom, did socialist ideals find their way into the ANC. SACP believed that it is their duty in the first instance to fight for black majority rule and only afterwards aim for a socialist stage. Despite the fact that this made both ANC and SACP natural allies, the early stage of the relationship between these two parties had not been a smooth one. Competition between SACP and ANC reached its peak when the ANC youth league, a band of young black radicals, including such prominent names as Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela, took over the ANC leadership in the 1940s. More or less anti-communists in their early days, these young leaders feared that the highly disciplined Stalinist Communist Party would impose its socialist agenda over that of the ANC. These fears were somewhat minimized when Walter Sisulu was elected General Secretary of the ANC. When the National Party came to power in 1948 and made clear that it intended to ban the SACP, many of its members looked for cover in the ANC. Two years later, the SACP was indeed banned, which had two important side effects. First several influential communists joined the ANC. Second, it disarmed the anti-communist attitude of Mandela, Tambo and Sisulu, who were prepared to adapt their ideals to accommodate an ally. Until then, contacts between the ANC/SACP and Moscow were limited to occasional visits to the Kremlin in which the SACP was the clear senior partner over the ANC.

Ten years after the apartheid-regime had banned the SACP it also banned the ANC in March 1960 in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre. It was during these early years of illegality when the ANC was depending the most on its relationship with the SACP. Since the communists already had 10 years of experience with clandestine work, knowledge which turned out to be invaluable in re-establishing the ANC in exile.

Additionally, the Communist Party had better international contacts than the ANC. It was the SACP that drew the ANC away from its Maoist attitude into the Soviet orbit and reestablished contacts with the Kremlin. Interestingly, however, as Odd Arne Westad points out in his brilliant work *The Global Cold War*, the relationship between the CPSU and the ANC developed in spite of, rather than because

---

of the SACP influence. Westad argues that evidence suggests that senior members of the CPSU were highly suspicious of their South African counterparts and placed more thrust in the leadership of the ANC.\textsuperscript{340}

Moscow therefore wanted to establish direct contacts with ANC leader Oliver Tambo. Tambo, who left South Africa only a few days before the ANC was banned, hesitated to accept the Kremlin’s invitation for he did not want to pick sides in the East-West-Conflict. Only after the remaining leadership within the RSA, including Mandela and Sisulu, was arrested and the ANC was basically wiped out within South Africa, did Tambo agree to visit the CPSU leadership in the Kremlin.

After the banning of both ANC and SACP, many of its members decided to continue their struggle by the only means left to them, through illegality and force of arms. The result was the formation of “Umkhonto we Sizwe” (MK) in mid-1961. Meaning “Spear of the People”, MK would later become the militant wing of the ANC, responsible for most of the attacks conducted in the name of the ANC.\textsuperscript{341}

When Tambo finally arrived in Moscow in April 1963, the USSR had already decided to support the ANC/SACP in their armed struggle. However, it is important to mention that MK was founded prior to Moscow’s decision to support the ANC. Additionally, the formation was not set up by the ANC National Executive. MK thus was an autonomously founded organization under the overall leadership of Nelson Mandela. In Moscow, Tambo was able to secure US$ 300,000 for the ANC, financial aid that was desperately needed since China had cut off all its assistance by then. Moscow further agreed to train MK personnel within the Soviet Union. Tambo also addressed the question of arms supply. The Soviets finally agreed to deliver arms through countries with whom “they [the Soviets] have normal relations with.”\textsuperscript{342} This country was at first Tanzania, where the exiled ANC set up its first headquarters in Dar es Salaam.

During the mid-1960s, the situation of the ANC did not look very promising. Its entire leadership except Tambo was arrested while the bulk of its members was exiled in Tanzania. There the camps were full of committed women and men who wanted to start the armed struggle against the apartheid-regime, yet its leadership was not yet prepared to start the violence. Only when disaffection reached a point of imminent mutiny, the leadership decided that the only way to solve the problem was to throw the army into battle. The result was the Wankie campaign, a joint ZAPU/ANC raid into Rhodesia. Initially, with the element of surprise on their side, they overwhelmed Ian Smith’s forces. But their tactics and equipment was hopelessly inferior compared to that of the Rhodesian army which resulted in heavy casualties for the ANC and ZAPU. A period of demoralization set in after the campaign which was intensified by Tanzania’s announcement that the ANC had to leave the country for it posed to great a security risk for Tanzania.\textsuperscript{343}

\textsuperscript{341} Ellis, The ANC in Exile, here pp. 442-443.
\textsuperscript{342} Shubin, The Hot "Cold War", pp. 239-246.
\textsuperscript{343} Ellis, The ANC in Exile, here pp. 443-444.
With no African country willing to admit the ANC, SACP and MK, it was once again the Soviet Union that stepped in and airlifted hundreds of ANC, SACP and MK personnel out of Tanzania into the Soviet Union. Not only did the Soviet Union agree to accept the movements on a very short notice, it also agreed to extend their stay for over two years. During the early 1970s, the USSR continued to train and equip the ANC, yet given the lack of an operational base close to South Africa, its actions were limited. 344

Again it was the year 1975 that fundamentally altered the ANC’s situation for the better. With the independence of Angola and Mozambique and the coming into power of governments hostile to Pretoria, there were not only countries willing to let the ANC establish its operational bases on its territory, these countries were also in the closest possible proximity to the ANC’s adversary. Additionally, when two years later the South African security forces brutally cracked down the Soweto riots, a mass exodus of young black South Africans into these two countries started, who sought to join the MK in its armed struggle against Pretoria. The ANC was therefore able to reestablish operational bases in southern Africa and could significantly enlarge its membership. Moscow meanwhile transferred hundreds of military advisors into Angola in order to train and equip the new MK-members. Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, USSR support for the ANC grew constantly, enabling the MK to conduct large operations for a protracted period of time. The peak of these operations was reached in 1984, which had a tremendous impact on the township uprisings in South Africa. 345

Pretoria responded with the already mentioned disastrous destabilization campaign in Mozambique and Angola. One of the main consequences of Pretoria’s POD was the disruption of the MK’s supply lines into South Africa, especially after Nkomati, when the ANC could only operate from Angola through Namibia. South Africa eventually succeeded in pinning down the MK, which had devastating effects on the moral of the fighters. Short of supplies, bored and frustrated, disenchanted by the corruption of some of their commanders and the brutality of the camp regime, the soldier’s mood became dangerous. By the end of 1984 open rebellion had broken out within the MK. During this time, the MK lost more members in fighting itself than in its war against South Africa and UNITA. After the mutineers were defeated, their leaders were arrested and publicly executed or detained. The disaster of the mutiny in Angola coincided with events inside the RSA that gave the ANC the greatest opportunity for a military breakthrough. The explosion of black South Africa seemed to offer suitable conditions for a guerilla war within the country, yet the ANC, due to the mutiny, was too ill equipped to exploit them. 346

Despite the inner turmoil, the Soviet Union continued to stand firm behind the ANC. In a 1986-meeting between Gorbachev and Tambo, both sides agreed on three major conditions for a settlement in southern Africa. These conditions were that Pretoria had to end its aggressions, it should grant independence to Namibia and abolish apartheid in its entirety. To reassure Tambo that Moscow’s withdrawal from Africa would have not the slightest impact on its relationship with the ANC, Gorbachev granted

344 Shubin, The Hot "Cold War", p. 245.
345 Ibid., pp. 247-253.
346 Ellis, The ANC in Exile, pp. 444-447.
the ANC an official diplomatic mission in Moscow and agreed to train the MK also in conventional warfare. With the beginning international relaxation and the growing international recognition of the ANC as the representative of the liberation struggle in South Africa, Moscow came to the realization that a diplomatic solution to the South African situation became more and more feasible.347

That a diplomatic course of action might be the best course after all was also realized by the ANC during the late 1980s. In retrospect, it failed to appreciate the full strength of the apartheid-regime and its willingness to do almost everything to eliminate the MK’s ability to operate. Its guerilla capabilities were further diminished by the failure to resolve the lethal political intrigues and with the support of the Soviet Union being not much more than of moral nature, the ANC realized that it cannot defeat the Botha regime militarily. The decision to embark on a non-violent approach to achieve majority rule was further reinforced when the apartheid-regime started negotiations with then still imprisoned Nelson Mandela in late 1987. The ANC now placed all its hope in the former youth league to return the movement to its democratic tradition.

The Soviet Union’s relationship with South Africa differed fundamentally from that between Washington and Pretoria. While Washington tried to influence the decision making process in Pretoria on the highest state level, Moscow refrained from a direct involvement with the Botha regime. The USSR treated the ANC as the true representative of South Africa’s interest from the early days of its anti-apartheid struggle. In this position, the ANC became the strongest ally of the USSR in the entire southern African region. Yet, the abolition of its moderate anti-communist stance in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the simultaneous swing to the left occurred to a large part out of political opportunism and not ideological conviction. Nonetheless, if it had not been for the Soviet Union’s massive support of arms, money, military advisors and not at least the granting of asylum to large parts of the ANC/MK cadres inside the Soviet Union, it would have been impossible for the ANC to evolve into the significant political and military force it was during the 1980s, if it had survived its exile period at all.

Contrary to Washington’s perception, the Kremlin was of the opinion that an end to the apartheid-regime could not be accomplished through “reforms from above” but exclusively through a transfer of power to the black majority, represented by the ANC. Regarding armed guerilla struggles as integral part of Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution, the USSR was thus highly willing to support a movement that aimed to overthrow the capitalist-backed regime of a country with a highly strategic value.

In the end, however, it were the developments on the domestic level that paved the way for a settlement in South Africa. The superpowers certainly contributed to these internal developments, yet their biggest merit is probably that both Washington and Moscow, in their process of burying the Cold War, winked at all the ideological differences and supported South Africa in its crucial transformation process at the end of the 1980s.

2.5. TNS – “Total National Screw-Up?”

Given South Africa’s status quo at the beginning of 1989, it does not require much of an analysis to conclude that Pretoria’s entire domestic and foreign policy and therefore the underlying TNS had failed by the end of the 1980s. To conclude, however, why the implementation of TNS did not succeed in achieving Pretoria’s domestic and foreign policy goals is, due to the strategy’s complex nature, not that straightforward. In general, three reasons can be identified why TNS had not and, in fact, could have never had worked in South Africa.

At first, the Botha regime failed to understand that “reforming” apartheid was not enough to successfully implement the domestic pillar of TNS. Throughout the reign of TNS, political participation was denied to more than three quarters of South Africa’s population. They were still subjected to racial segregation, exposed to state violence and forced to dwell in the inhuman Bantustans. Thus, the regime was not able to mobilize the majority of its population for the cause of TNS. Beaufre, however, clearly stated that a successful implementation of TNS would only work, if all elements which constitute a state were incorporated. As a consequence, the regime failed to amass enough internal support which would have been necessary to successfully wage a multiple-front counterrevolutionary war. In fact, the regime did not simply fail to include all its people into TNS, its way of implementing the strategy even led to an intensification of black oppression. In combination with a strengthened security apparatus that was equipped with more authority to exert power than ever, this significantly contributed to the escalation of domestic violence in the mid-1980s, which in turn further diminished the support for TNS.

Next to a wrong interpretation, the second reason for TNS’s failure was that its raison d’être was provided by something fictional. Pretoria introduced the strategy to counter a total communist onslaught, yet this onslaught was nothing more than a distorted, paranoid perception of the Botha-regime. In other words, TNS was introduced to counter something that simply did not exist. Thus, all the subsequent formulations of the strategy were wrong, since they failed to address reality. In further consequence, all the actions Pretoria took, defied their actual purpose. Without a total onslaught, the foreign pillar’s short-term goal made no sense any more. As it became increasingly obvious that Moscow was not orchestrating a “takeover” of southern Africa, the “communist threat” was not a strong enough argument anymore, to guarantee Western support and prevent an increasing isolation of South Africa. Without foreign (diplomatic and military) support, Pretoria had not enough resources to pursue its medium-term goal (i.e. the destabilization of the Frontline States) to the necessary extent. Admittedly, the regime succeeded in afflicting serious damages to its neighbors by a relentless application of POD. Yet, Pretoria could not pressure one single state to depart from its anti-apartheid course. It failed to bring RENAMO into power in Maputo, to overthrow the MPLA in Luanda and eventually to prevent the independence of Namibia. Above all, it did not succeed in eliminating the ANC, the biggest threat to its own power. This in turn made the implementation of the long-term goals ultimately impossible. With not a single Frontline State
beholden to Pretoria, the successful establishment of CONSAS was a pure illusion. While Pretoria’s POD aimed at preventing its majority ruled neighbors from forming an alliance, it achieved the contrary. The SADCC, the FLS’s counterpart to CONSAS, was created to boycott South Africa’s transportation routes. Zimbabwe’s liberation movements only gathered pace after they were able to use Mozambique as a starting point for their operations. The same was true for SWAPO, which significantly increased its activities after it was granted refuge in Angola. The only success South Africa had in this regard was that Maputo denied the ANC to operate from its territory following the signing of the Nkomati treaty. Yet, for the ANC this was only a minor setback, since it was still tolerated in Zimbabwe and Angola.

Third, Pretoria failed to increase the size of its vast security apparatus to the amount necessary to successfully implement TNS. While the inner tensions continued to escalate, an unacceptably high number of SADF-soldiers got tied down in the country’s townships which were actually needed in the numerous conflicts in the neighboring states. This two-front war exceeded Pretoria’s military and financial capabilities, it was simply not able to simultaneously wage a war abroad and at home.

These arguments lead to the conclusion that it was not an inherent flaw of Beaufre’s theory which caused its failure in South Africa. Despite having read and quoted Beaufre ad nauseam, Botha and his henchmen failed to understand the French general. Ultimately, TNS was abhorrent to the apartheid system. In consequence, Pretoria interpreted and implemented the strategy in the wrong way. One and a half decades of executing a policy which was characterized by aggression, coercion and ignorance, aimed at maintaining its hegemonic status in southern Africa and securing its very own existence, achieved the exact opposite. The apartheid-regime lost all its influence over its neighboring countries while the regime itself was collapsing. TNS was an utter failure, both on the domestic and foreign policy level.

Yet, it would be wrong to accredit South Africa’s collapse exclusively to the failure of TNS. After all, the country’s biggest weakness would have existed even if Pretoria would have pursued a strategy different from TNS. It still oppressed the vast majority of its own people in a most unjust way. And if the history of the African continent during the 20th century had pointed out something, it was that majority rule was ultimately inevitable. In the end, it was the black people’s longing for justice, equality and peace that brought down the last white-minority regime on the African continent. The violent, bloody and destructive steps the Botha regime took just made it more difficult to make this longing become reality.
CHAPTER III

Mozambique – The Chanceless Country?

“...when you look at what is going on in this country, you wonder what is behind this war. It is still very difficult to determine, what is behind it.”

(Melissa Wells, US ambassador to Mozambique in 1989)

3.1. Setting a Course – Strategies and Aims of Mozambique

3.1.1. NEW RULERS AND A NEW SYSTEM

Independence for Mozambique began when the shockwaves of the successful military coup d'état, which ended the Estado Novo in April 1974, were still noticeable. Although FRELIMO was caught by surprise by the events transpiring in Lisbon, the liberation movement reacted quickly to the decisively altered political situation. In this military and political highly chaotic period of time, FRELIMO engaged into ceasefire negotiations with the colonial administration. While the latter was only prepared to talk about a ceasefire itself, FRELIMO-leader Samora Machel brought three non-negotiable prerequisites for such a ceasefire on the table. These were the Portuguese recognition of FRELIMO as the only legitimate representative of the Mozambican people, the complete independence of Mozambique and the transfer of all powers to FRELIMO. The Portuguese initially refused to accept these terms, yet with both the political and military momentum lying with FRELIMO, the colonialists eventually had no other option but to agree to these terms. On September 7, 1974 the Lusaka Accord was signed, Lisbon agreed to cede power to FRELIMO after nine months of a joint interim government. Thus, on June 25, 1975, after a thirteen-years-lasting war of independence, Samora Machel was able to proclaim the independent country of Mozambique under the rule of FRELIMO. While the birth of the new country was met with strong euphoria, it soon became apparent that its early years were not going to be that much of a difference compared to the last decade of its colonial predecessor.

FRELIMO was officially founded in Tanzania at the beginning of the war of independence in 1962. Its origins lay in three small ethnically based parties which were eventually united one year later.

349 Iain Christie, Machel of Mozambique, Harare, Zimbabwe 1988, p. 82.
FRELIMO’s power was consolidated in the hands of a few educated southerners, most notably Eduardo Mondlane, a professor at Syracuse University, and Samora Machel, who, although not having a higher education, formulated the party’s key ideas. From the beginning on, FRELIMO was therefore considered to be a highly intellectual party. This intellectual foundation significantly determined the party’s approach in formulating its policy, since it was their belief that such a policy had to be based on the correct analysis of the country itself. FRELIMO began to carefully study the history, social structure and economic developments of colonial Mozambique and tried to formulate an integrated policy from these studies. Out of this analysis emerged a strong theoretical approach, aimed at transforming Mozambique into a modern 20th century nation. Its implementation, however, brought some serious challenges to the FRELIMO government.

Initially, the movement’s political orientation hardly differed from the other typical African nationalist movements at that time, it was characterized by a strongly anti-imperialistic stance which regarded colonialism as its primary enemy. A clear affiliation with either the Western or the Eastern block was neither expressed by the party itself nor deducible from its actions. Given the fact that both Mondlane and Machel expressed strong sympathies for Marxist-Leninism, this is quite an interesting fact. Yet, the early years of FRELIMO were marked by strong inner turmoil and especially Mondlane was challenged by other non-Marxist members of the leadership. It was only after these members were ousted from the party following the peak of the infightings in 1969/70 that the party made a sharp turn to the left. However, it took another seven years for the party to declare itself a Marxist-Leninist movement, which it did during the third party congress in 1977. By then, FRELIMO was equipped with a policy that resembled closely that of the socialist movements in Vietnam and Cuba.

Throughout the 1970s, FRELIMO conducted an intensive campaign of mass mobilization, during which it wanted to win over the Mozambican people for its cause. Machel said it was essential that the “process of liberation must also reach the traditional elements of the society”. In other words, he understood the liberation of Mozambique not only as an end to colonial oppression, but also as an end to the traditional structure of its society and economy. In his view, the birth of the new country had created a “national unity” which should be based on the transformation of Mozambique’s society and economy into that of developed country of the late 20th century. To accomplish this highly ambitious goal, the new leadership not only initiated a massive program of social engineering, it also tried to draw a clear line under the country’s colonial past. Unfortunately, as it was the case in several other countries during their first years of post-colonialism, this line was drawn with blood.

351 Ibid., p. 542.
352 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 176.
During the mid-1970s, the country was engulfed in fear and suspicion and “coercion became an ever more important component of mobilization and discipline.” While the bulk of the Portuguese administrative personnel left Mozambique around the time of independence, those who remained were often subjected to prosecution in FRELIMO’s attempt to eliminate even the slightest remnants of Portugal’s colonial past. FRELIMO rounded up native opposition leaders and Mozambicans who served in senior posts during the Portuguese reign, yet the movement soon realized that they could not hold everyone accountable for their involvement with the Portuguese. Those who were found guilty, the so-called “compromised”, experienced severe measures of coercion and were deprived of most of their political and civil rights. In a speech given by a FRELIMO party secretary in 1978, he indicated that “we have our policy, we arrest; we arrest the reactionaries, we have no fear regarding this. We punish.” Alleged reactionaries, collaborators within and without FRELIMO and Christian religious leaders (especially the Catholic Church was regarded as one of the most essential supporters of the colonialists) were detained and sent into re-education camps. During this “transitional period”, which lasted until 1982, FRELIMO was directly responsible for tens of thousands of deaths, while detention, displacement and forced relocation affected several hundred thousands more in Mozambique. Naturally, this brutal measures had an enormous negative impact on FRELIMO’s efforts of creating a “national unity” and drove people en masse into the arms of the Rhodesian army (which attacked the FRELIMO government immediately after independence) at first and later into that of RENAMO.

While FRELIMO initially regarded itself as a party of mass mobilization for people of all rank and file, this notion fundamentally changed after 1975. Although mass mobilization was still considered to be essential, henceforth this was to take place outside the party structure through various different organizations, while access to the inner party circle became limited to the intellectual leadership who regarded itself as the vanguard of FRELIMO. The inner party circle became the ruling elite which refused to hold general elections in 1975. FRELIMO was therefore without a democratically legitimized mandate from the Mozambican people, nonetheless it established a tight control over the new governmental institutions so that a distinction between party and state was more often than not impossible. Within the first year of independence, Mozambique had become a country with a one-party system, similar to that of Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe. Although FRELIMO later held general elections on a regular basis, this form of participation in the political decision making process offered the

355 Quoted in: Igreja, Frelimo’s Political Ruling through Violence and Memory in Postcolonial Mozambique, here p. 785.
356 Ibid., pp. 786-787
357 Newitt, A History of Mozambique, pp. 542-543.
population noting but the illusion of a choice, given the fact how these election were held. The Mozambicans could only choose from one single list whom they wanted as their representatives in the national assembly and the only way to actually get on this list was by nomination through the party cadres.358

On the organizational level, the biggest problem FRELIMO saw itself confronted with was to keep running the country’s administration. As already mentioned, the bulk of the colonial administration left the country with its colonial masters, despite the fact that Machel called upon them in 1973 to remain in new Mozambique – which is a controversial call given FRELIMO’s reaction towards the “compromised” after the Portuguese left. Between 1974 and 1976 more than 200,000 whites left Mozambique, effectively bringing the country’s administration to a standstill.359 This forced FRELIMO to fill the posts with the local population, which was insofar a fundamental challenge, as more than 90 percent of the population was illiterate at that time. As a consequence, most of the people occupying administrative positions on the local level were barely able to read and write. This situation was further aggravated by the fact that the party leadership failed to create a clear task allocation. The anyway overwhelmed administrators at the lower level thus got even more confused and began to cling themselves to both the old colonial rules and the new party directives. This led to an immensely bloated bureaucracy in which doing the paperwork often consumed more time than the task for which the paperwork was did itself.360

Moreover, FRELIMO was well aware of the dangers a one-party system and a massive bureaucracy could bring to a responsible and democratic movement it still strongly intended to be. Paradoxically, these dangers were countered by creating a pyramid of popular assemblies at the national, provincial, district and local level, aggregating to over a thousand in total. The “elections” to these assemblies followed the same principle as for the general assembly.361 Furthermore, the party began to allow public criticism to a certain degree in some areas of its policy. By allowing this limited form of criticism, the party was able to deflect it from other areas it did not want to be criticized, most notably from the leadership itself.

After the initial years of Mozambican independence and FRELIMO rule, the political structure of the new country therefore resembled closely that of the Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe. The country was ruled by a single pseudo-democratically elected party which did not refrain from prosecuting any opponents with the utmost severity, while personal rights, such as freedom of speech were limited. State and party increasingly became a homogenous entity, which, in combination with the lack of qualified administrative personnel and the out-of-proportion bureaucracy, made the entire state structure an immensely sluggish apparatus. The massive socio-economic reforms FRELIMO was nevertheless able to undertake, therefore seem all the more remarkable.

358 Ibid., p. 544.
359 Christie, Machel of Mozambique, pp. 82-83.
360 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 188-191.
3.1.2. **SOCIAL ENGINEERING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

When FRELIMO took over control of the country in mid-1975, Mozambique was a nation only in the widest sense of the word. The Portuguese put a great deal of effort into preventing the population of Mozambique to develop a sense of national identity. In the words of journalist William Finnegan:

*The fact that some people scarcely realize they live in a country called Mozambique stems from the fact that Portugal, which declared the place a unit to begin with, never had the wherewithal to turn it into one.*\(^{362}\)

Thus, by the time independence was finally achieved, the country lacked a common history, a common identity and a common language. Large parts of the population lived in abject poverty, was mostly illiterate and physically difficult to reach and hence to govern.\(^ {363}\) Against this backdrop, FRELIMO’s aspiration of transforming this rural, traditional society within a few years into that of a modern 20th century state was indeed a Herculean task.

The first problem the party was going to tackle was that of the extremely scattered population, which brought severe difficulties to the logistics and organization of FRELIMO’s reform programs. In doing so, they “collected” the population from their rural places of living and concentrated them in so-called communal villages. These rationally set up villages should then become the focal point of the intended social reforms. The implementation of this “villagization” project did not always occur in the fashion it was planned to, yet large parts of Mozambique saw a drastic demographic restructuring. Yet, especially in the central and northern regions of Mozambique, the local population considered the relocation measures as offensive and decisively “anti-traditionalist”. In consequence, the setting up of the communal villages became increasingly coercive and often involved state violence.\(^ {364}\)

The second task FRELIMO was determined to accomplish was to end any form of oppression. While external political oppression was ended with the country’s independence, internal oppression still prevailed in most parts of the country. In the view of FRELIMO, this oppression was partly in class terms and partly in terms of ignorance. By the time of independence, 80 percent of the population was still rural, living in feudal-like conditions. The Portuguese had installed traditional chiefs as local representatives who had power over people’s lives, placed wealthy polygynous males in a position to control the productive and reproductive capacity of women and subjected males to ill-paid labor. This class oppression was further aggravated by the people’s ignorance. Almost exclusively illiterate, they not only lacked political consciousness, but were also at mercy of traditional knowledge and practices which condemned them to poverty, made them superstitious and preserved the tyranny of various initiation rites. Achieving full literacy was considered by FRELIMO to be the most effective tool to end these, in their eyes, horrific


\(^ {364}\) Ibid., here p. 889.
grievances. Despite a severe lack of teaching material and teaching personnel, the impact of the large-scale efforts FRELIMO took were indeed astounding. The number of people enrolled into basic education programs doubled from 700,000 in 1975 to nearly 1.5 million people in 1979. Large scale literacy campaigns were first initiated in key sectors in the economy, the military, mass organizations and among party members. Within five years, the illiteracy rate declined from over 90 percent in 1974 to 73 percent in 1979. Still, the educational sector experienced difficulties. Of particular complexity was the issue which language should be used for teaching. The government finally decided to introduce Portuguese as the official common language, another element that should promote the aspired unity of the people. Yet, around 80 percent of the rural population was not able to speak Portuguese, so they not only had to learn how to read and write but also a foreign language. Additionally, the Portuguese spoken in Mozambique differed strongly from the “official” Portuguese used in the teaching material, a factors that further hampered the success of the entire literacy campaign.

In addition to the educational reforms, Maputo initiated a large scale infrastructure program through which schools, hospitals and other vital infrastructure should be constructed. On the judiciary level, the government replaced all tribal jurisdiction with official public courts and superstition should be replaced by factual empirical science.

FRELIMO also put a lot of effort into the emancipation of women. In Machel’s view, women had “a superior role in education” and he used to refer to the family as the “first cell of the party.” The party therefore abolished polygamy, introduced joint ownership between men and women in 1981 and encouraged females to take up jobs in the public sector.

Finally, the healthcare system was given a high priority, especially preventive medicine was promoted. By 1979 an estimated 90 percent of the population had been reached by vaccinations against smallpox, tetanus and measles; infant mortality had already fallen by 20 percent compared to 1975.

Overall, it was hard to argue against all the social reforms FRELIMO was about to undertake given their clear und undoubtedly human orientation. The party’s intentions were clearly favorable towards its people, the execution of the reforms, however, had too many flaws. Social engineering on such a massive scale is undoubtedly an extremely difficult task. While it was clearly a step necessary to bring the nation into the 20th century, the enormous speed with which the reforms were introduced certainly turned the lives of most people upside down. Their ancient system of values was replaced by a new social order, alien to most of them, virtually overnight. Many of their traditions and rites that provided the scaffold for their everyday life were suddenly completely different. For tribal chiefs, traditional healers or folk magicians this did not only imply the abolishment of their occupation but also a significant loss of prestige.

366 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 199-201.
368 Ibid., p. 550.
FRELIMO also failed to formulate alternatives to their new “universal” social program. Thus, when the entire reform campaign lost its momentum due to a lack of resources by the early 1980s, the government had no other alternative but to adapt their reform agenda to the best of their abilities. Yet, given the centralized planning and administrative overextensions on many levels, this constant adapting often had negative impacts. For example, it could have happened that people were (forcefully) relocated into one of the new communal villages with the promise of better living conditions, yet due to the lack of resources the government then failed to provide the necessary infrastructure. The fact that these reforms were basically forced upon the population as one of the several centralized initiatives from Maputo, which did not take into account the local circumstances, gave the reforms another strong negative connotation.

The locomotive for these massive social developments should be a strong, modern, steadily growing economy. Yet, what FRELIMO took over from Portugal was backward, completely dependent on Lisbon and dominated by a large, subsistence farming sector. Thus, quite frankly, if the party’s social aspirations were considered to be ambitious, its plans to transform the Mozambican economy within only a few years into that of a modern, 20th century country, were certainly borderline utopian.

FRELIMO inherited an economy which was nose-diving into a massive recession. The 1973 Yom-Kippur War triggered off a worldwide recession, lowering the global demand for raw material which resulted in a sharp price decline. Mozambique, whose little exports were almost exclusively raw materials, got hit particularly hard. While this factor alone would have been severe enough to cause FRELIMO drastic problems, three additional circumstances created an emergency situation. The already mentioned mass exodus of Portuguese settlers also had its impact on the economy. The massive brain-dain was accompanied by the repatriation of almost the entire Portuguese assets, the dismantling of industrial machinery and the withdrawal of nearly the entire stock of consumer goods. As early as February 1975, the interim government issued a decree allowing the state to take over control over private enterprises if economic sabotage was expected. This led to a snowball effect and the mass exodus gained further momentum.

Simultaneously, the cash flow from the South African Rand industrial complex started to dry up when Pretoria, as a consequence of the Mozambican independence, began to lay-off Mozambican nationals. While nearly 114,000 Mozambicans were employed in the region in 1975, this figure declined to only 32,000 in 1976, a decline of 71 percent. Thirdly, Mozambique was hit by a series of climatic catastrophes. The years 1977/78 saw massive flooding in vital agricultural areas followed by a massive draught which lasted until 1982, bringing almost the entire population to the brink of starvation.

Faced with a huge influx of unemployed into the cities, the government was forced to introduce price controls over food. Moreover, family farms, which accounted for about 30 percent of the entire agricultural production soon ceased to grow cash crops and retreated back into a subsistence economy since there was nothing to buy from their minimal earnings. This collapse of the agricultural sector affected
the entire political economy. During the first two years of independence, the production of export crops declined by 40 percent, industrial production fell by 36 percent in the same period. At the same time, import rates soared. The urban population, which doubled within five years, had to be fed with imported food since the crumbling agricultural sector was not able to meet the nation’s demand. Until 1982, there was a fourfold increase in food imports, constituting 21 percent of all imports.\textsuperscript{369}

Maputo’s exit strategy out of this misery foresaw the nationalization of large parts of the economy. Within a short period of time, the state owned huge parts of the economy, ranging from major plantations and factories down to local village stores and retail outlets. By 1981, 65 percent of industrial production, 85 percent of transportation and 90 percent of construction was within the state sector. Yet, FRELIMO continuously stressed that these measures should not be regarded as first steps to a permanent socialization of the economy but as emergency actions to prevent its complete collapse.\textsuperscript{370} The initial “emergency actions” were marked by some success as indicated by the growth rate of the overall economy in the late 1970s. From 1977 to 1981 it had grown by 11.6 percent, in some key sectors FRELIMO even managed to achieve the production rates of 1970. However, this impressive growth was only possible due to massive and uneconomic investments by the state and by large scale imports of chemicals and machinery, for which Maputo was not able to pay for.\textsuperscript{371} In combination with the huge food imports, this had the effect that the foreign debt of Mozambique quintupled from US$ 250 million in 1978 to US$ 1.3 billion in 1983.\textsuperscript{372} So what at first glance might have looked like an economic takeoff was in fact dragging Mozambique to the brink of bankruptcy.

FRELIMO’s efforts to transform the economy into that of a modern 20\textsuperscript{th} century country became most apparent in the agricultural sector. The entire sector was divided into four parts (family farms, private farms, cooperatives and state-farms) of which the state-farms comprised by far the largest part. These were created out of former Portuguese plantations and were to be transformed into huge state-managed companies using state-of-the-art-technology and the latest scientific farming methods. These farms were not only expected to produce the food for the cities, but also to gain enough surplus to boost the export rate which in turn would flush in the desperately needed foreign currency into Maputo’s treasuries. Under the guidance of Eastern bloc managers, huge consignments of machinery were imported to replace what the Portuguese had removed or got destroyed during the war of liberation. During the first five years, almost 90 percent of agricultural investments was directed to the state-farms, completely neglecting the other elements of the agricultural sector which still accounted for around 30 percent of the entire production. Also, the modern equipment proved to be inefficient, given the high prices of fuel and the people’s inability to operate or maintain them properly. Thus, after spending massive amounts of money, the machinery soon became useless.\textsuperscript{373}

\textsuperscript{369} Ibid. p. 552.
\textsuperscript{370} Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 206.
\textsuperscript{371} Newitt, A History of Mozambique, p. 555.
\textsuperscript{372} Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 219.
\textsuperscript{373} Ibid., pp. 212-215.
By 1981, almost all of the state owned farms were operating in the red, partly not even able to produce enough food for their own workers. The aforementioned inefficiency of the bureaucracy further aggravated the situation. The administration therefore had to continue its massive food imports. Due to a lack of export revenues, it became increasingly difficult to pay for these imports, as a consequence, the government had to make cut-backs in all imports of consumer goods expect for food. With retail outlets soon having nothing to sale, they began to collapse, further increasing the gap between goods and money in circulation. FRELIMO failed to counter the beginning inflation which led to the emergence of black markets and a spreading web of corruption. Eventually, it forced many people out of the cash economy back into subsistence farming. This was exactly the reverse effect of what FRELIMO had initially intended, namely that the expansion of a modern economy would drag people out of subsistence farming. 374

By the early 1980s, it became apparent that the gamble of achieving all the socio-economic goals by simply pumping enough money into the state sector was not going to work. This did not keep Machel from proclaiming that Mozambique’s economy was expected to grow an annual 17 percent throughout the 1980s. Reality, however, looked different. Between 1981 and 1984 Mozambique GNP experienced a decline between 10 percent and 18 percent per year while exports were almost nonexistent. Maputo tried to reverse the situation by changing its international course (see following chapter) and shift its main focus back to smaller family farms and cooperatives. However, these efforts proved to be fruitless, for it was at the same time that Pretoria decided to unleash its devastating policy of destabilization on the stumbling Mozambique.

Similarly to the party’s social reforms, its economic aspiration were, in its core, certainly a cause to advocate. Yet again, the new leadership wanted too much in a too brief span of time. To accomplish such a tremendous task, a country would need a nationwide consolidated and stable political system, a working and efficient bureaucracy and highly competent economists whose decision making process was not confined by an ideologically motivated agenda. Succinctly put, Mozambique did not meet any of these criteria. In terms of consolidation and political stability, the new leadership had its problems in gaining the trust of large parts of the population and the permanent military aggression from the beginning on (first by Rhodesia and then by South Africa) hampered the stability of the administration. The bureaucracy was way to sluggish and complex and therefore not able to process the paperwork in the speed necessary to avoid holding back the economy. The margin for economic decisions was limited by FRELIMO’s aspirations to create a socialist society while the fact that Maputo brought in economic advisors from Eastern bloc countries hardly improved that factor. Given the economic trajectory of these Eastern bloc states, it is a legitimate question to ask whether it was a wise decision to refer to these countries in terms of economic assistance.

3.1.3. INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

Mozambique was not born into a particularly friendly environment in 1975. In the West, it bordered then still minority ruled Rhodesia whose racist regime immediately attacked the new country militarily. In the south it was surrounded by South Africa, whose military and economic preponderance, despite the fact that Vorster was relentlessly stressing its peaceful intentions in the course of the “outward-looking policy”, hung over Maputo like the sword of Damocles. In the north, the border was shared with Malawi which was busily forging closer ties with South Africa. The only neighboring countries that were somewhat friendly towards Maputo were Zambia and Tanzania, yet they were still preoccupied with their own post-independence struggles. Things on the other side of the continent did not look very promising either, Maputo’s former Portuguese comrade in suffering was descending into a bitter civil war, while Namibia was still in the firm grasp of Pretoria. FRELIMO, however, had realized that the country itself, despite the enormous trust the government placed into the capabilities of its economy, would not be able to stem the enormous political and socio-economic challenges of the post-independence period on its own. Given the lack of potent regional allies, Maputo thus turned to the international community in its search for assistance.

Europe’s reactions towards Mozambique’s independence were diverse. Not surprisingly, the relation between Maputo and Lisbon was extremely complicated in the years following independence. Especially Maputo’s large scale nationalization of former Portuguese property was met with reluctance in Portugal. Only when Portugal made a shift towards the left with the ascendancy of a new government in the mid-1980s did the relationship between the two countries begin to normalize. In 1982 a military aid agreement was signed in which Lisbon promised to assist Maputo in its fight against RENAMO. On the other side, FRELIMO felt it had firm friends in several other minor European states like Sweden and the Netherlands. While Britain had failed to solve the Rhodesian issue after Smith’s UDI, the Labour government adopted the attitude that it was nominally friendly to the liberation movements and thus also to FRELIMO. Yet London was not willing to walk the talk and hence of little help to Maputo. On the other side of the Atlantic, Washington had its hands full with cleaning up the fiasco in Saigon and Nixon’s Watergate scandal. Albeit there were serious doubts in some of Washington’s political circles over whether FRELIMO was truly a Marxist-Leninist pro-Soviet movement, the United States refrained from a next direct engagement in yet another remote corner of the world.375

The strongest relationships Maputo maintained outside Africa were those with the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Initially, Moscow had its doubts about Maputo’s true commitment to socialism, which was, given FRELIMO’s ambiguous position towards the left ideology, not of further surprise. Moscow certainly took note of the fact that FRELIMO waited seven years to declare itself officially a socialist movement, even though the entire leadership (at least after 1969/70) was clearly influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideas. Additionally, at least during the initial years, FRELIMO understood socialism more as a

---

375 Ibid., pp. 558-560.
tool to fight imperialism and not as the “superior alternative to capitalism” Moscow was so relentlessly promoting. Thus, Mozambique’s new leadership was never as attractive an ally as other countries whose socialist tendencies were clear.376 This skepticism was further increased during the Sino-Soviet split, when Moscow got the impression that Maputo was tilting towards Beijing. This became evident after the death of Mondlane in 1969, when Machel was leading a FRELIMO delegation to Beijing, while the delegation to Moscow was headed by his deputy.377 Maputo was therefore not able to enjoy the same large scale support as Luanda could.

Nevertheless, Moscow and Maputo maintained a rather close relationship which originated in the years prior to Mozambique’s independence. Throughout the early 1970s, the USSR provided military training to several FRELIMO commanders as it did in a similar way for the ANC cadres.378 After Maputo’s independence, this limited military training expanded into a full-scale modernization of the FRELIMO guerilla troops. Right after the Angolan declaration of independence, South Africa invaded the southern part of the country, trying to influence the emerging civil war towards its advantage. Maputo thus entrained the, at that time quite reasonable, thought that Pretoria was also attempting to invade Mozambique in order to kick FRELIMO out of Maputo before the movement had fully settled in. Since this attack was assumed to be conventional, FRELIMO put a lot of effort into upgrading its guerilla forces into a conventional army.379 These efforts were substantially backed by the Soviet Union who provided the bulk of the heavy equipment and trained large parts of Mozambique’s military personnel.380 What Maputo did not expect, however, was that Pretoria, after suffering a humiliating defeat in Angola, was about to change its strategy towards Mozambique and would send in guerilla forces instead of SADF-units. While the new conventional FRELIMO-army proved its value during the attacks of Smith’s Rhodesia, it had severe problems in countering South Africa’s RENAMO campaign. Maputo, in consequence, was left with no other option but to transform the army back into a guerilla force.

Relations with Moscow improved drastically after FRELIMO publically committed itself to the socialist cause in 1977. In the same year, the two countries signed the “Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation” which emphasized the “unbreakable friendship” between them and stressed the importance of military cooperation between the two countries. Of particular significance was article 9 of the treaty, which laid down that in the event or threat of war the two countries would contact each other “in order to co-ordinate their positions in the interests of eliminating the threat that has arisen or restoring peace” (so basically the same as article 5 of the NATO-treaty). When Maputo actually invoked this mutual

---

380 Shubin, The Hot “Cold War”, p. 143; Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 239.
assistance pact in 1982, Moscow’s response was, however, limited to the dispatch of two warship to Maputo’s harbor.³⁸¹

Nonetheless, despite several treaties and agreements between the Eastern bloc and Mozambique, the latter was never fully integrated into the Soviet orbit. This becomes evident in Maputo’s relationship with COMECON. With its economic situation deteriorating in the early 1980s, Mozambique applied for membership in the organization. This request, however, was rejected due to strong opposition especially from the CSSR, Poland and Hungary. Yury Andropov, then general secretary of the CPSU made a sober statement after declining Maputo’s offer:

“It is one thing to proclaim socialism as one’s aim and quite another thing to build it. For this, a certain level of productive forces, culture and social consciousness is needed. (...) We assist also, to the extent of our ability, in their economic development. But on the whole, their economic development...can, of course, only be the result of the work of their people and of correct policy adopted by the leadership”³⁸²

Several scholars argue that after this humiliating rejection by the Soviet Union, Machel was eager to leave the Soviet camp as quickly as possible. According to them, a “shift towards the west” happened, predominantly marked by Machel’s visit to Washington in September 1983. Yet neither Moscow nor Machel himself perceived this step as a shift in allegiance. For Moscow, Maputo was never part of the Soviet camp in the first place and for Machel, an utterly convinced nationalist, his only allegiance was with Mozambique itself. If any deep reassessment between the two countries took place, it was after Mikhail Gorbachev entered the Kremlin and Maputo had to realize that Moscow was neither willing nor capable of continuing its support for Third World countries.³⁸³ Nevertheless, Maputo’s attempts to revive its relations with the Western world had significant impacts not only for the country itself, but also for the entire region (see the following chapter).

Next to its relationship with Moscow and Washington, Mozambique’s foreign policy was marked by a fairly radical and exposed course. This is quite surprising, given the difficult domestic situation the country had at that time. Immediately after independence, it joined the Frontline States and supported the ZANU-SWAPO-ANC alliance in their fight against white minority rule. In the UN it voted with the PLO, became a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and sought bilateral agreements with Libya, India, Algeria and Iraq. In the late 1970s, it allowed ZANU and ZAPU to operate from its territories, closed the border to Rhodesia and helped to tighten UN sanctions against Salisbury. On the other side, FRELIMO was well aware of its own vulnerability, especially with regard to its preponderant southern neighbor. It therefore tried to pursue normal relations with Pretoria, for example by refusing to allow the ANC to set up military bases (it did, however, accept diplomatic missions) in Mozambique. Yet, the

³⁸³ Ibid., p. 143.
country was in the forefront of negotiations for the formation of the SADCC, substantially supported by now majority ruled Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{384}

Summing up Mozambique’s political, social and economic situation, it can safely be concluded that the country’s initial years were anything but easy. The interdependency between these three situations entrapped the nation in a vicious cycle, FRELIMO was not able to break out from by its own efforts. Its failure to establish a nationwide, consolidated, stable political system seriously hampered the administration’s efforts to transform its backward economy into that of a modern 20\textsuperscript{th} century country. This in turn led to a lack of capital and other vital resources which would have been necessary to push forward the intended social reforms. The social reforms could therefore not meet the ambitious goals set out by the government. The country was not able to “produce” enough skilled personnel to eradicate the serious grievances in Maputo’s bureaucracy which in turn seriously affected the nation’s capabilities and stability. Significant international support would certainly have increased Mozambique’s power to break the cycle, yet neither the superpowers nor other members of the international community felt particularly responsible for the young nation.

Thus, from the beginning on, FRELIMO had enormous difficulties to pursue the course it had set out. One of administration’s senior members had put it aptly when he stated that April 25, 1974 had occurred too early, basically admitting that FRELIMO had not been ready to take over control of the country.\textsuperscript{385}

However, pursuing the set course did not become easier during the following years, since Mozambique’s most difficult and devastating years were yet to come.

\textsuperscript{384} Newitt, A History of Mozambique, p. 559.
\textsuperscript{385} Aquino de Bragança/Jacques Depelchin, From the Idealization of Frelimo to the Understanding of Mozambique Recent History, in: Review (Fernand Braudel Center) 11 (1988), No. 1, pp. 95–117, here p. 100.
3.2. Going Astray – Developments within Mozambique

3.2.1. PHASE I: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO NKOMATI

Within the first few months of independence it became evident that the eagerly awaited liberation would not bring the likewise eagerly awaited peace. The initial euphoria soon yielded to disenchantment as a new war was looming on the horizon. Already one month after independence several skirmishes occurred between Rhodesian and Mozambican soldiers and hundreds of small explosives (in most cases it were explosives disguised as pens that were littered in the street), bearing the emblem of a fascist group from Lisbon were found in the streets of Maputo. For FRELIMO, it was clear without a doubt that Rhodesia’s Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) was responsible for this “pen-bomb incident”, an incident which can be regarded as the first operation by a group which would later become known as RENAMO. Smith’s motive behind the attack was clear, he wanted to violently force Maputo to cease its support for the ZANU-ZAPU alliance which was gaining momentum in overthrowing his racist regime. Yet, this tactic backfired when in September of the same year the FLS-members declared their open support for both ZANU and ZAPU in their fight against Rhodesia. Salisbury’s immediate response was to launch a conventional military attack on Mozambique’s border region. In March 1976, Maputo closed the border to Rhodesia and announced it would fully implement the UN sanctions. The newly equipped Mozambican army successfully countered the attacks form Rhodesia, while ZANU-ZAPU troops, now able to launch its operations from Mozambique, soon gained the upper hand in the Rhodesian war of independence.

When Mugabe was finally able to proclaim an independent Zimbabwe, Maputo was caught in what historian Tom Young describes as a “Bastille mentality”. Mozambique now had a majority ruled country as a neighbor which it could regard as a strong ally, a factor that drastically improved Maputo’s geopolitical situation at the expense of Pretoria. On the domestic front, both the social and economic reforms showed initial results and looked, at least on paper, promising. RENAMO was considered to be nearly eliminated after Mugabe expelled them from Zimbabwe and the accession of P. W. Botha, who was entirely focused on CONSAS, was not yet regarded as that much of a threat to Mozambique. FRELIMO therefore assumed that the country was indeed on the right track. What FRELIMO, however, failed to realize was that RENAMO, although heavily defeated, was far from elimination and, in fact, in the middle of the process of forging an alliance with Pretoria.

RENAMO’s origins and South Africa’s motives to train, equip and utilize the movement for its own ends have already been dealt with in the previous chapter. Also it has been mentioned that South Africa applied a dual strategy against Mozambique, consisting of RENAMO insurgencies and direct attacks by

386 Christie, Machel of Mozambique, pp. 91-94.
387 Young, The MNR/RENAMO: External and Internal Dynamics, here p. 496.
units of the SADF. Hence, so far only the nature of the SADF attacks have been analyzed, the following paragraph will take a closer look on the devastating RENAMO campaigns during the 1980s.

After initial setbacks in 1980 and 1981, the year 1982 saw a drastic increase in RENAMO activity inside of Mozambique. For the first time, its troops were able to penetrate the area north of the Zambezi River and thus the agricultural heartland of Mozambique, an area that accounted for 50 percent of Mozambique’s entire foreign exchange. A crucial factor for this quick expansion was the rapid increase of RENAMO members during the early 1980s. To understand this sharp increase one has to take a look on how these soldiers were recruited by RENAMO. According to Young, coercion was the main method for acquiring new soldiers. Recruits were almost always transferred away from their home area, often after being forced to kill someone. Escapes were prevented by a variety of utmost brutal measures, which preferred knives and clubs over firearms. The entrances to the guarded camps were often marked with the spiked heads of those, who did not obey the rules. Yet, to understand the entire nature of the civil war itself, it is important to know that not every RENAMO fighter was forced into the movement’s ranks. Although RENAMO was widely considered to be a thoroughly apolitical movement, a significant number of its members were motivated by specific grievances that were caused by FRELIMO’s policy. It has already been mentioned that FRELIMO’s (forceful) imposition of socio-economic reforms was met, especially in the north, with deep resentment for various different reasons. This resentment was grist on the mills of RENAMO and led many native Mozambican’s into its arms. The fact that FRELIMO’s policy was a major contributing factor for RENAMO’s popularity is insofar of great significance, because it confutes the argument that the civil war in Mozambique was entirely imposed on Maputo by outside forces (i.e. the RSA and the SADF). Without a doubt did South Africa play a crucial role in RENAMO’s development and success, yet RENAMO could also rely on a steadily growing opposition base within Mozambique. The argument, which was for example brought forward by Davis that the civil war in Mozambique was in fact a low intensity conflict between an RSA surrogate and a national government and therefore not a “typical” civil war, is thus not entirely true. RENAMO was not an entirely “foreign” resistance movement that was controlled only by outside forces, it was also a genuine resistance movement from within the country, making the conflict in Mozambique as much a civil war as it was part in the wider regional conflict during the outgoing Cold War.

What made RENAMO to a certain extent different from the other liberation/resistance movements in southern Africa was the way it conducted its operations. Albeit differing from region to region, it was always marked by utmost, unprecedented brutality, giving the movement the reputation of the “Khmer

---

388 Margaret Hall, The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo). A Study in the Destruction of an African Coun-
389 Young, The MNR/RENAMO: External and Internal Dynamics, here p. 496-497.
390 Ibid., here p. 500.
391 Lunstrum, Terror, Territory, and Deterritorialization, here p. 888; Hall, The Mozambican National Resistance Movement
(Renamo), here p. 45.
392 Robert H. Davies, The SADF’s Covert War Against Mozambique, in: Jacklyn Cock/Laurie Nathan (Eds.), War and Society.
Rouge of Africa”. The main focus of RENAMO’s tactic lay on the artificially created communal villages of which RENAMO knew as well as FRELIMO that these were vital for the latter. FRELIMO was never democratically approved in its role as the country’s leader. Its sole legitimation and thus its raison d’être therefore rested on the premise that the overall standard of living would improve significantly under its leadership. Since FRELIMO, as mentioned above, pursued these improvements primarily in this communal villages, they became the sine qua non for the movement itself. RENAMO thus began to attack the villages directly, making no differentiation between civilians and enemy troops. Units of approximately 150 soldiers systematically looted village after village, destroying the entire social infrastructure, killing the livestock and setting granaries and even entire crop fields on fire. While FRELIMO party officials were killed instantly, the other inhabitants of the villages were mutilated, raped and brutally slaughtered. Survivors of the atrocities have accounted to incidents where ears, nose and mouth were cut out, pregnant women were torn open because RENAMO soldiers “wanted to know the sex of the baby” and children were killed in front of their parents’ eyes. To further increase the terrorizing effect, RENAMO put mutilated bodies on display and was careful to always leave behind witnesses of the massacres as constant reminders of its brutality. Timing and target were often unpredictable, yet it was almost certain that it would be another communal village. FRELIMO’s failure to protect its centers of reform sufficiently, made its inhabitants flee the villages, turning FRELIMO’s prestige project into “landscapes of terror”. RENAMO deprived FRELIMO of its vital basis for reform, thus destroying Maputo’s attempt to create a national unity. The movement’s brutality is also explained by the fact that it was not a means to an end (as it is with resistance movements in general) but an end in itself. By simply terrorizing the population it had enough success in weakening FRELIMO, without being in need to accomplish other goals (e.g. setting up an administration, getting the support of the local population, etc.).

While attacks on the communal villages constituted a large part of RENAMO’s activities, it also conducted operations which not only attempted to destroy the economy of Mozambique, but that of the entire SADCC-region in general. The primary target was the vital Beira corridor with its high capacity roads and pipelines.

RENAMO’s ultimate goal, however, remained largely obscure. If analyzed from its master’s perspective, the mere destabilization of Mozambique as the primary goal certainly makes sense, but given the fact that RENAMO also had a “domestic” agenda, this goal does not suffice. In late 1981, RENAMO

---

393 Sidaway, Mozambique, here p. 240.
394 Lunstrum, Terror, Territory, and Deterritorialization, here p. 889.
396 Metz, The Mozambique National Resistance and South African Foreign Policy, here p. 496.
397 RENAMO’s overall political strategy and goals are of a very complex nature and have been subject to scientific discussions for several decades now. Especially its strong dependency on South Africa makes it difficult, if even possible, to distinguish between the goals South Africa “imposed” on RENAMO, and those RENAMO adopted on its own. With regard to the scope of this thesis, this aspect cannot be explored in more detail here. The literature used in this chapter, however, provides additional information on this matter, especially the articles written by Hultman and Hall.
had set out some vague political aims in a Manifesto which, inter alia demanded a “Government of National Unity”.\textsuperscript{398} Afonso Dhlakama, RENAMO’s president and supreme commander, promised that his movement would cede power to a civilian government after peace was restored, introduce a mixed economy and hold democratic elections on a regular basis.\textsuperscript{399} Yet, political sophistication was almost nonexistent within RENAMO bases and illiteracy was over 90 percent.\textsuperscript{400} Thus, if the content of this aforementioned manifesto was to be taken seriously (which is by far not undisputed) its significance was certainly limited.

By 1982, the situation in Mozambique had severely deteriorated. RENAMO had gained a strength of 8,000-10,000 soldiers, now being able to operate in large parts of the country.\textsuperscript{401} In the southern provinces, where RENAMO had its operational focus was until 1986, up to 90 percent of all the communal villages were emptied either because they had already been attacked by RENAMO and/or the population had fled from the terror.\textsuperscript{402} Over a third of the entire population was affected by the war and during the first half of the 1980s, the national production declined by 30 percent, per capita income halved and a 60 percent decline in total exports occurred.\textsuperscript{403} The supply situation became so bad that in the years 1983/84 alone 100,000 Mozambican’s died of starvation.\textsuperscript{404} Although it is not only RENAMO which is to be blamed for a deteriorating economic situation but also a misguided economic policy and natural disasters, the civil war’s impact was disastrous. As of 1982 Zimbabwe began to assist Mozambique in its fight against RENAMO and sent troop contingents. Their primary goal was to protect the Beira corridor which was vital for Zimbabwe, but they also actively attacked and captured RENAMO camps.\textsuperscript{405} Nonetheless, Maputo’s situation continued to deteriorate – it thus sought negotiations with the RSA.

3.2.2. PHASE II: FROM NKOMATI UNTIL 1989

FRELIMO hoped that the signing of the Nkomati treaty would significantly improve the country’s grim situation. The agreement with South Africa did in fact lead to some changes, yet they were limited to Mozambique’s foreign policy course (see below), the anticipated improvements within the country were not to happen. On the contrary, as already indicated, the domestic situation deteriorated even further. Not only did South Africa continue its raids throughout the second part of the 1980s, it also refused to cease all support for RENAMO. Since these two elements have been analyzed in the previous chapter, they will no longer be mentioned here.

\textsuperscript{398} Young, The MNR/RENAMO: External and Internal Dynamics, here p. 502.
\textsuperscript{399} Hall, The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo), here p. 44.
\textsuperscript{400} Sidaway, Mozambique, here p. 241.
\textsuperscript{401} Hall, The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo), here p. 40.
\textsuperscript{402} Lunstrum, Terror, Territory, and Deterritorialization, p. 900.
\textsuperscript{403} Hall, The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo), here p. 55
\textsuperscript{404} Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 218.
\textsuperscript{405} Sidaway, Mozambique, here p. 240.
Throughout the second half of the 1980s, South Africa’s operations continued with the same intensity as they did during the first half. Additionally, RENAMO’s activities increased significantly after 1985. During this period it became more apparent than ever that RENAMO was not just a surrogate of South Africa. After its eviction from Malawi following the intervention by several FLS-presidents, RENAMO was forced to operate to a large degree from inside the country. While it still received support from the outside, for the first time it had to evolve ways of existing and surviving within the country and therefore had to change its tactics. It now began to set up permanent armed camps with fortified villages as outposts. The maintenance of these camps was ensured through submitting the local population, which was kidnapped and held under brutal conditions, to forced labor. With this renewed tactic, RENAMO continuously consolidated its hold over steadily growing territories until entire regions were under firm RENAMO control. Yet, its tactic of terror was not abandoned and RENAMO continued to systematically raid entire tracts of land.

At the time the movement was forced out of Malawi and invaded northern Mozambique by huge numbers, it had also secured significant support from Kenya. Simultaneously, Zimbabwe was conducting a large offensive from the south, driving RENAMO out of the southern provinces. This led to an enormous concentration of RENAMO troops in the central provinces which had such an impact on the territorial integrity of Mozambique that the country was at risk of breaking apart. Almost all of the central provinces of Mozambique were under the control of RENAMO, effectively denying Maputo direct access to its northernmost provinces. RENAMO’s success in Mozambique’s central provinces gave the movement enough reassurance that it felt confident enough to declare war on Zimbabwe and began to attack the country half a year later. This unprecedented aggression against another country was certainly a reaction to Harare’s continued strong support for Maputo. Nonetheless, Zimbabwe significantly increased its troop contingent in 1986 and also convinced Tanzania to contribute a significant number of soldiers to FRELIMO’s fight against RENAMO.

While RENAMO’s engagement in Zimbabwe and Zambia did not have any significant impacts on these countries, Lusaka’s and Harare’s involvement in Mozambique’s civil war turned the tide at least a little bit into FRELIMO’s favor. In a joint effort, the alliance succeeded in reestablishing FRELIMO’s control over certain areas in the central provinces by 1988. FRELIMO now had regained control over every major city and town within Mozambique, yet rural RENAMO insurgencies were still endemic. RENAMO, realizing that the momentum was shifting towards its opponents favor, offered a ceasefire by late 1987. This was immediately rejected by FRELIMO on the grounds that the party is never going to negotiate with a guerilla force that kills its own people by the thousands. An end to the civil war was therefore not in sight.

---

407 Hall, The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo), here p. 43.
408 Ibid.
Against this backdrop, the years 1987 and 1988 did not bring an improvement in the civil war. RENAMO was still ravaging in the vast rural areas of the country, while FRELIMO entrenched itself in the cities and towns. After the successful campaign by FRELIMO, Zimbabwe and Tanzania, the last two gradually began to withdraw their troops by late 1987, leaving the task of fighting RENAMO to FRELIMO. Yet, RENAMO was not the only problem FRELIMO had to counter. Economically speaking, the country was at the brink of collapsing, its vast social reform program was effectively destroyed due to the ongoing civil war and above all, it clearly failed to consolidate its power over the entire country.

Nevertheless, Maputo was able to remain in control of the urban areas of the country, yet it turned out to be an almost impossible task to regain control over the rural areas. It was not even possible to reestablish a social infrastructure in those areas that had already been liberated from RENAMO. This was partly because the economy was not able to provide enough resources to initiate a sufficient reconstruction but also due to an increased resistance among the population to return to the communal villages. This resistance FRELIMO saw itself confronted with was nothing new, but the motives were. Most of the population were afraid of returning into the villages because they feared renewed RENAMO attacks. This aspects further emphasizes the impact RENAMO’s “landscape-of-terror-policy” had on the nation’s population. Even after the civil war had ended in 1992, this fear of returning was still prevailing. For RENAMO, these abandoned regions were the ideal place to establish a highly efficient logistic network which reached deep into South Africa and ensured the continuous supply of money, weaponry and intelligence information.

FRELIMO was well aware of this fact and its accompanying advantages for RENAMO and it had come to the realization that the forceful, often violent resettlement of the population ran counter to its efforts of defeating RENAMO. Yet, it was no longer capable of improving the situation on its own and therefore placed its entire faith that the beginning change in Pretoria would also have its impact on Mozambique.

---

410 Lunstrum, Terror, Territory, and Deterritorialization, here p. 891.
3.3. Trying to Get Back on Track

3.3.1. RESPONDING TO RENAMO

Among the numerous problems FRELIMO had to face during the first decades of being in power, one was its own inability to recognize flaws in its policy, to accept these mistakes and ultimately adapt the course of action accordingly. Nowhere does this become more apparent than in its initial response to RENAMO.

At first, despite realizing that RENAMO had found a new chief sponsor in South Africa, FRELIMO did not consider the movement as a threat to its own security. Since Mozambique additionally succeeded in a joint effort with new Zimbabwe to capture all the major RENAMO bases, it believed to have dealt a death blow to the guerillas.\cite{Young:496-497} This notion changed only after RENAMO was already ravaging in most parts of the country. Now, all the efforts of transforming the guerilla force into a conventional army turned out as a grave error, since the military completely lacked the ability to conduct counter-insurgency operation, a feature that would have been decisive to effectively counter RENAMO. FRELIMO therefore began to retransform its armed forced back into a guerilla army. For this purpose, it reactivated countless former guerilla commanders, reequipped and restructured its troops and requested additional help from abroad. By the mid-1980s, Mozambique’s army again resembled more a guerilla force than a conventional army and was, to a certain extent, better equipped to counter the RENAMO insurgencies.\cite{Becker:240-241}

Despite these improvements, however, Maputo’s military problems continued to exist. The armed forced still had a low priority on the political agenda and tactical decisions and promotions were based more on ideology than on performance criteria. Furthermore,

\begin{quote}
"the collapse of the national transportation system, together with the general lack of administrative skills, disrupts military logistics just as thoroughly as it does civilian life. Troops in the field often don’t receive pay, uniforms, ammunition, or rations. Morale suffers, and when soldiers are forced to find food any way they can the Army’s reputation suffers. Draft evasion is widespread, especially in the cities, and provincial commanders, who seem to be given a free hand in the raising of forces, resort to rough-and-ready conscription, which further tarnishes the Army’s image."
\end{quote}

Misconduct of FRELIMO soldiers was, however, not limited to these incidents and abuses against civilians also occurred within the ranks of Mozambique’s official army. Yet, compared to the behavior of RENAMO, these abuses were rare but often not officially sanctioned. More often than not, Maputo made no distinction between RENAMO soldiers and civilians who were under their control. Machel publicly stated that “those who deal with the bandits, will die with the bandits”.\cite{Thaler:555} This attitude became

\begin{footnotes}
\item[411] Young, The MNR/RENAMO: External and Internal Dynamics, here pp. 496-497.
\item[412] Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 240-241.
\item[413] Quoted in: Sidaway, Mozambique, here p. 250.
\item[414] Thaler, Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars, here p. 555.
\end{footnotes}
evident in the ruthless bombing of RENAMO controlled villages and the violent treatment of rural civilians found outside the communal villages. The population thus found itself in the dilemma of either staying within the communal villages and dwell under the constant threat of RENAMO, or flee from the communities and therefore fear the retaliation of FRELIMO troops.

This dilemma manifests that FRELIMO, by the mid-1980s, still had not realized that not only the radical policy itself, but also its implementation was significantly playing into the hands of RENAMO. Around 1985, the government was aware that the initiated socio-economic reforms would not be able to keep the country on the right track. The reforms were therefore adapted in several areas, but again, a centralized implementation was pursued. This was insofar a problem, as the implementation was controlled from a government located in the southernmost part of the country, whose posts were entirely filled with people from the south. These “southerners” were in no way acquainted with the traditions in the north, not to mention the general skepticism the northern population had towards the south. Maputo was still propagating slogans like “for a nation to live, the tribe must die”, thus pushing further the alienation of the (northern) rural population it would have desperately needed in its fight against RENAMO.415

To compensate this lack of personnel, a problem which also affected RENAMO, both movements started a new most inhuman method of forced conscription which would sweep the African continent and later the entire world – they began to use child soldiers.416 The United Nation estimates that RENAMO alone had about 10,000 children, often not older than six years, forcefully put under arms. FRELIMO’s numbers were significantly lower, but the aggregated numbers of RENAMO and FRELIMO child soldiers indicate, that between 10 and 15 percent of all the recruited soldiers during the civil war were younger than 18 years.417

Nevertheless, all the military efforts, the adapting of reforms and the increasing support especially from Zimbabwe were not able to end the rapid decline of Mozambique. South African action increased dramatically after Mozambique allowed the ANC to set up camps in the southern parts of the country in 1981. The relationship with the Soviet Union cooled off while the West still had not figured out how to deal with the situation in Mozambique. It was in this desperate situation that Machel decided to engage into negotiations with his southern adversary which culminated in the aforementioned Nkomati treaty of March 1984.

---

415 Young, The MNR/RENAMO: External and Internal Dynamics, here pp. 57-60.
417 Alcinda Manuel Honwana, Child Soldiers in Africa, Philadelphia 2006, p. 11. As devastating and traumatic any civil war is, the horrific impact the civil war in Mozambique had on children exceeds that of many other conflicts. For reasons of scope, the issue of child soldiers in the southern African conflicts cannot be picked up in more detail here. Honwana provides a detailed account of these impacts in her book, to which reference is made at this point.
Viewed from the South African perspective, Nkomati looks in hindsight as a fruitless effort for Mozambique to end the violence, since Pretoria basically ignored the treaty after it was signed. It therefore seems to be an obvious conclusion that Mozambique’s situation did not improve after the treaty was signed. However, if the treaty is put into a wider context, the picture looks quite different.

Most observers interpreted the treaty as a triumph of South Africa over its northeastern neighbor. Machel on the other side was regarded as the defeated leader of a collapsing country who, in total desperation, had to beg for terms with the hated apartheid-regime. Yet, if Machel’s long-term diplomatic aspirations are taken into account, the treaty bought FRELIMO some of the desperately needed breathing space. Machel was well aware of the fact that his nation would not be able to count much longer on the support from the Soviet Union and therefore aimed at reviving its relationship with the West. Nkomati turned out to be a good opportunity for FRELIMO to prove its pro-Western attitude. It has already been mentioned that Machel never considered himself nor Mozambique to be part of the Soviet orbit. While this perception was affirmed by Moscow, the Western world still had its doubts about the true nature of FRELIMO’s political orientation. By accepting the Nkomati treaty, Machel wanted to reinforce the non-aligned status of his country, after all the treaty was to a large part brokered by US diplomat Chester Crocker and included the eviction of a movement which the US, at that time, considered to be a terrorist organization with a strong Marxist influence. That this plan was marked by some success is demonstrated by the numerous visits Machel made to Western countries in the wake of Nkomati. Especially the meeting with Margret Thatcher in London was characterized with significant success. Britain agreed to send hundreds of military advisors to Mozambique who would assist FRELIMO in its fight against RENAMO.418

In Washington, the State Department was already convinced by the end of 1983 that Mozambique’s leaning towards the West could be regarded as genuine. Pressured by Chester Crocker, Reagan finally allowed his European allies to send humanitarian aid to Mozambique, which Machel had constantly asked for since the beginning of the year. Also several western states (most notably Great Britain, France and the United States) now began to increase the pressure on Pretoria to fully cooperate in the multilateral talks on a security treaty between Mozambique and South Africa.419

Despite the continuous aggression, in some aspects the relationship also improved with South Africa. Pretoria once again began to recruit Mozambican workers for its mines and industries, parts of its exports were shipped abroad from Maputo’s harbor and a joined commission was created to draw up a plan to rebuild the Cabora Bassa power line. Against the backdrop of an increasing dominance of hardliners in Pretoria’s decision making bodies, even these smallest improvements must be regarded as a success for Machel and FRELIMO.

That this minimal rapprochement between Maputo and Pretoria was only of a very short duration became apparent at the latest with the crash of President Machel’s plane in 1986. A political solution

419 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 241.
with a Botha-led South Africa receded far into the distance. During the following two years, there was not even the slightest diplomatic progress between the two countries, while the violence continuously escalated. Once again, Maputo had no option of decisively improving its own situation just with its own resources. The diplomatic rapprochement Machel had achieved with leading Western countries and the close cooperation between the Frontline States were therefore all the more important. Maputo had not nearly enough power to convince Pretoria to end the devastating destabilization campaign and thus give the country the opportunity to get back on track.

3.3.2. AN UNDESIRED ALLIANCE – MOSCOW AND MAPUTO:

The signing of Nkomati and the mutual rapprochement between Washington and Maputo coincided with the transition of power from the late Konstantin Chernenko to Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow. The fundamental reforms initiated by the new leader were characterized by the replacement of Marxist-Leninist dogmas with knowledge and reason as the foundation on how decision should be made. The impacts of this new mindset were tremendous in regard to Moscow’s foreign and security affairs. Gorbachev replaced Andrei Gromyko, who had been foreign minister since 1957, with Eduard Shevardnadze, an internationally inexperienced but like-minded ally of Gorbachev. Anatolii Dobrynin, Soviet ambassador to Washington for 24 years and a pragmatic foreign policy professional, replaced Boris Ponomarev, a die-hard Marxist-Leninist theoretician, as head of the International Department in the Central Committee. This change of personnel sent a strong signal around the world that a fresh wind was blowing through the Kremlin. The new leadership had realized that the Soviet Union was going to need all its resources to maintain its own integrity and was therefore no longer in the position to support socialist countries around the world. The last five years of the global Cold War were thus marked by a retreat of Soviet presence from all embattled frontlines.

Mozambique had experienced this global retreat already a couple of years earlier, when the country was refused to join COMECON. The fact that the relationship between these two countries did not cease to exist during Gorbachev’s tenure, albeit reduced to a minimum, is therefore quite surprising. After the fatal crash of Machel’s presidential aircraft, which was a Soviet plane piloted by a Soviet crew, Moscow played an important role in the crash’s investigation while several of the most senior party members of the CPSU were present at Machel’s funeral. A year later, in 1987, Joaquim Chissano, Machel’s successor as President of Mozambique, made a visit to Moscow in order to stress Mozambique’s non-alignment, despite the increasing support it received from the United States and its allies. The meeting did not produce any significant results regarding an increased support from Moscow, however, Gorbachev came to an important conclusion. After Chissano’s visit, the Soviet leader said during a Politburo meeting:

“We shall support him... He is a man of great erudition, and, unlike Machel, he is a realist... Chissano asks us to understand them if they go for a compromise with imperialists in economic affairs. He says this does not change their principle position.”

In this statement lies probably the biggest accomplishment of the Moscow-Maputo-relationship during the outgoing 1980s. The previous chapter has shown the difficulties Machel’s supporters in Washington had to face in order to convince the hardliners of the necessity of Western aid for Mozambique. Gorbachev’s lenient and pragmatic stance led him to understand and accept Maputo’s rapprochement with the West, otherwise, the delivery of Western aid would have been even more difficult to accomplish. Moscow’s deliberate disengagement in Mozambique made it both easier for Maputo to accomplish and for Washington to accept the country’s shift towards the West, thereby opening a door for Mozambique to receive the desperately needed foreign aid.

3.3.3. CROCKER VS. REAGANITES: PART II – WASHINGTON AND MAPUTO

From the beginning on, Mozambique played a decisive role in Washington’s Africa policy. Again it was Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker, who coined the Reagan administration’s approach towards Maputo. He relentlessly tried to bring the government to adopt a pragmatic stance towards Maputo’s socialist leadership and to convince Reagan that an intensification of the relationship between the two countries would be consistent with “Constructive Engagement”. Crocker was of the opinion that an increased American involvement with Mozambique would be the best way to lure the country away from Soviet influence and bring it at least on a non-aligned course. But as it was with his efforts in South Africa, Crocker’s fiercest opponents were in the Reagan administration itself.

When Reagan entered the White House, the relationship between Washington and Maputo was at an all-time low. Mozambique had just kicked out several US diplomats which it accused of espionage while at the same time claimed that Washington was tacitly tolerating South Africa’s attacks on Mozambique. Naturally, Crocker’s first visit to Maputo just weeks before his nomination was therefore not constructive in any form. Yet, two years later, in the face of Moscow’s inability or unwillingness to assist Mozambique in solving its economic problems, Maputo’s commitment to socialism had become a mere lip service. Crocker thus rightly concluded that “the Mozambican Government wished to reestablish communication with the United States. We [the United States] responded by making clear that we were interested in a positive relationship...” Seeing the relationship between Pretoria and Maputo as an integral part of a successful implementation of Constructive Engagement in the entire region, which in

423 Kuhn, Die Politik der Reagan-Regierung im Südlichen Afrika, p. 158.
turn was a prerequisite for the “positive relationship”, the State Department actively promoted the Nkomati negotiations between the two African countries. As already indicated, Machel’s diplomatic calculations paid off and his country henceforth received economic support from the West. By the end of 1984, Washington had already become the largest supplier of grain\textsuperscript{424}, direct capital investments, however, was tied to the condition that it had to be channeled directly into the private economic sector, thus providing Machel with yet another reason to drastically restructure the economy.\textsuperscript{425} In May 1985, the government lifted price and wage control, a major step away from the idea of planned economy. Efforts were made to lure in private investments from Western countries and an appeal was made to Portuguese businessmen to return.\textsuperscript{426}

Yet, Machel’s aspirations in terms of security policy (i.e. getting at least diplomatic support from the West in its fight against RENAMO) were not fulfilled, due to the intervention of the Reaganites. While Washington officially distanced itself from RENAMO in 1985, the conservatives blocked an initiative by the State Department of sending “non-lethal” military aid to Maputo. Despite this setback and Washington’s apparent failure to exercise pressure on South Africa regarding its relationship with RENAMO, Machel continuously stressed his country’s interest in a close relationship with the United States. This political cunningness of not slamming the diplomatic door, allowed Crocker to arrange a personal meeting between Machel and Reagan at the White House in September 1985. Reagan was highly impressed with the Mozambican leader and stated after the visit that the United States “is now involving itself in a major effort to rebuild Mozambique’s shattered economy…”\textsuperscript{427} Crocker thus seemingly had succeeded in bringing the President on the side of the State Department. Yet this did not prevent the ultraconservatives of pursuing their own political agenda.\textsuperscript{428} Through continuous monkey-wrenching, they tried to undermine every effort of Crocker and wanted the United States to recognize RENAMO as a liberation movement in the terms of the Reagan Doctrine (see chapter 4.4.1), therefore making it eligible to military support. The promulgation of the Iran-Contra-Affaire\textsuperscript{429}, however, caused a severe blow to the right wing within the White House. Several of Crocker’s staunchest opponents had to resign, providing the State Department with the opportunity to free its Africa-policy from the ideological baggage loaded on them by the conservatives. By 1987, the United States agreed to US$ 700 million in foreign aid while the State Department succeeded in blocking any attempts by the Reaganites to fully recognize and support RENAMO.

At the end of Reagan’s second tenure, the right wing made yet another effort to achieve full recognition of RENAMO. Several Republicans, who wanted to succeed Reagan in the Oval Office (including

\begin{footnotes}
\item[424] Ibid., p. 160.
\item[425] Newitt, A History of Mozambique, p. 566.
\item[426] Ibid., p. 567.
\item[427] Kuhn, Die Politik der Reagan-Regierung im Südlichen Afrika, p. 164.
\item[428] Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 241.
\item[429] The Iran-Contra-Affaire was a political scandal during the second Reagan administration where several senior White House members secretly sold arms to Iran (which was then subject to an arms embargo) and then funneled the revenues to the anti-communist Contra rebels in Nicaragua.
\end{footnotes}
George H.W. Bush) publically supported RENAMO to secure the support of the powerful right wing. On this renewed wave of sympathies, Dhlakama was invited to Washington where the RENAMO-leader met with a financially sound RENAMO-lobby. Despite the fact that Reagan had made it clear by then that the United States would not fully recognize RENAMO, his own National Security Advisor, Frank Carlucci, indicated that the administration might reassess its policy towards RENAMO and FRELIMO. Crocker later described Washington’s approach towards Maputo as follows:

“In my eight and a half years at the helm of the African bureau, no policy battle was more bitter. Few presidentially approved policies were more shamelessly undercut by people in the President’s own party, his own administration and, even, his own White House staff.”430

The State Department countered by publishing a report which revealed the ongoing crimes against humanity committed by RENAMO. According to the report, more than 100,000 Mozambicans lost their lives while large parts of the rural infrastructure were destroyed.431 With this report, the State Department succeeded in destroying the last efforts made by Washington’s RENAMO supporters to turn the country’s policy towards Maputo around and make Mozambique yet another operational field for the notorious Reagan Doctrine. RENAMO never enjoyed the full recognition of the United States as a bona fide liberation movement and was therefore never entitled to the Reagan Doctrine.432 Due to Machel’s cautious approach towards the United States, Crocker had enough leverage over the conservative hardliners to successfully pursue the course of Constructive Engagement. Contrary to South Africa, Crocker and Constructive Engagement undoubtedly prevailed over the hardliners in Washington.433

430 Quoted in: Kuhn, Die Politik der Reagan-Regierung im Südlichen Afrika, p. 166.
431 Minter, Apartheid’s Contras, p. 50.
432 Alden/Simpson, Mozambique, here p. 111.
3.4. A Lost Cause? – Mozambique in 1989

By 1989, a year whose events had an equally decisive impact on the southern African region as those of 1975, fourteen years of civil war had taken a horrible toll on Mozambique. Hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans are estimated to have been killed in direct combat actions, while more than four million people were made refugees within their own country. Tens of thousands had fled to neighboring countries, facing a more than uncertain future.\(^ {434}\) Until 1985, more than 100,000 people had died of starvation and by 1988, almost six million people, which were nearly half of the entire population by then\(^ {435}\), were threatened by a famine that was even worse than the previous ones.\(^ {436}\) Taking into account the previous war of independence, the country had endured nearly 30 years of war, hence the majority of the Mozambican’s had never experienced a time of peace.

Next to a war torn population, three decades of armed conflict left a devastating mark on the country’s infrastructure. In addition to RENAMO’s focus on the communal villages, the movement predominately targeted the nation’s transport infrastructure. By the end of the 1980s, the country was therefore largely cut off from its neighboring states while most of the provinces, even if they were under control of FRELIMO, were isolated from each other.\(^ {437}\) Besides a few exceptions (most notably the Beira corridor to Zimbabwe), this utter lack of transportation made an effective deployment of troops, their supply and a distribution of foreign aid almost impossible. Vital lines of communication and electric power were destroyed as well as hospitals and schools.

The overall situation was further aggravated by the weakness and inability of the FRELIMO government to effectively counter the nation’s socio-economic decline. By 1989, not only the economy had collapsed but also the entire bureaucracy. The foreign debt rate had risen to 275 percent of export revenues in 1988\(^ {438}\), while foreign aid constituted 70 percent of the nation’s GDP. Officials were not paid, corruption was widespread and consignments of foreign aid mysteriously disappeared or could not be distributed due to the destroyed transport infrastructure. The official army was demoralized, unpaid and underequipped. In consequence, army discipline broke down so that it was often unclear whether atrocities were committed by RENAMO, deserted FRELIMO-units or freelance bandits. By 1992, a draught, more severe than those before, hit the country, further increasing the suffering and starvation caused by war and the breakdown of government.\(^ {439}\)

Yet, throughout the 1980s, regardless of how severe the destruction of the country was, FRELIMO could always rely on a functioning party structure. By 1989, however, not even this was the case any-

---

\(^{434}\) Newitt, A History of Mozambique, p. 571.


\(^{436}\) Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 220.

\(^{437}\) Alden/Simpson, Mozambique, here p. 117.

\(^{438}\) Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 223.

\(^{439}\) Newitt, A History of Mozambique, p. 574.
more. An internal FRELIMO report stated that only 29 percent of all FRELIMO party cells were working.\textsuperscript{440} FRELIMO thus not only failed to succeed in consolidating its own party throughout the entire country, it also did not accomplish its most important goal, the creation of a national unity. Without having control over the entire country and the eventual collapse of the economy, FRELIMO’s prestigious social reforms broke down as well.

Due to a military stalemate, an economic collapse and a complete breakdown of the social system by 1989, the country was literally done. Even with massive support from foreign countries, the only chance to avoid a complete disintegration of Mozambique as a state was in finding a comprehensive solution for the complex southern African conflict which had haunted the region for the past fifteen years. With significant changes about to happen in Pretoria and Moscow, the transitional period to the 1990s did not seem to be all that far away from such a solution.

In the light of this situation, assessing Mozambique’s status quo in 1989 can be seen as a rather straightforward task. What turns out to be far more complex, however, is to find a sufficient answer to the question of why, in the long term, nearly everything went wrong in Mozambique. Blaming RENAMO’s terror campaign and FRELIMO’s misguided socio-economic policy does provide part to the answer, yet to fully comprehend the entire dynamic within the country, this question has to be placed into the larger, global context.

It was FRELIMO’s declared goal to vault Mozambique, politically as well as socio-economically, within a very short period of time into the 20th century. That the country’s political instability, social ambitiousness and economic mismanagement were large obstacles on the path of bringing these reforms on track, has already been mentioned. Yet, it is important to note that during the initial years of independence, FRELIMO succeeded, despite all the problems and challenges, in initiating these reforms. Of course, the country was still miles away from meeting even the standards of the Eastern European countries at that time, but certainly an improvement was achieved. This implies that the reforms did not fail right at the beginning but only in the course of the 1980s. Obviously, both the civil war and FRELIMO’s actions played an important role in this ultimate failure, yet, Maputo made another crucial mistake right at the beginning. The new government initiated such a vast reform program, of which it knew from the outset that it could only be accomplished with massive assistance from abroad. Even if the country had not descended into a civil war it seems highly unlikely that Maputo would have been able to realize these programs without foreign aid, for FRELIMO still would have inherited a politically and economically shattered country. Yet, FRELIMO’s calculation did not work out, since, especially at the beginning, Maputo was denied the necessary assistance from abroad. The reason for the lack of interest (compared to that other southern African countries received at this time), especially from the two superpowers, lies in the way of how Machel conducted the country’s foreign policy.

\textsuperscript{440} Sidaway, Mozambique, here p. 250.
From the beginning on, the Mozambican leader put great emphasize on the fact that his country was pursuing a neutral course in the global Cold War. Machel’s decision to pursue such a path was, considering the situation many Third World countries who aligned themselves either with Washington or Moscow had to face, certainly a wise choice. To avoid getting involved in such a situation, Maputo therefore kept diplomatic relations and economic treaties with the Western world, the Eastern bloc and the non-aligned movement. It was the nation’s declared goal to receive as much assistance as possible without having to commit itself fully to one camp. As it has been shown, neither of these three blocs invested much effort in preventing the others from exercising their influence over the African country. In consequence however, neither of them felt primarily responsible for the nation. During Mozambique’s early years, it was therefore too less a socialist country to be fully integrated into Moscow’s orbit, yet too much to be fully accepted by Washington. Yet, by the time Maputo finally opted for the Western world, its reform program and the civil war had already inflicted destruction on such a massive scale that a full recovery of the nation through Western aid alone was not possible anymore.

The negative consequences of this non-integration into any of the superpowers spheres of influence is not only reflected in terms of economic assistance but also in regard to Mozambique security policy. Similarly to Angola, Mozambique faced external threats from the beginning on. Immediately after independence it was attacked by Rhodesia, from 1980 onwards South Africa unleashed its policy of destabilization while RENAMO terrorized the entire country well into the early 1990s. As of 1980, Maputo could partly rely on Harare and Dar es Salam for assistance in its fight against South Africa and RENAMO, yet the alliance was never powerful enough to change the political setting in southern Africa in the long term after 1980. While Machel succeeded in convincing several European countries, including Great Britain, Portugal and Spain, that the total destruction of Mozambique could not be in their best interest (these countries regarded the FLS as a backup plan in the region in case the situation with South Africa deteriorated to such an extent that any form of relation was no longer possible), neither of these countries was powerful enough to exercise enough pressure on Pretoria to change its approach towards Maputo. This power rested with the United States, however, with Ronald Reagan was a typical Cold Warrior at the top of the decision making process who treated each and every conflict around the world as part of the global struggle against the Soviet Union. Although he had been convinced by the mid-1980s that Maputo was a socialist country only on paper, his global world view did not allow him to seriously challenge his most important ally on the southern African continent (i.e. South Africa) for the sake of a, seen from the Cold War perspective, rather unimportant country.

Moscow’s anti-South Africa stance certainly made its relationship with Maputo easier, but also the Kremlin considered Mozambique not important enough to change its general approach in the region. By the 1980s, the Soviet Union had long decided not to challenge Pretoria directly but in an indirect way through supporting the ANC. Although the ANC was allowed to operate from Mozambican territory, its priority was clearly to end the reign of the National Party in Pretoria and not to end the civil war in Mozambique.
Against this backdrop, the repercussions of Maputo’s neutrality course were decisive. Since Maputo was not integrated into any of the superpower’s socio-economic, political or security perimeter, none of the involved actors regarded the country as part of the Cold War. However, given the interconnectedness between the regional conflicts in southern Africa and the Cold War, Mozambique was caught in a conflict whose frontlines were not only running between majority and minority ruled countries and apartheid and anti-apartheid governments, but also between Washington and Moscow. This leads to the paradox that the Cold War, of which Mozambique, succinctly put, never was a part of, had a fundamental impact on the country.

Ultimately, basically being left alone, Mozambique never had the strength nor the means to deal both with the problems it had inherited from the Portuguese, and to overcome the destruction caused by a civil war interconnected with a Cold War-propelled regional conflict. Throughout the first fifteen years of FRELIMO’s reign, the movement never had the possibility to build the country it had aspired. Mozambique was therefore a country without a chance.
CHAPTER IV

Angola – The Cold War Microcosm?

“When elephants fight, it is the grass which gets trampled”

(African proverb)

4.1. From War To War – The Period of Independence

4.1.1. BROKEN PROMISES – THE TREATY OF ALVOR

It took the Portuguese colonialists another four months after they had agreed to grant Mozambique its independence to reach the same conclusion in regard to Angola, by far their largest and most wealthy colony. Being confronted with three different independence movements in a country larger than Germany, France, the Benelux-countries, Switzerland and Austria combined, Lisbon had accepted the fact that it was no longer powerful enough to uphold its claim on Angola. On January 15, 1975, the Alvor Treaty was signed by representatives of the FNLA, MPLA, UNITA and the Portuguese government. Signed in a small town on the Algarve in southernmost Portugal, the treaty granted full independence to Angola by November 11, 1975. During the eleven months between the signing and the commencement of the act, a transitional government, comprised of representatives of FNLA, MPLA and UNITA, should take over the administration and prepare the country for general elections by October. Additionally, the guerilla forces of the three parties should be merged into a national army (8,000 from each movement and another 24,000 from the Portuguese). The Portuguese army was further obliged to assist the transitional government in restoring civilian order in the case of an uprising by any power.

Yet, what looked promising on paper was illusionary in reality. When the transitional government took over in January, the atmosphere in Luanda was marked by deep mistrust. While Agostinho Neto’s MPLA could clearly propound the most advanced political and administrative structure, the military edge was with Holden Roberto’s FNLA. Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA, neglected by the two others despite being a signatory power, was both militarily and politically the weakest movement, having its main support base far away from Luanda in the southeast of Angola. Within Luanda, the MPLA could enjoy

441 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 81-82.
442 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 55-56.
the support of a vast majority of people, an issue that increasingly caused worries among the FNLA’s leadership, which continuously lost its support due to its brutal and arrogant appearance in Luanda.\footnote{Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, pp. 250-251.} Fearing to lose control over the city, the FNLA began to attack the MPLA’s infrastructure only weeks after the transitional government took over and by March 1975, major fighting broke out between the MPLA and FNLA. Despite their contractual obligations, the Portuguese army did nothing to bring an end to the escalating violence. Only with help from a local militia did the MPLA succeed in repelling the FNLA. By April, a shaky truce had been brought about by the Portuguese, yet only weeks later fighting broke out again. Given this violent atmosphere, it is not much of a surprise that neither the transitional government nor a joint Angolan army became functional.\footnote{James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 57.} While the northern provinces were slowly descending into a civil war, Savimbi was crisscrossing the southern part of Angola, busily building a huge support basis for UNITA. The charismatic leader managed to consolidate large parts of predominantly rural areas, not hesitating from intimidating or executing those who did not obey.

Meanwhile, the leader of the three independence movements had all realized that the party, whose army controlled the city by November 11, was most likely going to take over power in Angola and neither of them continued to place any faith in the Alvor Treaty. In May, the FNLA launched another offensive, this time heavily backed by Zairean troops. International journalists reported that around 1,200 Zairean soldiers were in Angola. By late May, the MPLA launched its first counter-offensive and succeeded, with material support from the Soviet Union, to expel the FNLA from Luanda. A raging Roberto had to retreat into Zaire, where he declared a “total war” on Neto and the MPLA.\footnote{Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 253.} Another FNLA-attack followed in July; by August, Savimbi, who had been engaged in secret talks with Roberto, began to attack the MPLA in the south. Despite the dangers of a two-front war, the MPLA succeeded militarily and prevailed against the FNLA and UNITA. Holden Roberto only remained in control of the two provinces bordering Zaire, while Savimbi was stuck in the southeast of Angola. Neto’s party, on the other side, controlled twelve of Angola’s sixteen provinces.\footnote{Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 83-86.}

Historiographically speaking, it is rather difficult to provide a detailed reconstruction of the first ten months of 1975 in Angola. The United States, Europe and, to a certain extent, the Soviet Union thought that the looming crisis in Angola was yet another minor conflict in the African bush, without any consequences for them. International observers and reporters were rare, reliable accounts thus scarce.\footnote{Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 251.}

It is a fact, however, that as November 11 was approaching, the MPLA had already decided to take power unilaterally, ignoring the Treaty of Alvor. As acting chairman of the OAU, Ugandan President Idi Amin made a last ditch attempt to come to an agreement in a meeting with representatives from all three parties. Yet, the developments in Angola made such an attempt futile. Roberto launched a last
offensive on November 10, which the MPLA was able to halt. A few hours later, the last High Commissioner of Angola hauled down the last Portuguese flag which had been flying over the nation for almost 500 years. Neto then proclaimed the People’s Republic of Angola which was immediately recognized by the Soviet Union, Cuba, Brazil, the Congo, and Mozambique. Almost simultaneously, Savimbi and Roberto proclaimed the Democratic People’s Republic of Angola, with Huamba as temporary capital until UNITA/FNLA-forces could take over Luanda. The departing High Commissioner made no mention of this fundamental violations of the Alvor Treaty, he simply stated that Portugal was handing over the country to the “Angolan people”. What the people received was a deeply divided country whose independence fell in the midst of the beginning of a decades-lasting civil war.448

4.1.2. SEIZING POWER – THE MPLA TAKES OVER

The origins of the MPLA date back to the mid-1950s. Founded in Luanda by a small number of students, intellectuals and members of the local communist party, the MPLA had a brief semi-legal career until mass arrests in 1959 forced its remaining members out of Angola. After five years of straying through Angola’s neighboring countries, the MPLA was finally allowed to establish a permanent mission in newly independent Zambia. Along the Zambian-Angolan border, several MPLA training camps were set up from which the fight against Portugal’s colonialists was taken up. Despite numerous infightings and miscommunications, the MPLA was able to create a rudimentary counter-state structure with the Zambian-Angolan border region and the Cabinda enclave as its main areas of operation. Contrary to UNITA and FNLA, the MPLA kept some minor characteristic features of a political party since Angolan independence was not only pursued through military violence, but also by promoting liberation outside the MPLA’s ethno-national basis. Yet, the movement failed to achieve support among Angola’s largest ethnic group, the Ovimbundu, which was in hindsight the severest failure of the early MPLA. By basing the movement only on the sparsely populated northeastern parts of Angola, the MPLA only had a narrow popular base, thus having large problems in meeting its labor and resource demands. The Ovimbundu people on the other side remained hostile to the MPLA, forcing the latter to not only fight the Portuguese but also, albeit to a lesser extent, the FNLA and UNITA. It was only because of UNITA’s and FNLA’s failure to exploit this problematic situation that the MPLA was able to achieve some short-term success during the independence war, which in turn set out the prospects for the coming civil war.449

In the international arena the radical political position of the MPLA made its stance and acceptance not any easier. Neto never held back his Marxist-Leninist ideals and by the early 1970s, the MPLA’s socialist orientation had become too radical for most Western countries. Their governments were therefore more in favor of the FNLA and UNITA, to whom they wanted to extend their support. The MPLA,

however, soon gained the sympathies of the socialist world, with the USSR and Cuba leading the way.\textsuperscript{450} Already by January 1975, Neto had secured vital support from Moscow and the OAU which both helped the MPLA in building a 7,000-man force.\textsuperscript{451}

Following its assumption of power in November 1975, the MPLA faced, in addition to its own internal structural problems, the same challenges as FRELIMO when it took over in Mozambique. With the Portuguese withdrawal a massive brain-drain in the political and economic administration occurred, infrastructure was destroyed and capital was taken out of the country. The developmental status of the Angolan society was catastrophic, the economy at the brink of collapsing and a political system was basically non-existent. At first, the MPLA gave the highest priority to consolidate its power, at least in those territories it was in control of, and to rebuild the administrative apparatus in a way that resembled the movement’s Marxist ideology. However, up until 1974, the MPLA was fragmented, the different sections worked in complete isolation from each other and often pursued contradicting approaches. The leadership realized that securing the MPLA’s control in Angola would not be possible without a profound structure of the party. Despite putting a lot of effort into restructuring the party, it took more than three years until the leadership thought it had accomplished this task. Yet, when high-ranking members of the MPLA attempted a coup d’état against the leadership in May 1977, Neto and his followers had to realize that the process of consolidation was far from being over. With help from the armed forces and the Cubans, Neto was able to quell the putsch and inflicted brutal punishments on its members. The main leaders were executed, and almost all other members got arrested. Neto concluded that he would not be able to end all the infightings unless the party was transformed into a much smaller avant-garde party. During the party’s 1977 congress, Neto therefore reduced its membership from 110,000 to 30,000, while only five of the Central Committee’s seats were reserved for representatives of the working class. Similarly to FRELIMO, the MPLA changed from a broad mass-movement into a small, intellectual Marxist-Leninist party.\textsuperscript{452}

Neto’s plan proved to be successful and by 1978 the MPLA had securely established itself in Luanda. In 1980, the people’s assembly became the highest legislative body in the country and its members were to be elected on a regular basis. Yet, as in Mozambique, there was only one party to be elected while all its candidates were to be nominated by the MPLA’s leadership only. The new constitution defined the MPLA, and not the “elected” legislative body, as the leading power in both state and society. Consequently, the party now was superior to the state.

While Neto was able to transform the former mass-guerrilla movement with only a rudimentary political agenda into a much better organized political party, the movement itself failed to administer the country. Again, the lack of skilled personnel made an effective bureaucracy almost impossible. The heavily centralized state structure soon overwhelmed the inexperienced and often illiterate officials,

\textsuperscript{450} Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 75-78.
\textsuperscript{452} Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 87-93.
which basically paralyzed most of the initiated reforms. The allocation of tasks was anything but efficient, a severe problem President dos Santos, who succeeded Neto in 1979, took up in a speech in 1981. There he stated that it was an absurdity that a state president had to deal with a minor local issue such as the installation of irrigation plants in a provincial town. He went on that “if we want to build socialism, solve the problems of the working class and the people in general, we will make no progress if we spend the entire time debating an issue without having the will and the power to implement the decisions.” Yet, dos Santos himself failed to lead by example and it would take several more years until Angola’s administration under the MPLA would become at least somewhat more efficient.

Next to solidifying its own power, the new leaders in Luanda crafted a detailed plan for a socio-economic development of Angola. Due to the strong socialist orientation of the movement, these attempted socio-economic reforms were textbook examples of Marxist-Leninist engineering. Especially in regard to the post-independence economic situation, this was the crux of the matter. The Portuguese left behind an economy which was not only weakened by a long-lasting colonial war but also because of its strong dependency on Lisbon. Moreover, in the course of the war, 130 strategically important bridges were destroyed and of 153,000 vehicles that were registered in 1973, only 8,000 were left in 1976. Large parts of the trading system were destroyed, 2,500 companies were out of business and 30,000 technicians fled the country, taking machinery and other technical equipment with them. Files, entire archives and official documents disappeared. That way, for example, all drawings of Luanda’s water and electricity supply ended up in Lisbon, out of the MPLA’s reach.

Luanda was trying to tackle these problems and rebuild its economy in a fashion similar to the reform agenda of FRELIMO. First, the MPLA issued a decree that empowered the government to nationalize private property, which were, in most cases, colonial assets. Again, this step was taken out of an economic necessity and not owed to ideological motives. Yet, due to the utter lack of a skilled labor force, this massive nationalization campaign did little to counter the heavy recession. The nation’s GDP experienced a massive decline and by 1980, it was only at 60 percent of the 1974 level. This decline continued during the early 1980s, alone in 1982 the economy had shrunk by 15 percent.

The agricultural sector was hit the hardest by the economic crisis. The large plantations formerly owned by the Portuguese, were transformed into large state-farms where a quick modernization should be accomplished. Yet, needless to say, the Angolan people were overchallenged in handling the state-of-the-art machinery imported from other socialist countries. Hence, the only effect this expensive equipment had, was to increase the foreign debt of Luanda. Nevertheless, the MPLA allocated almost all resources that were not invested into the military to these state-farms. Further economic wrong decisions forced most state-farms to retreat into subsistence economy, which decreased the agricultural output even further. During the mid-1980s, this sector would only provide 12 percent of the demanded food

453 Ibid., pp. 96-98.  
454 Ibid., p. 99.  
455 Ibid., p. 112.
for the cities and 15 percent for the rural areas, in 1986 the country was not even able to produce half of its people’s wheat demand. The lack of goods caused a massive inflation, black markets mushroomed and barter trade began to replace the money market business.456

The situation in Angola’s export sector was not much better. Next to oil, coffee and diamonds were Angola’s biggest export goods under Portuguese administration. Following independence, coffee production collapsed due to its transformation into large state-operated farms. 65 percent of the entire coffee production was state-owned and by 1986, these farms produced 15,000 tons of coffee, which were only 7 percent of the 1974 level. The other 35 percent were produced by small family-owned plantations, however, these peasants refused to sell their crops (for there was nothing to buy with the little money they would have earned) but rather wanted to trade it for goods like cloths, fish, salt, soap, sugar and oil. Since the Angolan economy was not able to satisfy these demands, these products needed to be imported. Imports on such a massive scale were impossible, as the low export rates did not flush enough hard currency into Angola’s treasury, thus creating a vicious cycle. A provincial leader estimated that in his province alone more than 16,000 tons of coffee were stacked in the villages.457 The diamond business was hit even harder. In 1973, Angola mined 2.12 million karat of diamonds, by 1977, this number has declined to 330,000 karat. By 1986, as the civil war expanded into the mining centers of Angola, the entire business collapsed and Angola’s total output was only 266,000 karat, whereby a large amount was mined by UNITA and thus out of governmental reach.458

The only branch of Angola’s economy which was in the black was the oil sector. Until 1981, due to the large revenues Angola gained from the oil exports, Luanda was able to finance its massive imports. The biggest oil producer in Angola was the American Gulf Oil Corporation (merged with Standard Oil into Chevron in 1985) which continued its close relationship with the MPLA despite massive interventions by an anti-MPLA US government. Its proportion of Angola’s total oil output was 71 percent in 1985. To guarantee its own revenues from the oil business, the MPLA founded the state-owned Sonangol Oil Company in 1976. The company became operational in 1978 and immediately took over 51 percent of the oil production of all foreign companies. During the outgoing 1970s, Angola aligned its entire economy on the oil business. This exclusive focus on the oil sector reached such an extent that by the mid-1980s this sector generated 94 percent of Angola’s total export revenues, a figure that was only at 50 percent in 1974. Basing an entire political economy on one single industrial branch is a hazardous endeavor, since an entire nation is depending on this single sector. A failure of this sector would immediately bring down the country as well. This scenario occurred at the beginning of the 1980s. With the sharp decline of the oil price during the early 1980s, Luanda’s oil revenues nosedived. Since Angola was not a member of the OPEC (it joined only later in 2007) and thus not bound to an output quota, it drastically increased its output and thereby tried to compensate for the lower revenues. However, this

456 Ibid., pp. 90-108.
458 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 121.
did not succeed and the nation’s foreign debts skyrocketed. Unable to finance its vast imports, Luanda issued a harsh austerity policy and within a few years the MPLA had been able to contain the increase of foreign debts. This austerity policy, however, did not prevent the government from spending vast amounts of money on its military. In 1985, 38 percent of the Angolan budget was spent on military equipment, while 53 percent of all imports were military related goods. The cutbacks in imports were primarily made for consumer goods which further aggravated the supply situation in Angola and, for similar reasons as in Mozambique, seriously hampered the development of the nation’s economy.\(^{459}\)

It was in this deteriorating situation during which Luanda realized, almost simultaneously with Mozambique, that without a fundamental reorientation of its economy it would not be possible to bring an end to this recession. Already by 1983, a restructuring of the agricultural sector was initiated which focused on the small family farms, while more and more state-farms were being dissolved. Henceforth, they should not only receive more resources (especially financially), but also have a freer hand in leading their businesses. By 1985, the Angolan economy began to open itself gradually to the West, a trend that became evident by the fact that the United States were the largest export market for Angola during the second half of the 1980s. In 1987, Luanda joined the World Bank and the IMF. State-owned businesses were granted more autonomy, decision making processes were decentralized and became more flexible. The MPLA-government attempted to create a private sector (most notably the aforementioned family-farms) and increasingly started to promote foreign (western) investments in the country.\(^{460}\)

In regard to Angola’s social situation, there is not as much data available as for Mozambique, yet it can be said that there had not been much difference between these two countries. At the time of independence, 88 percent of the Angolan people were illiterate, which the MPLA, like FRELIMO, tried to counter with a massive education program. Yet, while Maputo made the mistake of conducting these programs in the Portuguese language, Angola opted for the native languages of the people. Although this approach seemed to be more promising, it was again the lack of resources that strongly limited the success of the literacy campaign. The situation of the health-care system was characterized by some initial success. The MPLA introduced free medical treatment, preventive medicine campaigns were initiated and child mortality rates could be lowered by 10 percent.\(^{461}\) Yet, due to a constant lack of trained medical personnel and a worsening supply situation of medicine due to an escalating war, these earliest improvements soon vanished. Considerable medical support from other socialist countries could not improve the overall conditions in the long term and, especially following the Lusaka Accords, it became even worse.

It has already been mentioned that Angola has always been an ethnically diverse country, whereby the MPLA was not able to build a strong base among the largest ethnic groups. This crucial factor is

\(^{459}\) Ibid., p. 116-120.

\(^{460}\) Ibid., p. 135-137.

reflected in the problems the administration had to face when it tried to implement various social reforms. As soon as the reforms affected regions outside the MPLA’s “home-base”, the administration’s failures were glaring. In several (especially rural) areas, the FNLA and UNITA had already secured their support, making any MPLA-initiatives almost impossible. In those regions which were not (yet) under FNLA/UNITA control, the administration tried to implement its reforms. However, the movement’s lack of understanding the different tribal cultures worked against their efforts and often alienated these people. Additionally, due to the heavy destruction of the nation’s infrastructure, it was extremely difficult (and often dangerous) to reach the scattered population, which brought another challenge to improving their living conditions.662

Throughout the entire reform process, the MPLA relied heavily on foreign assistance and advisors from mostly socialist countries. By 1979, more than 10,000 advisors from the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and, above all, from Cuba, were in Angola. Instead of finding and promoting local experts (who were certainly more acquainted with the everyday life in Angola) as FRELIMO intended to do, Luanda predominately diverted problems to the numerous foreign advisors, leading to the threat of new dependency relations.663

Although the socio-economic situation of Angola closely resembled that of Mozambique, it is important to note that the MPLA’s initiatives certainly differed from those undertaken by FRELIMO and were not nearly as radical as they were in Mozambique. Especially with the social reforms, the MPLA pursued a more diverse approach and tried to take the various cultural differences among the Angolan people into consideration. Luanda refrained from (forced) relocation programs, did not overemphasize the Portuguese language and, in general, conducted the reforms at a much slower pace. It can be argued that the MPLA was more aware of the challenges and consequences which an extremely fast implementation of radical reforms would bring about. Then again, political and socio-economic reforms were certainly not as high on the MPLA’s agenda as they were on FRELIMO’s. FRELIMO took over control of Mozambique with the assumption that its power would not be challenged at least not to the same extent as the MPLA did expect. FRELIMO could therefore focus the bulk of its energy on the extensive reform programs, allowing the movement to implement them faster and more radical. The MPLA, however, knew from the outset that its power would immediately be challenged by the FNLA and UNITA. It therefore had to divert vast resources into a military build-up to secure its own power, which at the same time lowered the movement’s priority to implement all forms of reforms. Finally, it can also be assumed that the MPLA was simply not capable of initiating reforms on the same level as FRELIMO did, for the movement’s sphere of influence was limited from early on.

662 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 100-108.
4.1.3. RETREAT AND DEFEAT – UNITA AND FNLA

By the time the year 1975 was coming to a close, the MPLA had many reasons to look towards the years to come with a certain optimism. Politically speaking, Neto’s movement had secured its control over the “official” Luanda while massive foreign support ensured the MPLA’s ability to continue its fight against the FNLA and UNITA. Given this dominance, the situation of Savimbi’s and Roberto’s movements was therefore characterized by a struggle for their mere survival.

The origins of the FNLA date back to the year 1957, when it was founded as the UPNA (Uniao das Populacoes do Norte de Angola). Established and deeply rooted among the Bakongo people, the early FNLA was located in northwestern Angola and southwestern Zaire. Initially, the movement aimed at restoring the ancient Bakongo Empire, which should have been independent not only from the Portuguese but also from Angola and Zaire. In the same year as it was founded, the movement decided to send a representative abroad to present the movement’s situation to the UN, the US and several African nations. The person chosen for this task was Holden Roberto. While his lobbying efforts were marked by only modest success, he made a fundamental change in the movement’s overall orientation. He transformed the UPNA from a group propagating ethnic nationalism to a movement representing Angolan independence in general. This is of great significance as there were now two movements, the MPLA and the UPNA, which claimed to represent the interests of the entire Angolan people.

In the wake of the fall of Belgian Congo in 1960 and the subsequent Congo Crisis, Joseph Mobutu staged a coup d’état and became the new leader of Zaire. Being friendly towards Roberto, the movement was allowed to establish its bases in Zaire. In the meantime, Roberto had changed its name into FNLA and Savimbi had seceded in 1964.464

At the turn from the 1960s to the 1970s, Roberto was now undoubtedly in charge of the FNLA, a movement which, albeit pursuing the same ultimate goal as the MPLA (i.e. the independence of Angola), differed in several ways from it. First, while the MPLA was, according to the US State Department “the alliance of most of the best educated and skilled people in Angola”465 the upper echelons of the FNLA had no more than a secondary education. Second, despite the FNLA’s claim to represent the entire Angolan people, a political concept or plans for a post-independence administration of Angola were basically non-existent. The orientation of the FNLA was more “peasant-populist like than that of the MPLA and the struggle was perceived as exclusively nationalist and non-ideological.” Roberto stated already in 1967: “The Angolan revolution…has nothing to do with the ideological conflicts which tear apart today’s world… we are conducting a war of liberation and not an ideological one.”466 Finally, the FNLA “was totally disorganized [and] totally corrupt” and, according to the CIA station chief in Luanda, “was led by corrupt unprincipled men who represented the very worst of radical black African racism”.467

465 Quoted in: Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 358-359.
467 Quoted in: Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, pp. 237-238.
It is therefore not much of a surprise that throughout its history the FNLA had almost exclusively been a military movement. Yet, like the other two movements, it did not succeed in establishing a military force by its own means. Zairian support was undoubtedly the FNLA’s biggest asset, however, it was not the only nation that got involved with Roberto and his movement.

Holden Roberto had been on the CIA’s payroll since the Kennedy administration. Although hardly a pro-Western capitalist but an opportunistic African nationalist, Roberto became Kissinger’s choice ally in the escalating Angolan conflict, ignoring the hesitations of the African Bureau in his own State Department. In January 1975, Washington confirmed a US$ 300,000 aid package for the FNLA. Despite severe criticism from within the administration, another US$ 6 million of covert aid for the FNLA and UNITA were approved by the CIA in June.468 By July, first cargo planes from the United States Air Force arrived in Kinshasa with military equipment. According to the South African “Rand Daily Mail”, these shipments included “light tanks, armored cars and jeeps, uniforms, munitions, trucks, anti-tank weapons and heavy mortars.”469 It was just at that moment that the MPLA, boasted by increased Soviet and Cuban assistance, took complete control of Luanda and evicted the other two movements from the capital. Alarmed by the prospect of a pro-Soviet Angola, Kissinger and Ford reacted immediately. The CIA was directed to draft a detailed plan for covert actions that would enable the FNLA to retake the capital by November. The plan, which authorized US$ 33 million of covert aid for UNITA and FNLA, was approved by Ford the following day. This massive aid had a clear impact on UNITA and FNLA and the movements were able to halt the MPLA’s advance.

Yet, just as victory was within sight, the tide turned again. On the day of independence, a joint Cuban/MPLA operation defeated a FNLA/Zairian advance on Luanda. Equipped with Soviet-built rocket-launchers (“Stalin-organs”) a well-prepared defensive force opened fire on the approaching enemy troops. According to eye witness reports, some 2,000 rockets rained down on FNLA and Zairian troops, whose weapons were of little value due to their limited range. Neither FNLA nor Zairian troops made any attempt of resistance and retreated in disarray. This battle, which became known as the “Battle of Death Road”, battered the FNLA, making any further military operation, and thus the capture of Luanda, impossible.470 The massive intervention of Cuba and the complete defeat of the FNLA had destroyed the US strategy in Angola. Kissinger was unable to launch a meaningful response to the MPLA/Cuban dominance, neither overtly, covertly or with the help of allies.

As the year 1975 was coming to a close, US congress began to investigate the administration’s involvement in Angola. Most notably, Democratic senators Joseph Biden and Dick Clark voiced their concerns over the increasing involvement of the United States. Until then, Congress had little knowledge of the situation in Africa, a factor raised that hopes among Ford and Kissinger that the legislative branch would give its concession to further covert aid without asking any more questions. However, coinciding

469 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 258.
470 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 56.
with a heated debate on Capitol Hill over further aid for Angola, a story broke loose nationwide, revealing South Africa’s involvement in Angola and the close ties Washington had with the apartheid-regime. In addition with the, even though farfetched, fear that the United States could stumble into another Vietnam-like disaster, American awareness and concerns over Kissinger’s and Ford’s southern Africa policy skyrocketed. It was in this atmosphere that Clark introduced an amendment that called for cutting off all covert aid for any Angolan faction. The amendment passed the senate by 54 to 22 votes and banned any use of funds for Angola, a month later it passed the House by 323 to 99 votes. Unwilling to fight a losing battle amid a presidential election campaign, Ford reluctantly signed the Clark amendment into law on February 9, 1976. Henceforth, Washington’s hands were tied, the FNLA sole remaining lifeline was Mobutu’s support.\footnote{Hanhimäki, The Flawed Architect, pp. 418-420.}

By February 1976, the FNLA held only three minor towns in northern Angola, the bulk of its troops had retreated back into Zaire, from where they launched minor attacks against MPLA forces, which were now the official army of Angola. Throughout the FNLA’s existence, Zaire had been, without a doubt, the most important ally of the movement. This becomes evident by the fact that Mobutu continued to tolerate the movement’s presence in his country, although the continuous support for it had become an increasing burden to Mobutu without US assistance. Yet, this attitude changed when Luanda gave permission to the Front National de Libération du Congo (FNLC), a movement that was in opposition to the Mobutu-regime, to launch an attack on Zaire from Angolan territory (see chapter 4.3.1). Mobutu came to the conclusion that a friendlier relation with the MPLA-government might be better for his country. The prospect of a reopened Benguela Rail Line (the cheapest export route for Zairian copper) and a general stabilization of the region were major reasons that led to a rapprochement between Kinshasa and Luanda. By mid-1978, relations between the two countries were slightly improving, sealing the fate of the FNLA. As part of the rapprochement, Mobutu kicked the entire FNLA out of Zaire which immediately broke apart without any foreign support. Most guerillas and several leaders made use of an amnesty policy executed by the MPLA-government and returned to Angola. The insignificance of his movement was made plain clear to Roberto when he, seeking support after the Clark amendment was lifted in 1986, was rebuffed by all authorities in Washington. Upon his return from the US to Africa in 1986, the former FNLA-leader Johnny Eduardo Pinnock rightfully concluded: “The FNLA does not exist anymore [...].”\footnote{Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, pp. 140-141.}

With the FNLA being finally out of the picture, the MPLA saw itself confronted with only one movement left that tried to knock it off from power in Luanda. Albeit being, compared to the FNLA, much less a threat during the initial years of the civil war, UNITA would become a devastating force for the MPLA and Angola for decades to come. UNITA’s origins date back to the period when Jonas Savimbi and his followers were still affiliated with Roberto’s FNLA. Within the FNLA, Savimbi rose to a high
position and became an influential figure. Yet, as the war of independence took off during the mid-1960s, Savimbi’s disagreement with Roberto’s leadership style and the general direction of FNLA’s policy grew. During the first anniversary meeting of the OAU in Cairo in July 1964, Savimbi stunned the delegates by announcing his resignation from the FNLA and delivered an inflammatory speech on Roberto and FNLA. Savimbi considered the FNLA to be corrupt, chaotic and accused it of pursuing a tribal agenda rather than national unity.

In March 1966, after traveling to Algeria and the PRC, Savimbi founded UNITA. Contrary to the FNLA, which regarded the creation of an armed force as the paramount duty of every movement and ignored any socio-economic problem of its people, Savimbi stressed the necessity of creating a political and economic wing as well. In doing so, UNITA put a lot of effort into gaining the support of the Ovimbundu, the largest ethnic group in Angola, totaling over one third of the entire population. Since this group had not had any representatives until then, it was not that much of a difficult task to win these people over for UNITA’s plans. Savimbi was described as a charismatic and intelligent leader, something that was acknowledged by friend and foe alike. Unlike Neto and Roberto, he spent the rest of the war of independence inside Angola, boasting: “I alone remained in the bush for six years”. Yet, the question remains as to what exactly he was doing there.

In July 1974, a Paris-based newspaper (“Afrique-Asie”) published four letters which seemed to prove that UNITA had been collaborating with the Portuguese. Savimbi immediately denounced these letters as forgeries, despite the fact that many top-ranking Portuguese officials (including Caetano himself) confirmed that close links between their armed forces and UNITA existed. General Costa Comes, commander in chief in Angola, wrote that Portugal and UNITA signed an agreement in early 1972 to cease all military operations against each other. Several additional testimonies that surfaced during the 1970s leave no doubt that UNITA was in fact collaborating with the Portuguese throughout certain periods during the war of independence.

To understand this baffling move of Savimbi, a closer look on UNITA’s overall situation has to be taken. From the beginning on, UNITA was the only movement that received virtually no foreign aid during the war of independence. After losing the support of Zambia, it was entirely left on its own, while, given its close proximity to the MPLA’s “home-territory”, clashes between the two movements occurred on a regular basis. Since it was the weakest of all the rebel movements at that time, UNITA would probably not have survived a war on multiple fronts. Siding with the Portuguese would not only provide the weak movement with a protective shield, it would also give UNITA the opportunity to sit out the multiple-fronts war on the sideline while its enemies exhausted themselves in fighting each other, quasi along the lines “when two parties quarrels, a third rejoices.” During the early 1970s, Savimbi’s strategy worked and UNITA got only involved into minor skirmishes with the MPLA. The Portuguese even started negotiations over bringing Savimbi and UNITA back into the Portuguese army. Yet, in

473 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 50-51.
474 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 239.
September 1973, in the midst of these negotiations, Portuguese general Hipólito launched an attack on UNITA, ignoring all agreements between Savimbi and Lisbon. This operation, described as an “act of sheer lunacy” by another Portuguese commander, was not authorized by Lisbon, but in Hipólito’s view all African rebels were the same and thus not worthy of collaborating with them. Hipólito was immediately released from his command but the damage was done. Savimbi broke with Lisbon and any prospects of a union were gone.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 239-241.}

Half a year later, only a few days after the Lisbon coup, Savimbi’s troops staged a remarkable coup. Taking advantage of the festive mood the Portuguese soldiers were in, they captured an entire Portuguese company, took all their weapons, stripped them and let them return to their barracks naked. This sent a strong message and refurbished Savimbi’s image as a “freedom fighter” just weeks before he signed a ceasefire with the Portuguese in June. A few months later, the FNLA and MPLA signed ceasefires as well, and by November, UNITA was fully recognized by the OAU as a legitimate representative of the Angolan people. Despite being still the weakest military movement (by April 1974 UNITA was estimated to have only 600-800 men), on the diplomatic level UNITA was equal to the other two movements.\footnote{James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 53.}

In the months following the Treaty of Alvor, UNITA increasingly attracted Western attention. With an increasing Soviet and, though a bit later, Cuban presence in Angola, UNITA automatically became an anti-communist-movement for Western nations, especially the United States. The fact that Savimbi himself used a strong Marxist-influenced rhetoric and began to fight a Soviet-backed Cuban-/MPLA-force out of national interests and not because of an anti-communist attitude was either overlooked or ignored by the West. Savimbi tried to exploit this factor to the best of his abilities, yet he was only able to secure little money from the US. Thus, UNITA was still heavily outgunned and out-numbered by FNLA and MPLA. Having nowhere else to turn to, in mid-1975 Savimbi approached southern Africa’s biggest nemesis, a step that would have a profound impact on UNITA in general and his image as an African guerilla leader in particular.

South Africa had approached Savimbi already in March 1975, yet, the UNITA leader, who back then probably still counted on the United States for support, turned the South Africans down, fearing that an allegiance with Pretoria would seriously hamper his credibility as an African nationalist leader. When Pretoria proposed another meeting in August, however, UNITA’s situation had deteriorated to such an extent that Savimbi was willing to enter an alliance with Pretoria. Making these step was certainly made easier for Savimbi due to Vorster’s détente policy and South Africa’s close ties with NATO, which would certainly not stand on the sidelines and let Moscow take over Angola. Henceforth, Pretoria’s racist apartheid-regime became the lifeline for Savimbi’s black resistance movement.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 144-145.} This diplomatic
stroke, which at a first glance might seem to be rather paradox, prevented UNITA from suffering the same fate as the FNLA did and was thus able to survive the initial years of the Angolan civil war.

4.2. The Civil War Becomes International

4.2.1. CUBAN BACKUP

Given the early months of the Angolan civil war as outlined in the previous chapter, the conflict was, despite being labeled a civil war, never confined to the borders of the newly independent state on Africa’s western coast. Moscow, Kinshasa, Beijing, Pretoria and Washington, to name only a few, all played a part in the months following the signing of the Alvor Agreement, albeit to a different degree. It was, however, with the involvement of another nation that the “internationalization” of Angola’s civil war was brought to another level.

Cuba’s involvement in the Angolan civil war was completely unexpected and surprising for all the other participants. Henry Kissinger wrote in his memoirs that “the intervention of Cuban combat forces [in Angola] came as a total surprise”\(^478\) to him and the US government and it caught South Africa, which was racing towards Luanda at this time, off guard.\(^479\) Throughout the entire Cold War, Cuba’s role in Angola was unique. Havana was the only non-superpower and Third World Country which projected its military power far beyond its own immediate neighborhood. Even the Soviet Union sent far fewer soldiers beyond its immediate neighborhood than Cuba. In this regard, the Caribbean island was only surpassed by the United States. Yet, if some light is shed upon Havana’s history in Africa following Castro’s successful revolution in 1959, Cuba’s involvement in Angola does not seem like a sudden “out-of-nowhere” action.

Havana’s Africa-adventure began in Algeria during the country’s war against the French colonialists.\(^480\) Shiploads of Cuban arms for the Algerians were unloaded in Casablanca, helping Ahmed Ben Bella to fight the French. Two years later, Che Guevara was touring central Africa, promising Havana’s support to the revolutionary movements in Brazzaville and Kinshasa. Only when the corrupt, US-backed regime in Zaire was threatened had Washington realized the significance of Cuba in Africa and sent a CIA-led force of European mercenaries into Zaire to prevent the potential takeover of a pro-Soviet movement. Despite Cuban reinforcement, the Congo Crisis ended in a “Western” victory and Havana

\(^{478}\) Henry Kissinger, Years of Renewal, New York 1999, p. 815.
\(^{479}\) Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 8.
subsequently withdrew completely from the African continent. Washington and its allies referred to the event as “Moscow’s debacle” and concluded that Africa’s rebel movements would not succeed in unseating the remaining white minority regimes and that the continent would not become yet another theater in the Cold War. Washington’s false confidence even remained when its NATO-ally Portugal was shaken by revolution in 1974. By then, Castro had long renewed his country’s ties with Africa and Cuban instructors were found in Guinea-Bissau and in Angola. Washington’s Intelligence Community was well aware of Havana’s presence in southern Africa but the Nixon/Ford administrations concluded that “a few Cuban’s would not make a difference”. The events of the following decade should prove the opposite.

After the debacle in the Congo Crisis of the early 1960s and the withdrawal of its entire personnel from Zaire, Havana’s relation with the region in general and Luanda in particular cooled off. Castro had, according to Neto, lost much of his faith in the abilities of southern Africa’s liberation movements. The fall of Caetano in April 1974 did little to change Castro’s mind. Three months later, a delegation from Luanda asked for financial and technical aid, yet Castro was reluctant to make these concessions, having in mind the events that happened ten years earlier when Havana, based on second-hand information, sent personnel into Zaire. The Cuban leader did not categorically reject any further Angolan demands but emphasized the necessity that a Cuban “exploratory mission” would tour Angola to gain first-hand information on the situation in the African country. Given Castro’s reluctance to assist Luanda, an attitude he had shown since the mid-1960s in several yet irregular exchanges with Luanda, the question comes up why Neto turned to Havana in the first place, since it is thoroughly legitimate to conclude that Moscow would have been Neto’s primary go-to ally. There are two answers to this question, a diplomatic and a geopolitical one. Ideologically speaking, the relationship between Moscow and the MPLA had never been an easy one. From the outset, the Kremlin did not place much faith in Neto’s leadership abilities and had always looked with skepticism towards a Neto-led MPLA. During the early 1970s, tensions grew to such an extent that Moscow drastically cut back its aid and even considered to drop the MPLA in favor of another movement. Relations would begin to improve only by the late 1970s, yet they never became what would be described as “cordial”. Geopolitically speaking, the lion’s share of Moscow’s aid was channeled through Brazzaville, whose leadership had strong sympathies for Moscow. When the dispute over the Cabinda enclave between Luanda and Brazzaville grew, however, Brazzaville denied Moscow to use its territory as a layover for delivering aid to Angola. Thus, Neto was afraid that the MPLA would soon end up without any Soviet aid. As a logical consequence, he looked for a backup plan and turned to a country which also had a history of interventions in Africa.

After Castro had received the report from the “exploratory mission” in Angola, he asked his advisors to draft a proposal for military aid to the MPLA. The proposal suggested the delivery of military aid

\[481\] Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, pp. 7-8.
\[482\] Ibid., pp. 344-245.
from May 1975 throughout 1976 as well as the creation of a military mission. For various different reasons it took another couple of months until Cuban aid finally started flowing into Angola by July 1975. But the amount was staggering. Havana sent large amounts of money and established several training centers in Angola with a capacity of training more than 5,000 soldiers within three to six months. This was five times as much as Neto had asked for. Yet, as is made obvious by the delay, Havana did not rush to aid the MPLA. Why there were delays is, given the still strongly limited access to Cuban archives, only a matter of speculations. Piero Gleijeses, currently the only foreign scholar who has ever had (though strongly limited) access to the Cuban archives of the Castro era, postulates several possible reasons: First, Castro could have been reluctant to get drawn into a far-away conflict whose duration, intensity and protagonists were more than vague at the time. Second, he might have been afraid of jeopardizing global détente which also had some positive impacts on the Havana-Washington relationship. Castro might have concluded that Washington would interpret his country’s involvement in Angola as Havana acting on Moscow’s orders and not on his own.484 And as Kissinger mentioned in his memoirs, this was, at the beginning of Cuba’s involvement, actually the case. There, Kissinger wrote after stating his surprise over the out-of-sudden Cuban involvement: “The Soviet Union[!] never having intervened massively so far from its borders and historic interests, we [the US government] interpreted its efforts at first as a harassing move rather than a strategic decision.”485 Other reasons might have been Castro’s fears that the dispatch of military units would offend other Cuban-friendly nations in Africa (which seems to be less likely since Luanda specifically asked Havana for troops – so, in terms of international law it technically was not an invasion – and several African nations pressured Castro into sending troops), or that Havana’s leadership was preoccupied with domestic issues.

Regardless of Castro’s motives for delaying a response, once the aid was rolling, it was rolling fast. The training camps were already set up by October, while additional aid came into Angola on a regular basis. Yet, Raúl Díaz Argüelles, the Cuban officer in charge of all Angolan-related military operations, reported back to Havana already in early September that, should UNITA and FNLA launch major, internationally backed operations, the Cuban/MPLA presence would have severe difficulties in halting these offensives. Havana should therefore consider to send regular combat troops to Angola. According to a letter Castro had sent to CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in August 1975, the Cuban leader had already been considering the possibility of a large-scale operation of Cuban forces in Angola for at least two weeks. In this letter Castro stressed the necessity for increased support for the MPLA, including the deployment of regular Cuban troops. While his staff had already drafted a detailed plan for transportation and supply, he wanted Brezhnev to send transport assistance and Soviet staff officers both to Havana and Luanda to help planning the operations.486 The Cuban leader knew that he could not stem the logistics of such a massive troop deployment on his own. Probably due to Moscow’s skepticism

484 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, pp. 256-257.
485 Kissinger, Years of Renewal, p. 816.
486 Odd Arne Westad, Moscow and the Angolan Crisis, 1974-1976, here p. 25.
of Neto and the MPLA, Brezhnev was not satisfied with Castro’s plan and declined all his request. Furthermore, the Soviet leader did not want to jeopardize détente, which had reached a crucial phase at this time since Moscow and Washington were in the midst of the SALT II-negotiations. A direct involvement of Moscow in Angola would certainly have upset superpower relations. Furthermore, several African countries would oppose direct Soviet engagement in the region. Finally, the Kremlin was not entirely convinced that the conflict in Angola had deteriorated to such an extent that the urgency for Castro’s proposed reinforcement was justified.487

Moscow’s and Havana’s disagreement over which course to pursue in Angola is a decisive fact that debunks the notion that Cuba was nothing but a pawn of, and its engagement in Angola yet another move in Moscow’s global chess game against Washington. Several former top-level diplomats, including Henry Kissinger and Anatolii Dobrynin, Soviet ambassador to Washington from 1962-1986, later admitted that Havana was not acting on Moscow’s orders.488 So what, then, was Castro’s motivation for his bold moves in Angola?

Certainly it was not Realpolitik, because its logic would have dictated that the Cuban leader had to back down without the assistance of the Soviets. Succinctly put, Castro involved himself, his troops and his country into the Angolan conflict because he was opposed to minority rule. This was the reason that caused him to overthrow the Batista-regime in his own country fifteen years earlier and motivated him to prevent a victory of US- and RSA-backed movements in Africa, which would have implied the prevalence of apartheid and white minority rule over black majority.489 Even Kissinger later admitted in his memoirs that Castro was “probably the most genuine revolutionary leader then in power.”490

Nevertheless, Castro’s genuine commitment to the revolutionary cause was of little help when his country lacked the means to deliver the aid to the place where it was needed. With UNITA and FNLA getting stronger, Havana’s so far limited endeavors in Angola got increasingly endangered. But it was at this time that the cards were about to be reshuffled. It was October 15, 1975 and South Africa decided to invade Angola.

4.2.2. SOUTH AFRICA INVADES

Invading Angola had not been a knee-jerk reaction of Pretoria, neither was the decision made immediately after Caetano had been overthrown. With the coup occurring in the midst of Vorster’s détente-focused “outward-looking policy”, it was, however, abundantly clear that a major shift in South Africa’s foreign policy had to be made. Unsure about how the Angolan situation would develop, Pretoria’s initial response was characterized by hesitation. Pretoria waited well into the year 1975 until it approached Savimbi and began to provide limited aid first to Savimbi and later to Roberto. In May, Vorster asked

489 Ibid., here p. 8-9.
490 Kissinger, Years of Renewal, p. 784.
the SADF for a detailed report on the situation in Angola. The report was delivered by the end of June and concluded that a civil war in Angola was inevitable. Without massive help from South Africa, UNITA and FNLA would not prevail over the MPLA, which would, heavily backed by the Soviet Union, single-handedly take over control in Luanda. Given the public adversity the MPLA had expressed towards South Africa’s apartheid-regime, an MPLA-ruled Angola was unacceptable for Pretoria.491

After receiving the report, Vorster stepped up the aid for UNITA and FNLA, while at the same time approaching the Ford administration in Washington concerning a possible collaboration of the two governments in Angola. Like Pretoria, Washington itself was caught off-guard by the events in Lisbon and first had to figure out itself how to respond to the fundamentally different situation, let alone whether or not to collaborate with Pretoria. A paper drafted by the CIA on the Angolan issue in late June 1975 does not mention the RSA at all, thus implying that any cooperation with the apartheid-regime was not anticipated by Washington at this time. Yet, due to the fact that most of the related material is still classified, it cannot be said with absolute certainty, whether or not Washington was taking South Africa’s plans into its own consideration. It can be assumed, however, that most of the senior White House and intelligence staff was aware of what South Africa was planning. First, the CIA and its South African counterpart were notoriously close; second, Chester Crocker states that throughout spring 1975 there was “an intense debate over Angolan developments…within the South African government. Pretoria was in close contact with all the Western and African players.”492

Against this backdrop, the immediate reactions of the US government to “Operation Savannah”, as the SADF’s 1975 invasion of Angola was codenamed, are more than astonishing. In his memoirs, Kissinger states that “South Africa had opted for intervention without prior consultation with the United States” He goes even further by claiming that “we [the US government] learned of it no later than the CIA report of October 31.”493 The South Africans on the other side were claiming the contrary. P. W. Botha, then Minister of Defense, stated that “his country had intervened with the foreknowledge and encouragement of the United States”. The conservative US-Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) claimed that “[t]here is no doubt that the CIA told the South Africans that they should go into Angola and that we would help with the military equipment.”494 This is also brought forward by US-historian John Macrum who states that Washington both knew and encouraged Pretoria to invade Angola.495 Yet again, since the relevant material is still largely classified, it is difficult to draw a clear picture of the top-level exchange between Pretoria and Washington but the available evidence clearly points into the direction that Washington knew of Pretoria’s plans.496 So why does Kissinger state the opposite in his memoirs and why did the United States suddenly back down?

491 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 276.
492 Ibid., p. 290-291.
493 Kissinger, Years of Renewal, p. 820.
494 Becker, Angola, Mosambik und Zimbabwe, p. 87.
One reason might be a reaction to public opinion. While there had been international press coverage on the massive escalation of violence in southern Angola, the general assumption was that UNITA, FNLA and white mercenaries, not official SADF-troops, were invading from the South. Even by December, the London “Times” for example, was still of the opinion that an “armoured column of FNLA, UNITA and white mercenary forces…has been halted [by MPLA and Cuban forces].”\textsuperscript{497} It appears, however, that the few Western journalists who were present in Angola became aware of the strong South African presence already weeks earlier, yet the newspapers themselves, for various reasons, did not dare to publish the story. The big lie of South Africa unraveled when the MPLA succeeded in capturing two SADF-soldiers who then were publicly presented to the press as POWs. The tide had turned against Pretoria and to a certain extent also against Washington.\textsuperscript{498} News about covert CIA operations in Angola had appeared in US newspapers already in September. Then, when news about the true nature of South Africa’s involvement in Angola became public, as a senior US-Senate official later described, “the shit hit the fan.”\textsuperscript{499} The press began to link US-involvement with the apartheid-regime, causing a public outcry. Yet, this outcry was not primarily because Washington was dealing with a racist regime but because of the possibility, however far-fetched it was, that the Ford administration could maneuver the United States into yet another Vietnam like disaster, a certainly uncomfortable prospect for a nation that got humiliated by the fall of Saigon just months earlier.\textsuperscript{500} The US government, not wanting to act against the opinion of its own people, therefore backed down.

The impact of Washington’s retreat on Pretoria’s invasion was disastrous. Initially, Savannah advanced at full speed, gaining sixty to seventy kilometers per day.\textsuperscript{501} Three armored columns were simultaneously advancing north, determined to accomplish the highly ambitious goals approved by Vorster in late September. At first, the MPLA should be eliminated from the border area and then from central Angola. Ultimately, Luanda should be captured before November 11, the day of independence.\textsuperscript{502} Savannah’s early fulminant success can be explained by several factors. First, it was the size of the units itself. Second, these units were well organized, trained and led by capable SADF commanders. Finally, they were far better equipped than the defending MPLA forces. It was only after Cuba significantly increased its presence in Angola (see chapter 4.2.3) that the South African advance was decisively slowed down. During early November, the SADF for the first time encountered Cuban troops. “We were facing the best organized and heaviest MPLA-opposition to date”, Breytenbach, the SADF’s commanding officer, wrote. But still, the SADF/UNITA advance outnumbered and outgunned the opposing

\textsuperscript{497} Quoted in: Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 321.

\textsuperscript{498} Ibid., pp. 321-325.

\textsuperscript{499} Ibid., pp. 331-332.

\textsuperscript{500} Hanhimäki, The Flawed Architect, p. 420.

\textsuperscript{501} On the following pages there will only be a very brief outline on the SADF’s operation in Angola. For a more detailed account refer to chapter 14 and 15 in Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions; and Rodney Warwick, Operation Savannah. A Measure of SADF Decline, Resourcefulness and Modernisation, in: Scientia Militaria - South African Journal of Military Studies 40 (2013), No. 3, pp. 354-397.

\textsuperscript{502} Ibid., here pp. 369-370.
MPLA/Cuban forces. By mid-November, FNLA/Zaire, attacking in the north, and SADF/UNITA, attacking from the south, had made their biggest advances. The MPLA was only in control of a 300 kilometer broad corridor stretching south of Luanda all the way to the Zairian/Zambian border. It was in the midst of the preparations for independence day that the biggest reinforcement from Havana reached in Angola. This reinforcement decisively defeated Roberto’s advance on Luanda in the battle of “death road” and was then immediately transferred to the southern front. Still outnumbered and outgunned, the strategic brilliancy of Cuban commanding officer Díaz Argüelles changed the momentum to the MPLA/Cuban favor. On November 23, Cuba handed the first defeat to South Africa causing them to temporarily halt their entire offensive.503

The situation was further aggravated by the increasing tensions of the fragile alliance between Roberto and Savimbi, forged in August 1975. Throughout December, the mutual antipathy between the two leaders escalated into a “war within a war” from which UNITA emerged victorious. But the anti-MPLA coalition had weakened itself. The MPLA and the Cubans took advantage of their adversaries’ infightings and launched another major attack, whereupon South Africa and UNITA started to retreat. The looming defeat of the SADF caused a heated debate in Vorster’s cabinet. Especially the foreign ministry favored a retreat from Angola, while P.W. Botha and the SADF were opposed. The hardliners’ position was strengthened by urgent pleas from Mobutu, Savimbi, and the United States. Yet, neither of them was willing to provide further assistance for Pretoria, which, following international condemnations, became increasingly isolated. Vorster’s decision to withdraw was ultimately made when the US Senate passed the Clark-amendment, denying Washington any further support for UNITA. In the words of a senior RSA-official: “We stood naked in the world.”504 By early February, the SADF had withdrawn to the extreme south of Angola. Deprived of its protective shield, UNITA immediately collapsed and retreated into the bush, while Cuba and the MPLA were mustering their forces to evict South Africa from Angola. Luanda in the meantime promised that it would respect international boundaries (i.e. it would not invade Namibia) and it would leave the Cunene dams – a complex of hydroelectric power-plants that generated the bulk of Namibia’s power located in the Angolan/Namibian border area – intact. For Vorster, these were enough concessions and he ordered the SADF to completely withdraw from Angola by March 24, 1976. A South African Air Force brigadier later referred to the invasion as South Africa’s “Bay of Pigs.”505 A week later, the UNSC, in a 9-0 vote, condemned South Africa as aggressor in the Angolan war and demanded that it compensates for all war damages.

Pretoria lost more than just the battle. The mite international prestige Pretoria had prior to the invasion was now entirely gone, leaving the country more isolated than ever before. And SWAPO had finally gained what it needed for a successful insurgency in Namibia, a border region that provided safe refuge.506

503 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, pp. 300-327.
504 Quoted in: ibid., p. 341.
505 Warwick, Operation Savannah, here p. 376.
506 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 328-346.
4.2.3. REPERCUSSIONS

“Savannah” had a catalyzing effect on the complex outside support network for both sides in the Angolan war. In Moscow, the invasion moved the Angolan issue way up on the Kremlin’s foreign policy agenda. It has already been pointed out that Brezhnev was more than reluctant to support Castro in his Angolan endeavor. With the SADF’s attack, however, Moscow turned full circle. According to Odd Arne Westad, the Kremlin knew of the South African invasion plans in advance and was in the middle of intense discussions when South Africa crossed the border. For the Soviets, the invasion was without a doubt orchestrated by the United States, thus it became virtually obligatory for the USSR to rush to the aid of its Angolan ally.507 Westad then goes on that in the weeks prior to independence, “large groups of Cuban soldiers began to arrive in Luanda onboard Soviet aircraft.”508 Gleijeses on the other side states that it was only in January 1976 that Moscow finally began to assist Havana in its deployment of troops and material to Angola.

While there is some controversy over when Moscow started to airlift troops to Angola, there is more certainty that Moscow increased its direct support for the MPLA after South Africa’s invasion. The day following independence, first Soviet personnel arrived in Luanda form the Congo, while vast amounts of heavy military equipment including fighter-jets, SAM-units, anti-tank missiles, tanks and hundreds of tons of other equipment arrived from the Soviets. Doubtlessly, it was this Soviet material that made the Cuban/MPLA alliance in terms of arms sophistication equal to the SADF/UNITA coalition.

The USSR, regardless of its early reluctance and with a high degree of self-congratulations, felt that they had won the war by spring 1976.509 While this is certainly an exaggeration (after all it were the Cubans and the MPLA and not the Red Army that went into battle), the Soviet involvement was truly a decisive factor in the war’s outcome. And given Brezhnev’s ignorance of the Angolan issue prior to October 15, it is doubtful whether Luanda would have received the same scope of Soviet aid without the SADF’s invasion.

For Cuba, Operation Savannah implied that decisions had to be made immediately. By mid-October, Cuba only had between 500 and 600 men in Angola, who were hopelessly inferior to the over 1,000 SADF-troops which were far better equipped. Now, however, there was and is a controversy taking place over the nature of this Cuban personnel, whether or not it were combat troops or just technical advisors. The US government was of the opinion that combat forces had arrived from Havana already in September 1975.510 A CIA report from October, on the other side, claimed that only “a few Cuban technical advisors have been operating with the MPLA inside Angola for some time.”511 Given the dif-

---

508 Ibid., here pp. 26-27.
509 Ibid., here pp. 27-29.
510 Kissinger, Years of Renewal, p. 784.
511 Quoted in: Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, p. 271.
difficulty of gathering information of the Angolan conflict, it is plausible why there had been some confusion about the type of Cuban personnel in Angola at the time. Yet, it is not clear until today at which point the first Cuban combat troops arrived. Given the scarce access to relevant sources due to the sealed archives, this is not further surprising. It is again Gleijeses and Westad who contradict each other. Westad, who bases his argumentation on one document from the Soviet archives, argues that first combat troops arrived in late September.\textsuperscript{512} Gleijeses, who refers to several reports from Díaz Argüelles, on the other side says that combat troops arrived only in November. The boldest interpretation is made by Kissinger himself who, in a later part of his memoirs, cites Gleijeses’ document to support his claim that Cuban intervention “began in May, accelerated in July, and turned massive in September and October,”\textsuperscript{513} which is precisely the opposite of what Gleijeses’ article said. Before he published \textit{Conflicting Missions}, Gleijeses sent a draft of the relevant chapter to Robert Hultslander, who was then CIA station chief in Luanda, to ask for his opinion on the matter. Hultslander responded that “I [Hultslander] agree with the history as you present it. Although we desperately wanted to find Cubans under every bush, during my tenure [August to November 3, 1975] their presence was invisible.”\textsuperscript{514} Since Gleijeses’ argumentation appears as more convincing, the further discussion in this thesis assumes that first Cuban combat troops arrived only in November 1975 and that by the time South Africa invaded only 500-600 non-combatant Cuban troops were present in Angola. This is insofar of significance as Castro’s decisions to send combat troops into Angola can then be interpreted as a reaction to Operation Savannah and not vice-versa. Thus it was Pretoria who dramatically escalated the conflict with its invasion and not Havana. This time, knowing that a response from Moscow would either be negative again or would take too much time, Castro did not even bother to consult Moscow. Only when Cuban troops were well underway to Angola he informed the Kremlin of his decision to send massive reinforcement to assist the MPLA. Castro might have thought that Brezhnev, confronted with the fait accompli, was more likely to support him.\textsuperscript{515} From November 1975 to April 1976, Havana dispatched 36,000 Cuban soldiers to Angola, an accomplishment that stunned the world. As it was later admitted by several people who were involved in this phase of the war, it were the Cubans who actually defeated both Zaire/FNLA and SADF/UNITA. Until Havana’s involvement, the MPLA had to retreat on all frontlines, desperately trying to hold Luanda until November 11. Only after Cuba took over the command and the handling of the heavy, sophisticated weaponry delivered by the Soviets, did the MPLA gain the upper hand and was able to defeat the FNLA and to drive back the South Africans.

For the United States, Operation Savannah was a more than awkward event in the deteriorating civil war. Against the advice of the African Bureau in the State Department Kissinger and Ford, in July 1975,
brought on track IAFEATURE, a clandestine CIA-operation to support the FNLA and UNITA. During the first couple of months, the operation looked quite promising, as it clearly had an impact on the FNLA’s and UNITA’s abilities to fight the MPLA. Additionally, Washington was able to keep the involvement hidden from the public, both at home and abroad, which drastically increased Kissinger’s confidence, making him say to Ford that “[w]e apparently won a victory in Angola…”516 Savannah, however, put the entire operation into jeopardy.

From the beginning on, the African Bureau predicted that the CIA would neither be able to keep up with the increasing support from the Soviets, nor would they succeed in keeping the operation entirely secret. With the SADF’s invasion, this was precisely the case. First, the stakes were dramatically risen further when the Cuban expeditionary force and massive Soviet arms deliveries arrived in Luanda. To match these foreign assistances, Kissinger and Ford would have needed additional funds for IAFEATURE, yet Capitol Hill refused to do so without asking questions. Second, IAFEATURE was not clandestine anymore, as the public got increasingly aware of Washington’s activities in Angola. This was not only the case in terms of the CIA’s close cooperation with SADF prior and following the latter’s invasion, but also in terms of the massive support for UNITA and FNLA. After the FNLA and its Zairian allies were completely defeated the day prior to independence, advancing Cuban and MPLA soldiers encountered a large number of crates all bearing the blue-white star of the United States Air Force. The FNLA retreated in such haste that it was not able to take the highly compromising material with them.517

By the end of 1975, there was no doubt left that Washington was heavily involved in the Angolan civil war. For Kissinger, the entire situation had deteriorated beyond repair and all his intentions had backfired. From the beginning on, the Secretary of State regarded Angola as the perfect place for the United States to regain the international credibility it lost a couple of months earlier in Saigon. A “Western” victory over a communist inspired movement would immensely have contributed to that cause. Ford concurred with his secretary when he said that “doing nothing [in Angola] is unacceptable.”518 Yet, by the end of 1975, IAFEATURE was dead. Following the initiative of Senator Dick Clark, Congress blocked any further aid by the United States for UNITA and FNLA. Increasing public concerns and opposition to continuing US involvement in the region forced the Ford administration to back down and retreat from the region. Kissinger’s and the CIA’s plans did not work out and Washington’s credibility as the world leader against communism was further compromised.

For South Africa, Operation Savannah was a shot in the foot. Its own invasion triggered off a chain of events that ultimately left Pretoria completely isolated and internationally condemned. SADF’s attack prompted Castro to send combat troops into Angola and Moscow to step up its aid deliveries. With its

517 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 65.
increased firepower, the MPLA now was able to remain in control of Luanda after the day of independence. To halt the reinforced MPLA, Pretoria would have needed the assistance from Washington, yet, the Ford administration was no longer able to provide this aid, for both Congress and the public considered any further involvement with Pretoria in regard to Angola as unacceptable. Left alone, the SADF’s only option was to beat a humiliating retreat, leaving behind a weakened ally that was now deprived of any international assistance. The MPLA in turn, thanks to a lifesaving support from Havana and later from Moscow, had prevailed over the preponderant nemesis from the south. Yet, all parties realized that the MPLA had just won the battle, the war itself was far from being over.

4.3. The Cold War Joins the Conflict

Operation Savannah was nothing more than a caesura in the Angolan civil war. Despite the operation’s debacle, neither South Africa, UNITA nor the United States completely disengaged from the conflict, a fact Havana, Luanda and Moscow were well aware of. The almost a decade-lasting period from South Africa’s withdrawal in 1976 until the signing of the Lusaka Accords in 1984 was thus characterized by a complex process of reshaping and strengthening the alliances on both sides of the frontline, while the violence persisted to rage with all its devastation.

4.3.1. Washington, Pretoria and UNITA

The reassessment of Washington’s Africa policy occurred in the midst of several significant international changes. With Jimmy Carter assuming office as new president in 1977, the White House was again in the hands of the Democrats. The new president, a “self-styled champion of human rights”, attempted to rebuild his country’s relation with Africa. To emphasize his administration’s commitment to this cause, he nominated Andrew Young as US ambassador to the United Nations, the first African-American person ever to hold a Cabinet-ranked post in Washington. He pursued a tougher course towards South Africa’s apartheid-regime and assisted Mugabe in achieving Zimbabwean independence. Yet, Carter’s new policy was complicated by renewed Cold War tensions. First, SALT-II-negotiations came to a standstill, effectively marking the beginning end of détente. Second, the Ogaden War at the Horn of Africa opened another proxy-war out of which the “Soviet side” (i.e. Ethiopia) emerged once again victorious in Africa. During this war, Somalia, out of irredentist motives, invaded Ethiopia over the disputed Ogaden province which belongs to Ethiopia but was claimed by Somalia. Apparently confirming the hardliners’ fear that Washington was on a “global retreat”, they increased pressure on Carter to pursue a tougher course in Africa. Carter reluctantly did so during yet another crisis in Zaire. In 1977

and 1978, Katangese separatists invaded the southern province of Zaire from Angolan territory. The incidents, known as Shaba I and II (the alternative name for Katanga), led to massive Western support for Mobutu, including the provision of direct US aid, a policy which, given Mobutu’s brutal human-rights violations, was diametrically opposed to Carter’s “human-rights-approach”. Washington accused Havana of training and arming the Katangese separatists, allegations that were immediately denied by Cuba, yet it further complicated the intended rapprochement between Havana and Washington. The Ogaden War and the two Shaba incidents were only a few among many events during this period that made perfectly clear that the Cold War had finally arrived in whole Africa. Yet, it would be wrong to stick to the still prevailing notion of Washington’s hardliners that the United States was forced into a global retreat during the Carter administration. True, Washington lost at the Horn and in Angola, but what did Moscow get in return? With Ethiopia it had an ally that had virtually nothing to offer while Angola was a faraway, poor country amidst a bloody civil war in a highly complex regional environment, whose benefits for Moscow in no way justified the resources the Soviet Union was about to invest. Even from a global perspective it is hard to argue that the United States came off worse than the USSR during the end of détente. The Iranian Revolution, one of the most decisive events during the outgoing 1970s, was a severe loss for the US but no gain for Moscow. Khomeini loathed the United States but the Soviet Union was a close second, which now had an Islamist regime right in its backyard. Since several of Moscow’s southern republics had a large Muslim population, this posed serious threat to the Soviet Union’s integrity. Additionally, the United States were still a sound super-power that had overcome the recession following the 1973 oil crisis, while the USSR was only at the beginning of its massive economic struggle. If one conclusion can be drawn from these events, and this is crucial for understanding the Angolan conflict, it is that the Cold War was no zero-sum game anymore. A loss for Washington no longer equaled a win for Moscow and vice-versa. It had never been more apparent than in 1980, that the world was no longer entirely bipolar.\textsuperscript{520} For the outgoing Carter-administration this decisive alteration in world politics was certainly too new to be recognized in its full entirety. The incoming Reagan-administration would have been in the position to adapt the United States’ foreign policy accordingly, yet, at least throughout Reagan’s first tenure, it chose to ignore this fact completely.

Ronald Reagan rode into the White House spearheading a reinvigorated conservative movement which was determined to “make America strong again.” A presidency, characterized by (at least during its initial years) thinking in absolutes, he regarded the world as an entirely bipolar organism in which the Soviet Union represented the anti-thesis to everything good America stood for. It was an “evil empire” and it was the United States’ and its allies’ job to eradicate this evilness. It seems self-evident that this renewed hardline stance also had a tremendous impact on the administration’s Africa policy. In Reagan’s view, the Western world’s highest priority regarding Africa should be to get the Soviets, and their “Cuban proxy”, out of Africa.

\textsuperscript{520} Westad, The Global Cold War, p. 336; Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom pp. 164-165.
With Reagan’s inauguration, Chester Crocker took over the African Bureau in the State Department and, henceforth, it was he who decisively designed Washington’s approach towards southern Africa in general and Angola in particular. The new Assistant Secretary of State was well aware of the complex situation he inherited. The fact that Washington’s means to influence the developments in the region were due to the Clark-amendment almost exclusively limited to diplomacy, further complicated the matter. For Crocker it was as clear as it was for Reagan that the Cubans had to leave Angola. Yet, he knew that neither Luanda nor Havana would agree to such a withdrawal as long as there was no guarantee that Angola was secured from any further South African aggression. This guarantee was not given as long as South Africa used Namibia as springboard for continuing aggressions against Angola. In other words, as long as South Africa refused to withdraw from Namibia and grant independence to the country, Cuba was not going to leave Angola. As will be elaborated in chapter five, the international community had made South Africa’s illegal presence in Namibia their number-one concern in southern Africa by the late 1970s. By the early 1980s, however, all diplomatic efforts to get South Africa to withdraw from Namibia and grant independence to the country had reached a deadlock. Crocker was certainly not the first top-level diplomat who realized that the Namibian deadlock influenced the situation in Angola. Yet, as it was with Constructive Engagement, he tried to tackle the problem from an entirely different angle.

To achieve the enormously difficult task of getting the South Africans to withdraw from Namibia and the Cubans from Angola, Crocker, together with Secretary of State Alexander Haig, broke new ground by introducing a policy that became known as “Linkage”. In its importance second only to Constructive Engagement, this policy foresaw the simultaneous withdrawal of Cuba from Angola and South Africa from Namibia, followed by the implementation of UN-Resolution 435, which foresaw the independence of Namibia (see chapter 5.1.1).521 Linkage perfectly reflects the overall understanding Crocker had of the region’s conflict. In his eyes, the United States did not have enough leverage to persuade South Africa and Cuba to withdraw from Namibia and Angola respectively. However, by linking these two issues together, he saw an opportunity to increase Washington’s leverage decisively. This increased leverage would not only enable Washington to force Cuba out of Angola but also to revive negotiations over Namibian independence which had been deadlocked for several years. Contrary to the Carter administration and most African and European states, he regarded the Namibian problem (i.e. the illegal occupation of the country by South Africa) not as the overriding issue in the southern African region which had to be solved first. In his view, the successful achievement of Namibian independence was utterly dependent on the context in which it would occur. Since this context was anything but favorably for such an independence at the beginning of the 1980s, Crocker’s number-one priority, henceforth, was

---

521 UN-Resolution 435 was passed in 1978 and stated that SADF would gradually withdraw from Namibia while SWAPO would simultaneously retreat to previously defined bases inside Namibia. Meanwhile a constitutional assembly should prepare general elections in the country.

The first obstacle that Crocker had to overcome in implementing Linkage was not only to convince both Luanda and Pretoria that Washington (personified by Crocker) could function as an appropriate mediator but also to bring the countries to the negotiating table. While Pretoria greeted the new Assistant Secretary with skepticism, Angola had no reason whatsoever to engage into negotiations led by the United States. According to Crocker, it took nearly two years until he was able to reduce the mutual distrust between the two countries.\footnote{Kuhn, Die Politik der Reagan-Regierung im Südlichen Afrika, pp. 139-140.} By October 1982, he could convince Pretoria to accept the Linkage proposal in general terms. Having gained South Africa’s support, he now had to find out how to get Luanda’s acceptance, a task that turned out to be far more challenging. After all, neither the Carter-, nor the subsequent Reagan- and Bush-administration recognized the MPLA-government as the legitimate representative of the Angolan people.\footnote{Thomas Meier, Die Reagan-Doktrin. Die Feindbilder, die Freundbilder: Afghanistan, Angola, Kambodscha, Nicaragua, Bern 1998, p. 196.} The matter was further complicated by the fact that South Africa’s occupation of Namibia had been ruled illegal by the United Nations, while the Cuban presence in Angola was perfectly in line with international law. Luanda therefore rightfully assumed that the simple acceptance of Linkage would have implied that it regarded the two issues as equal in legal terms. Additionally, Crocker had never offered any incentives to the MPLA (as he did to South Africa) which was under no more pressure to accept Linkage than was Pretoria. The Cuban presence and Soviet supplies protected the MPLA from UNITA’s grasp for power, while the SADF’s continuous aggression, as can be seen later on, was primarily directed at resupplying UNITA and fighting SWAPO and not against the MPLA. A Cuban withdrawal would therefore only have increased the risk for Luanda. Crocker then tried to present the prospect of full diplomatic recognition in case Luanda would accept Linkage. Yet he could not accept Luanda’s proposal that the US in turn would cease its support for UNITA, for neither he himself nor the hawkish Reaganites were willing to further solidify the Clark-amendment.\footnote{Kagan-Guthrie, Chester Crocker and the South African Border War, 1981–1989, here pp. 70-71.}

In fact, Reagan had expressed his intention to lift the amendment already during the 1980 election campaign and as soon as he took office he started to lobby in the legislative branch for this cause.\footnote{James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 154.} However, in 1981, his motion for repealing the amendment was turned down by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives. Yet, this did not prevent Reagan from pursuing the same course his predecessor already had done, namely to simply ignore the amendment and support UNITA anyway. Carter’s National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski later admitted to Gleijeses that throughout the amendment’s existence, the CIA (knowingly by both presidents) continued to indirectly support
As it was with Constructive Engagement in South Africa and Mozambique, Crocker’s harshest critiques regarding his approach to the Angolan situation were found in the White House. Yet, Crocker’s efforts and the Linkage-approach were not entirely fruitless during the early 1980s as they contributed to the accomplishment of the Lusaka Accords in 1984.

Following Angolan independence, Pretoria’s policy towards Luanda was, not unlike its American counterpart, always made against the backdrop of possible ramifications for the Namibian situation. As it was in Washington, Pretoria’s reassessment of its strategy towards Angola coincided with a transfer of power. Vorster was succeeded by Botha and again a hardliner replaced a liberal. In general, South Africa preferred a low intensity conflict in Angola to a civil war in Namibia. Thus, Pretoria did everything to stop SWAPO activities in Namibia, although this implied to continue raids into Angola and increase support for UNITA. In this regard, Botha continued Vorster’s policy in southern Angola and ignored all international condemnations and threats. Yet, Savannah had shown to some RSA policy makers that, as long as Cuba functioned as a protective shield, UNITA would never be strong enough to evict the MPLA from Luanda, take over power itself and deny SWAPO entry into Angola. As already mentioned, Crocker’s idea of Linkage was therefore a welcomed alternative for Pretoria’s policy makers. For the SADF’s generals, however, Linkage was no viable option for they did not trust the Cubans nor, albeit to a lesser extent, the Americans. Their plan foresaw that Cuba had to leave prior to any possible withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia. This should be achieved by a further escalation of the conflict so that the stakes would become too high for Cuba. UNITA would then be able to assume power and, together with SADF, defeat SWAPO. Only then could Pretoria be sure that SWAPO would not assume power in Windhoek and could safely withdraw from Namibia. Both the United States and the South African Foreign Ministry, however, dismissed this plan as being not feasible because the SADF, in their view, placed too much faith in Savimbi and his political and military capabilities. Since the hardliners’ influence within the SSC was not that dominant during the early 1980s, Botha went with the Foreign Ministry, which itself was not entirely convinced of Linkage as well but had no viable alternative, and accepted Linkage.

That Pretoria never was as fully committed to Linkage as it would appear at a first glance is shown by its renewed massive aggression in late 1980. Reinvigorated by the improved relations with Washington and the prospect of a much friendlier incoming administration, it felt confident enough to escalate the “South African Border War” and launched massive full-scale military attacks deep into Angola. Operation “Protea”, launched in August 1981, was the first operation since 1975 that was not only directed against SWAPO. It also should destroy vital elements of Angola’s economy, repel MPLA and Cuban forces and apply the Israeli policy of “defensive occupation” to support UNITA and “protect” Namibia from SWAPO. While the United Nations tried to condemn the renewed aggression, the

---

527 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 53.
United States applied its veto and tacitly approved South Africa’s attacks. This is insofar of great significance, since the United States was at this point in the middle of the process of bringing Luanda and Pretoria together at one table. Yet, as Crocker later explained, he initially approved of the attacks for he thought that “breaking some diplomatic china”\textsuperscript{529} would increase pressure on Angola to enter the negotiations. Since Angola did partake and the talks continued despite numerous RSA-attacks, it can be concluded that the pressure on Angola must have had increased dramatically through the attacks. This assumption is underpinned by the fact that the SADF enjoyed complete air superiority in southern Angola and was in all aspects superior to the MPLA/Cuban alliance.\textsuperscript{530} Only after the United States had succeeded in bringing Luanda to the table (although it still refused to accept Linkage) did they began to pressure Pretoria, not publicly though, to end its aggressions, fearing it could hamper the negotiations. Yet again, Pretoria’s regime was immune to Washington’s request and continued its attacks.

What is even more interesting or almost downright paradox is that throughout the first half of the 1980s there had been several bilateral talks between Pretoria and Luanda. Technically, the state-of-war-like situation the two countries were in, generally entails the termination of all diplomatic relations. Yet, these talks took place on an almost regular basis. The reasons and contents of these conversations were diverse. The basic tendency within Pretoria’s SSC that the departments of foreign affair and defense rarely had the same opinion, was also true for the situation in Angola. The diplomats almost never knew what their generals were planning and did not believe in the SADF’s aggressive approach. Instead, they regarded Angola as a country, like Mozambique, with which South Africa should deal on the basis of common (primarily economic) interests. The Angolans, for their part, had accepted the fact that South Africa was the de facto ruler of its southern neighbor and they gladly embarked on every possibility that was aiming at settling their differences in a non-violent way. Most of these meetings were highly secret, and the public was almost never told what they were about. The United States knew about these talks, yet especially Crocker was very dismissive about them. He was obviously resentful of the fact the two countries managed to talk to each other without him, when he writes: “It strained our imagination to suppose that these characters would communicate effectively, lacking a common language, agenda or political idiom.”\textsuperscript{531}

The initial meetings took place immediately after the SADF’s withdrawal in 1976 and mostly dealt with minor technical border-related issues. Only after South Africa stepped up the violence did the two parties engage into talks about the far more urgent possibilities for a ceasefire. The significance of these meetings for the participators is further elevated by a statement José Eduardo dos Santos, Neto’s successor as President of Angola, made to a South African delegate after his first meeting with Crocker in August 1981. There he said that Angola wished to continue the bilateral negotiations outside the framework provided by the United States. Until February 1982, the talks continued on a top level as several

\textsuperscript{529} Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 230.
\textsuperscript{530} James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 192.
rounds of negotiations were held. The following months, however, saw an escalation (by SWAPO and the SADF) on such a scale that both parties terminated the talks on a senior level. Yet, diplomatic relations were never stopped completely and by 1984, in preparation for the Lusaka Accords, they resumed on a most senior (i.e. ministerial) level.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 108-118.}

As South African historian Cristopher Saunders concludes, it would be wrong, despite only limited achievements during the early meetings, to conclude that the talks did not achieve anything at all. Crocker is wrong when he states in his memoirs that the accomplishment of the Lusaka Accords was entirely the merits of the US delegation led by him. The bilateral talks between Pretoria and Luanda were of equal importance for the successful accomplishment of the Lusaka Accords as were Crocker’s Linkage and Constructive Engagement and thus part of a process that halted, at least for a time, the violence in southern Angola.\footnote{Ibid., here pp. 118-119.}

Despite their significance, these diplomatic relations must not obscure the brutality with which South Africa conducted its operations. One of the first incidents where this is shown was in April 1978, when SADF raided the Cassinga refugee camp in southern Angola, killing more than 600 civilians. In the aftermath, Pretoria tried to justify its actions by claiming that the camp was a SWAPO base used by the guerillas for incursions into Namibia. This was, however, immediately denied by the UNHCR which said it was a camp for refugees from Namibia (which was clearly marked as such) under their control.\footnote{Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 62.}

Pretoria’s dualistic approach towards Angola (multi-level diplomacy on the one side and military aggression on the other side) is a perfect reflection of the split within the SSC that made a coherent, non-contradicting policy immensely difficult to accomplish. That the military approach was ascribed a growing importance at the expense of the diplomatic approach is another indication for the radicalization of the SSC during the 1980s.

The peak of the aggression was reached with the launch of operation “Askari” in December 1983, when for the first time since 1976 SADF and Cuban troops directly fought each other. The staunch resistance the South Africans were now encountering led not only to heavy casualties among its own forces but also caused Pretoria to reconsider embarking a serious approach towards a diplomatic solution to end the violence. Now, with both Angola and South Africa fully committed to a ceasefire, the negotiation quickly culminated in the Lusaka Accords.\footnote{James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 157-158.}

Savimbi’s turn to South Africa prior to its defeat in 1976 turned out to be crucial for the period following the Savannah-debacle. Immediately after the last SADF-soldier had crossed the Angolan-Namibian border, Pretoria began to support UNITA. Yet, Pretoria was not the only supporter, as additional aid came from France, Egypt, Saudi-Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Initially, Kinshasa offered to use its airports as a logistical hub. Shaba II, however, sobered Mobutu and a deal was struck
between Neto and Mobutu. The former promised to cease support for the Katangese, while Mobutu ended his support for FNLA and UNITA. Henceforth, all aid for UNITA was channeled through South Africa.536

The reason why UNITA was able to secure aid from several different countries was, to a large extent, Savimbi himself. Chester Crocker once described him as “one of the most talented and charismatic of leaders in modern African history.”537 And indeed, Savimbi knew exactly how he had to deal with his foreign audience. Utilizing the Cold War for his purpose, he presented himself as the typical African democratic leader who opposed any form of Soviet influence on the African continent and sought to integrate his country into the Western world. This was heart-balm for the conservative elites in the United States and Western Europe. They rejoiced in the fact that they had found a reliable, capable “freedom-fighter” who was willing to fight for their cause in Africa and try to push the Soviet’s (and its proxies) out of Africa. That Savimbi was also the typical African warlord, who did not make a difference between soldiers and civilians, who was hopelessly corrupt and always made his personal interests the number-one priority was (knowingly) overlooked by the majority of Western politicians. Only a few Western policy makers did look behind Savimbi’s façade. As a member of the British Parliament put it: “The man they call the ‘Pol Pot’ of Africa, was at his most charming: sophisticated, worldly and alternately witty… The ostentatious jewelry, the silver-topped cane and the distinctive white suit added to his charisma. Only Jonas Savimbi's eyes betrayed the smile: the eyes of a psychopath.”538

Of all the contributors, South Africa had always been the largest and most important one. By mid-1976, UNITA had regrouped and, with South African equipment, began a hit-and-run campaign against the vital infrastructure in Angola. One of the prime targets was the aforementioned Benguela Rail Line, the 1350 kilometer long main trade route running form the port of Benguela through Katanga deep into Zambia’s copper fields. UNITA’s continued attack effectively destroyed the entire railway, so that in 2001 only 34 kilometers (!) remained in service. These attacks would gradually increase in intensity and severity until they reached the characteristics of an all-out war against the MPLA by the mid-1980s.539 South Africa’s recurring invasions deep into Angolan territory then successfully established the attempted “buffer-zone”. This zone along the Namibian/Angolan border did not only provide UNITA with a safe haven within Angola, but also significantly improved the opportunities of how the movement could plan and conduct its operations and be resupplied by its steadily growing number of allies. By early 1983, with profound South African assistance, UNITA was therefore able to expand its operational territory deep into the north-eastern provinces of Angola. Although these were the sparsely populated areas of Angola, they were the backdoor to the diamond-rich provinces in the most north-eastern parts of Angola. Especially during the last years of the Civil War in the late 1990s and early 2000s, UNITA

---

financed large parts of its operations by selling so-called blood diamonds. It is estimated that between 1992 and 1997, UNITA sold diamonds worth more than US$ 3 billion, financing the lion’s share of its military operations.540

By the mid-1980s, SADF had established eleven training camps in northern Namibia and southern Angola where hundreds of UNITA-soldiers were trained. In combination with the invasions of the SADF, Angola was trembling both in military and economic terms. By late 1983, the CIA remarked that the raids conducted by UNITA were “devastating the economy”.541

For the “pro-Savimbi” side, the first ten years of the Angolan civil war were marked by several decisive developments. Most apparent, if it had not been for the massive assistance from abroad, UNITA would not have been able to remain a decisive factor in the ongoing conflict. This in turn implies that the foreign involvement significantly prolonged a war that, with a high degree of certainty, would otherwise had been over after the failure of “Savannah”.

Additionally, with Washington’s growing participation, the Cold War became an integral part of the conflict. While the Cold Warriors’ concern over the region gradually increased in the late 1970s, this increased concern becomes evident especially after the inauguration of the Reagan administration. Given Reagan’s overall understanding of world-politics, this is of no further surprise. Yet, it was also Crocker who largely contributed to this fact. By introducing Linkage, he not only introduced a new approach to overcome an impassably-seeming deadlock. He also connected a regional problem (the illegal occupation of Namibia) with another conflict that was undoubtedly regarded as a new theater in the global Cold War by both superpowers. Thus, at the latest with the introduction of Linkage, the Cold War had become inseparable from the conflict in the southern African region.

Finally, “Askari” had shown that a military victory for South Africa, if possible at all, would entail high costs in human lives and material. With the additional benefit of hindsight it became increasingly obvious that the military situation of both sides would reach an impasse and that a diplomatic solution would be the only key to solve the conflict. Lusaka raised hopes that the involved parties came to that conclusion, whereas the immediate months following the signing of the treaty would prove that this was, at least in certain areas of the decision making process, not (yet) the case.

4.3.2. MOSCOW, HAVANA AND MPLA

To understand Moscow’s policy in Angola in the decade prior to Mikhail Gorbachev’s inauguration, a general look on the Kremlin’s foreign during this period has to be made. During this period, the Politburo was dominated by four political heavyweights, who were all born before the October Revolution,
grew up in the turmoil of civil war, were educated under Stalin’s reign of terror and eventually became Marxist-Leninist ideologues of the old school. With Brezhnev’s (he was one of the four) health deteriorating, the entire political power got increasingly concentrated in the hands of the other three, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, KGB’s Yuri Andropov and Minster of Defense Dmitriy Ustinov. This “troika” presided over ten years of policy making which later on in the Soviet Union became known as the “time of stagnation”. Under their reign, Soviet ideology became an outdated relict that failed to provide answers for the everyday needs of the Soviet people. The idealism of the 1950s and 1960s and the belief in a “communism with human face” had been replaced by perverse cynicism. Marxist-Leninism, according to an astute observer, “died a quiet death sometime during the reign of Brezhnev.”

For all the benefits détente had, it exposed the Soviet people to the Western world, showing them a (better) alternative to the Soviet way of life, eroding the myth of Soviet exceptionalism. More significantly, it corroded the image of a Western aggressor, so far one of the most powerful bonds between the regime and its people. A younger, dynamic, “Gorbachev-type” generation of politicians might had been able to reform the outdated, all-defining ideology by the mid-1970s, yet with this troika pulling the strings, this was not the case.

The failure to initiate the urgently required reform process was also reflected in Moscow’s foreign policy. The Kremlin failed to reform the rationale underlying Soviet international behavior. Being overloaded with ideological doctrines, it was therefore an impossible task for Soviet foreign policy makers to move towards a type of Realpolitik that would have been utterly necessary to engage effectively and successfully in the opening Cold War theater in southern Africa. As it has been mentioned previously, it was this ideologically dominated foreign policy that hindered the Soviet Union from being a viable powerful ally towards whom the newly independent countries could turn to.

After a short period of celebration following the victory over the Savannah-troops, disenchantment set in quickly in Moscow. In July 1976, the Soviet Union sent numerous advisers to Luanda, in order to help Neto to establish a Marxist-Leninist state in Angola. It is a remarkable detail that these advisors were instructed to “[a]dvise, but not [to] impose”, still the advisors should make clear which attitude the Kremlin preferred and expected from Luanda. Moscow wanted the MPLA to be an “initiator of Marxist-Leninist parties on the African continent.” Neto, however, understood this directive literally, since this was precisely what he wanted to hear. Decades of colonial oppression by a staunchly anti-communist regime had left their mark on the local population of Angola, who looked at communism with strong prejudices. Neto therefore was reluctant to label the entire MPLA a communist party, despite the fact that its leadership’s orientation was undoubtedly Marxist-Leninist. Regardless of the fact that this was a mere terminological dispute, it only increased Moscow’s suspicion of Neto. During the limited

---

543 Ibid., pp. 94-101.
rapprochement between Luanda and Washington under the Carter administration, Moscow was almost paranoid about the possibility that Neto could tilt towards Washington (which was a more than absurd scenario, since Washington had not even recognized the MPLA and was covertly supporting UNITA). This episode exemplifies the previously explained inability of Moscow to approach the situation in a pragmatic, Realpolitik-like fashion. Instead, the Kremlin was fixated on irrelevant ideological issues that only increased the tensions between the two socialist countries.

The crisis between Luanda and Moscow peaked in May 1977, when Nito Alves, a former member of the MPLA CC, attempted a putsch against Neto. Moscow’s part in this coup was a dubious one. While Gleijeses mentions the possibility that the putschists enjoyed support from the Soviet embassy in Luanda, this is categorically ruled out by Shubin. They both agree, however, on the fact that the coup was cracked down only due to the quick and fierce response of the Cubans. Neto remained atop the MPLA, yet relations with Moscow would not recover until his death in Moscow in 1979.

Nonetheless, the Soviet Union’s support for Angola became increasingly all-inclusive, albeit the focus was clearly on military-related material. Yet, contrary to Havana, Moscow only sent technical and logistical unites and no combat troops to Angola, which tried to handle the massive challenge of reorganizing the undisciplined, poorly trained and equipped, demotivated MPLA-troops into a powerful army. By mid-1982, both the Soviets and Cubans came to the realization that the MPLA-troops needed to be reorganized into a conventional army, given the increased involvement of the SADF and UNITA (which also began to increasingly operate in a conventional way). As the overall situation of the MPLA-troops did not improve fast enough, the Soviet and Cuban commander began to leave out their MPLA counterparts from planning military operations. Additionally, in mid-1983, Soviet equipment was transferred directly to the Cuban forces and not, as previously, to the MPLA which then had distributed it to the various battlefields. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that several MPLA-unites, after they had got wind of Linkage, refused to fight against UNITA for they believed that the civil war would soon come to an end when the South African’s withdrew from Namibia.

Against the backdrop of South Africa’s aggression, Soviet aid increased massively in both amount and sophistication throughout the first half of the 1980s. While Havana continuously insisted that more aid is required, Luanda could not even pay for what they had already got. The fact that Luanda focused on paying back the loans from capitalist countries in time and thus was in default towards Moscow, hardly contributed to ease the tense relation between these two countries.

---

545 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 70.
548 The fact that Neto died in Moscow fueled speculations that the Kremlin wanted him gone even further. Yet, it is known that the Angolan President had been battling cancer for a long period and was seeking medical treatment in Moscow as is medical situation severely deteriorated.
549 Ibid., pp. 80-93.
Tensions existed not only between Moscow and Luanda, also the relationship between the Soviet Union and Havana was not exactly straightforward. After Khrushchev backstabbed Castro at the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it took several years until the two countries were on friendly terms again. The lesson that Castro had learned is that in times of urgency, his country most likely could not count on its “older brother”. This became apparent again in 1982, when Castro, who got increasingly worried of Reagan’s aggressive rhetoric against Havana, wanted certain guarantees from the Kremlin. For this purpose, the Cuban leader sent his brother Raul in December (Fidel himself had been in Moscow the previous month for Brezhnev’s funeral) to meet Yuri Andropov, the CPSU’s new General Secretary. During a lengthy meeting Castro brought forward the point that it was absolutely crucial for his country that “the Soviet Union tell[s] the United States in a clear and categorical manner that they [the USSR] will not tolerate any military aggression against Cuba.”\textsuperscript{550} In a long monologue Andropov turned down Castro’s request based on the argumentation that Cuba was too far away from Moscow and that they had nothing to back their threat up with, since Washington knew well enough that Moscow would not risk a nuclear war over a Caribbean island.\textsuperscript{551} Having been rejected by the Soviets again, Castro’s policy towards Angola was thus characterized by the double constraint of a possible US invasion of Havana and the fragility of the Soviet shield.\textsuperscript{552}

Castro’s initial plan foresaw a withdrawal of all Cuban forces after Operation Savannah was over. Yet, the two Shaba incidents and the Cassinga-refugee-camp-raid by the SADF made him nervous about South Africa’s further intentions. While the amount of Cuban troops in Angola had been reduced from 36,000 in 1976 to less than 24,000 a year later, Castro began to reinforce the contingent as of 1978, following a desperate request by Neto. By 1983, the Cuban presence numbered a total of 30,000.\textsuperscript{553} It has been pointed out that the Moscow-Luanda relation can hardly be described as a cordial one. That things with Castro’s Cuba were hugely different is exemplified by what Havana did apart from military assistance. Havana’s military presence was accompanied by a massive development program. “Tens of thousands of Cuban experts, mainly in health care, education, and construction, worked in Angola…More than 40,000 Africans studied in Cuba on full scholarships funded by the Cuban government.”\textsuperscript{554} In the words of a South African newspaper correspondent: “Seventeen years of revolutionary rule under Fidel Castro had made them a tight, disciplined and well groomed lot… The Cubans had not only won the war, they are now trying to pull the country together through a dozen different reconstruction programs.”\textsuperscript{555} Even more important than the rebuilding of the country was Havana’s medical contribution. Due to the Portuguese brain-drain, there were only fourteen (!) trained doctors left in Angola at the time of independence, after Havana’s arrival the number exploded to 200.\textsuperscript{556} Given the fact that

\textsuperscript{550} Quoted in: Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{551} Ibid., p. 218.
\textsuperscript{553} Quoted in: Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 215.
\textsuperscript{555} Quoted in ibid., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{556} Ibid., here pp. 9-10.
Cuba itself was a country in the midst of a developing process, these are quite impressive numbers. Cuba’s non-military accomplishments in Angola were put in a nutshell by the British ambassador in Luanda, Marrack Goulding: “As far as I was concerned they [the Cubans in Angola] were a good thing. They had done wonders for Angola’s education and health services and were preventing the South African army...from running wild all over southern Angola”.557

No less impressive was how the financial aspect of the Cuban involvement was handled. A 1978 military agreement between Havana and Luanda stipulated that Cuba would pay the soldiers’ wages while Angola would provide food, clothing and other equipment. Yet, Luanda was never able to hold up its end of the bargain. By 1982, only 60 percent of the required food reached Cuban troops, while there were other difficulties with footwear, pillows, towels, sheets and other personal necessities. For the remainder of Cuba’s presence in Angola this was a problem for Luanda and an economic burden for Havana.558 Yet, Castro did not press this issue during any of the numerous meetings with the Angolans. On the contrary, he was willing to grant them even more concessions. With the Angolan economy in a deep recession, Havana proposed a new agreement which foresaw that Angola only had to pay for food and lodging of the aid workers, while henceforth Cuba would pay their wages. This loss of compensation meant a loss of approximately US$20 million per year for Cuba.559

During one of the meetings between Castro and dos Santos the grave situation of access to medicine in Angola was raised. Rodolfo Ferro, Cuba’s ambassador in Luanda, stated that “there are regions, provincial capitals, where there is no medicine...The mortality rate is high because of this lack of medicine”. While Havana had offered them a six month supply of medicine worth US$ 700,000, the goods had not been shipped because Luanda failed to release the requisite letters of credit. Being assured by Ferro that Cuba can manufacture this medicine, Castro stated:

“Well...then let’s do it and send it to Angola, and let them pay later...We don’t want to make any profit from this medicine; we will sell it at cost...If the situation is critical, we’ll send it on the first ship, and let them pay later...We cannot let a man die in a hospital, or a child, or an old person, or a wounded person, or a soldier or whoever it may be, because someone forgot to write a letter of credit or because someone didn’t sign it.”

Being asked by dos Santos how Havana could bear the burden of continuously supporting Angola, Castro replied: “I believe...taking into account the situation of Angola, that you must not worry about this...We can bear it for as long as necessary. Don’t worry.”560

Regarding the military issues, there was a clear division of labor between Havana and Moscow. Succinctly put, the latter supplied the material while the former took it to the field and operated it. However, in the upper echelons of the command structure this division of labor caused more than a few

557 Quoted in ibid., here p. 31.
559 Ibid., p. 229.
problems. Castro had made it clear from the beginning on that the Cuban troops would directly fight any South African soldier who invaded Angola. Yet, in Castro’s view, the MPLA’s fight against UNITA was a purely inner-Angolan struggle and thus not something the Cubans should get involved with. Thus, “only” 3,000 Cubans served among the MPLA-troops, while the vast majority was pulled together in central Angola, ready-to-go if South Africa attacked. The Soviets on the other side wanted the MPLA to fight both the SADF and UNITA, supported by the Cubans. Additionally, Moscow preferred a conventional warfare against UNITA, while Cuba wanted to apply classic guerilla-tactics. Despite numerous meetings, the impasse continued. In the meantime, South Africa had launched another attack which brought them 500 kilometers deep into Angolan territory, further northwards than ever before. Castro concluded that the SADF had again risen the stakes and the only way to counter it was to increase the Cuban contingent. Again Havana approached Moscow with the urgent request to increase its military aid for Angola. And again, Moscow answered with reluctance. Nonetheless, Castro gave order to significantly reinforce the Cuban contingent in Angola, further weakening the military defense of the Cuban army at home. This was a rather risky move. Only a few weeks after Castro ordered another 9,000 Cubans to leave for Angola, (by the end of 1983 almost 40,000 Cuban soldiers were present in Angola) Ronald Reagan illustrated his aggressive stance against the Caribbean when he decided to invade the small island of Grenada. This egregious violation of international law caused Moscow to change its passive attitude and not only increased its aid for Angola in quality and quantity, but also increased its military naval presence in Cuba to counter what could have been a general offensive of the Americans in the Caribbean.561

Yet, differences over which tactic to pursue continued. Cuba insisted that the MPLA concentrated exclusively on UNITA, the Soviets disagreed and Luanda faltered. In the midst of these quarrels fell “Operation Askari” and while the SADF advanced rapidly, the Cubans, Soviets and Angolans failed to come up with a coherent strategy.562 This was yet another reason for Luanda to consider the time being ripe to engage, unbeknownst to Moscow and Havana, into serious ceasefire talks with Pretoria.

By the time “Savannah” was over, the MPLA had been recognized by every major Western government as the legitimate representative of the Angolan people, with the United States being the sole exception. After months of wavering, the OAU finally followed the Western lead and fully recognized the MPLA by spring of 1976. The OAU, spearheaded by Zambia, then urged Neto to reconsider the possibility of incorporating UNITA into the national government. Of all the neighboring countries, Zambia probably had the strongest interest in a stable Angola, since Lusaka’s export-oriented economy was heavily relying on the Benguela railroad. Yet, Neto had made up his mind and categorically ruled out any possibility for UNITA’s participation in a national government.563

562 Shubin, The Hot "Cold War", p. 95.
Similarly to Machel in Mozambique, Neto was well aware of the implications an exclusive alignment towards the Eastern bloc could bring about. Fueled by the mutual skepticism between Luanda and Moscow, he was in search of an equilibrium between the two political hemispheres. To a certain extent he had already made some success in this regard by achieving widespread Western recognition. After Neto died in 1979 and dos Santos was unanimously elected as his successor, the new president continued with his predecessor’s policy of seeking Western integration. For Crocker this was a welcomed intention for he had at least some leverage to get Luanda’s acceptance for Linkage. And indeed, initially Luanda was, to a certain extent, inclined towards Crocker’s concept. By mid-1982, however, it had swung full circle and rejected any further negotiations over Linkage. As dos Santos put it: “We just cannot trust the South Africans.”

Against this backdrop it is quite a surprising fact that Luanda entered the Lusaka talks without letting its Cuban and Soviet allies know about the new diplomatic initiative, not to mention without consulting them. Yet, if dos Santos’ situation at that time is taken into consideration, his way of conduct appears to be more comprehensible. During one of the numerous meetings between Fidel Castro and the Angolan delegation, the Cuban leader expressed his reluctance against negotiations with the United States and/or South Africa. He was of the opinion that the MPLA should wait another twelve to eighteen months until its military position had significantly improved, which would have an impact on Angola’s position in the negotiations. Knowing that Castro would therefore object his intentions, dos Santos might have concluded that it would be better to confront Havana with the fait accompli. Additionally, with the increasing differences between Havana and Moscow concerning which strategy to pursue against the SADF/UNITA aggression and the accompanying military setbacks, dos Santos’ doubts increased whether such a military improvement was even possible. Finally, dos Santos might have thought that accepting a diplomatic solution brokered by the West would bolster Luanda’s image in the respective countries, just as it was the case in Mozambique after Machel accepted the Nkomati Accord.

The fact that Luanda informed Havana and Moscow not until a few days after it had come to terms with Pretoria, caused serious irritation among both allies. “We are faced with a fait accompli”, Castro said during a meeting with dos Santos one month later. “I don’t think this is right…The final decision was yours, not ours, but at least we could have talked about it beforehand, and we, as well as the Soviets, could have expressed our disagreement beforehand…Who is going to question Angola’s independence when Angola is so independent that it feels free to mistreat its best allies?” Luanda’s behavior around the Lusaka negotiations had shown that Havana’s and Moscow’s control over Luanda was limited.

That dealing with the MPLA was a rather difficult task is furthermore indicated by its internal grievances. Once dos Santos took over the MPLA-leadership, the tight and disciplinary style that characterized Neto’s ruling got replaced by corruption and nepotism while the incompetence in all governmental

565 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. 98.
areas took an increasingly dramatic scale. Above all, Luanda’s economy was in ruins. The few remaining areas that had not been destroyed by foreign interventions and the civil war were paralyzed by mismanagement. At the latest by the mid-1980s, Luanda’s reform programs came to a standstill, while the ongoing conflict devoured 60 to 80 percent of Angola’s annual budget. If it had not been for an economic agreement with the Soviet Union and continued oil revenues (paradoxically primarily form the United States), the MPLA-government would have collapsed by 1985.

The triangle relationship Havana-Luanda-Moscow certainly was a strained one. The mere fact that all three countries were Marxist-Leninist was not enough to generate a pragmatic, mutually reinforcing alliance. Above all, Moscow and Havana hardly ever acted in concert. Without a doubt, both Havana’s and Moscow’s contribution were crucial for the MPLA to have a chance against the Pretoria/UNITA alliance in the civil war. Yet, Moscow’s continuous hesitations whether and how to act definitely put Castro’s patience to the test. That Castro then began to present Moscow with a fait accompli was not well received by the Soviet leadership. The resulting tensions between the two had their impacts not only on everyday decisions that had to be made in Angola but also on most crucial strategic and tactical military decisions. The Kremlin’s distrust for Neto was certainly a benefiting factor for its hesitations, something the Angolan leader was certainly aware of. Nonetheless, he continued to disgruntle the Soviets by seeking Western integration and engaging in secret back-channel diplomacy with its Western adversaries.

The persistence with which Cuba and the Soviet Union assisted the MPLA thus seems all the more remarkable. Obviously, neither Havana’s nor Moscow’s motives were purely altruistic, yet, Castro certainly had some genuine interest in the overall situation of Angola. This is reflected by the fact that large amounts of aid were non-military related, but rather aimed at improving Luanda’s healthcare and education system. Castro was well aware of the ramifications his involvement in Africa could bring for Cuba, yet he stuck to his course even without enjoying the protection of the Soviets. For Moscow on the other side, Angola was first and foremost yet another tool for the power-play in the global struggle against Washington, while all decisions were carefully balanced against possible Cold War repercussions.

Yet, despite both countries’ increasing involvement, the overall military situation as well as the Lusaka Accords had clearly pointed out that the MPLA was neither in secure Cuban/Soviet hands nor securely established in Angola itself. Despite a brief optimism following the signing of Lusaka, Angola’s immediate future looked anything but peaceful.

---

568 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, here p. 212.
4.4. Failures, Escalations and Realizations – The Late 1980s

4.4.1. FAILURES

The Lusaka Accords were a dead-born child. Too many mistakes were made during the negotiations and their implementation as that the agreements could have ever led to lasting peace. Since neither SWAPO nor UNITA were made signatories, the movements never felt compelled to oblige to the agreement. In the wake of the treaty, SWAPO incursions into Namibia continued and were, according to South African observers, tolerated by the MPLA-government. This accusations were to a certain extent true, for Angola’s participation in the Joint Monitoring Commission, the body that was set up to oversee the implementation of the accords, was characterized by a lack of effort.\footnote{Saunders, The South Africa-Angola Talks, 1976-1984: A Little-Known Cold War Thread, here p. 116.} On the other side, the SADF stalled its withdrawal from the beginning on, continuously bringing up new demands in order to proceed with the withdrawal. For months Crocker tried to pursue Pretoria to stick to the agreement, yet ultimately, due to South Africa’s intransigence, his efforts were in vain. By mid-1984, it had become clear to everyone that Pretoria would never withdraw its forces from Angola definitely, unless UNITA was securely in power in Luanda and SWAPO deprived of its ability to win possible elections in Windhoek. In terms of the Cubans, however, Pretoria was caught in a dilemma. On the one side, it needed the Cubans gone, otherwise UNITA would never seize power. On the other side, TNS dictated that the Cubans need to stay in Angola, for this was the only way that continued backup from Washington would be assured and the Reagan administration would refrain from implementing Resolution 435. This contradiction in US and RSA goals (for the US getting the Cubans out of Africa was clearly the number one priority) were to become a major obstacle for the better part of the late 1980s.\footnote{Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, pp. 242-252.} Pretoria further complicated the post-Lusaka negotiations by demanding an adaption of Resolution 435, a proposal that was rejected by all participants immediately. Atop, tensions mounted drastically when Botha introduced the new constitution, whereafter Pretoria installed an interim government in Windhoek, which contravened Resolution 435, and SADF launched its unprecedented raid on three foreign countries simultaneously. With the Cabinda incident in May 1985, everything was finally in jeopardy whereupon Luanda terminated the negotiations while Washington called back its ambassador from Pretoria.\footnote{Kagan-Guthrie, Chester Crocker and the South African Border War, 1981–1989, here p. 72.} Back in the US he reported: “Our present influence on Pretoria is very low…There is no sign of South African gratitude or even acknowledgment of the Reagan administration’s more friendly attitude towards the Pretoria-regime.”\footnote{Quoted in: Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 264.}

If there had been a little bit of hope left that the post-Lusaka negotiations between Luanda, Pretoria and Washington would continue even after the Cabinda incident, they were ultimately blown away when
US Congress lifted the Clark-amendment in June 1985, opening the doors for the Reagan administration to support UNITA excessively. The full-circle turn made by Congress to finally lift the Clark-amendment was evoked by a fundamental reorientation of Reagan’s foreign policy. In his 1985 State-of-the-Union-address, Reagan stated:

“We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives – on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua – to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth.”

Although the main focus of the speech was on economic issues, it redefined Reagan’s foreign policy and is generally regarded as the birth-hour of one of the most decisive foreign policy dogmas of 20th century-America – the Reagan Doctrine. In its core the doctrine replaced the policy of containment with that of rollback, laying the foundation for Reagan’s intention of ending détente and renewing American interventionism. With the United States still traumatized from the debacle in Vietnam, however, he had to accomplish rollback without risking the lives of American soldiers. This implied that Washington had to find regional allies that were willing to fight for its cause. While these goals did not differ much from those Kissinger tried to accomplish, the means to achieve them did all the more. Kissinger strived for regional “police forces” (e.g. the People’s Republic of China) which would enforce American interests and work as guarantors of stability. Reagan, however, wanted to utilize revolutionary movements, which fought against left-wing governments around the world. In other words, Reagan wanted to assist any movement that attempted to overthrow left-wing governments. That these revolutionary movements almost never opposed the left-wing governments out of ideological but out of nationalist interests, was constantly (and willingly) overlooked in Washington. This new notion of how US foreign policy should be executed, eliminated the biggest concern of the legislative branch that so far had prevented them from lifting the amendment: the fear of getting its armed forces drawn into yet another Vietnam-like disaster.

From a legal perspective, this doctrine was highly problematic as it undermined the sovereignty of fully independent and internationally recognized countries, one of the highest principles of international law. Reagan circumvented this problem by a unilateral redefinition of international law. Henceforth, the United States regarded the American model of freedom and democracy as a superior right to the sovereignty of a country. This legal interpretation is perfectly concurrent with Reagan’s notion of an “evil empire”, since it treated American values as the ultimate “ideology” any country should be able to adopt. Thus, from the administration’s point of view, the doctrine was not only justified legally, but also morally. Henceforth, the Reagan Doctrine was the bedrock for an unprecedented support program for revolutionary movements all around the world, including the Mujahedin in Afghanistan, Cambodia’s FUNCINPEC and KPNLF, Nicaragua’s Contras and, eventually, UNITA in Angola. In Washington’s

574 Westad, The Global Cold War, p. 331.
bipolar world view, all these movements were opposing communism and therefore fighting for the “greater good”. Without taking a closer look on their real intentions, all movements that were entitled to the Reagan Doctrine were subsumed under the euphemistic term “freedom-fighters”.

Not surprisingly, the doctrine found high acclaim among the conservatives Reaganites who wanted, as well as their president, to support UNITA since Reagan assumed office. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, US ambassador to the United Nations during Reagan’s first tenure and a die-hard Reaganite, once mentioned that any “racial dictatorship is not as bad as a Marxist dictatorship”, and therefore an adequate approach to deal with the “Russian gun” in Africa. The moderates in the State Department, however, regarded the lift of the Clark-amendment and the postulation of the Reagan Doctrine as a big mistake made by the administration. In their view, the drastic increase of arms delivery to UNITA would provoke a reinforcement of Cuban troops and therefore directly contravene Washington’s primary goal of getting Havana out of Angola. Diplomatically speaking, the Reagan Doctrine severely upset Luanda, which, after condemning Crocker of playing a double game, terminated its negotiations with Washington in March 1986, after Reagan had approved the first aid delivery to UNITA.

For Savimbi, with the lift of the amendment, the overall situation improved significantly. By stating that the vote in Congress was not about Angola or UNITA but about Cuba, in order to hit them hard and get them out of Africa, he entirely fulfilled Washington’s expectations of a “freedom-fighter” in the spirit of the Reagan Doctrine. By early 1986, Washington approved the first of many aid deliveries of state-of-the-art weaponry for UNITA, worth US$ 18 million. Among them were high-tech communication systems, anti-tank missiles and, most crucially, the highly advanced heat-guided Stinger-missiles. Additionally, numerous CIA-field agents were brought to Angola to train UNITA in handling the equipment.

Following the diplomatic breakdown on all levels in mid-1985, South Africa had relaunched its raids deep into Angolan territory on a regular basis. In combination with the fact that UNITA, thanks to support from the United States and South Africa, had increased its strength significantly, it would have been more important than ever for the Havana-Cuba-Moscow coalition to come up with a common strategy to counter the renewed SADF/UNITA advance. Yet, the coalition continued to disagree over a common strategy and could not decide on who should attack whom when and where. The disastrous consequences of these disagreements were illuminated by a military operation which Moscow launched despite severe objections from Havana. Colonel-General Konstantin Kurochkin, the highest ranking Soviet officer in Angola, had long wanted to attack the UNITA/SADF-positions in Mavinga, a small town in southeast

---

577 The Assistant Secretary initially favored a repeal in order to increase his leverage over the MPLA to get it to the negotiating table in the early 1980s. After he had accomplished the goal, however, he became a staunch advocate of the amendment. Following the repeal, Luanda had some serious doubt whether Crocker had double-crossed them, allegations that were not nearly substantial.
578 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 304.
579 Ibid., pp. 307-308.
Angola which was considered as the “gateway” to Jamba, the headquarters of Savimbi. Again, the highly decorated and four-war-seasoned officer emphasized that a direct assault on the center of UNITA would be more effective than the Cuban preference of striking ravaging UNITA-bands in central Angola. While the Cubans did not deny the strategic significance of the town, they objected out of military reasons. The Cubans rightfully claimed that the South African Air Force (SAAF) enjoyed unchallenged air-superiority in the skies over the Mavinga area. The Cuban/MPLA air defense system on the other side was not effective enough to protect the advancing columns from enemy air attacks. After months of heated debates over whether to attack Mavinga or not, the Soviets finally convinced Luanda (which had to give the green light for every major operation conducted in Angola) to launch the assault on Mavinga. Cuba issued heavy protests and refused to join the operation. The offensive began in August 1985 and initially progressed well. UNITA was not able to slow down the rapid advance of the MPLA which soon reached Mavinga. The situation changed in September when the SADF intervened and struck with air attacks and heavy artillery fire. The MPLA, without a sufficient air defense, was decisively defeated, the entire operation an utter failure. Needless to say, the outcome of the operation did little to ease the tensions between the Soviets and the Cubans. When a Cuban delegation arrived in Moscow in January 1986, Jorge Risquet, Castro’s go-to man for everything that was even remotely related to Angola, brought up the issue of SAAF’s air superiority. Risquet stressed that “our greatest weakness is that South Africa has air superiority over southern Angola. We must eliminate this.” What the Cubans wanted was more sophisticated anti-aircraft systems and fighter-jets from the Soviets to elevate their chances against the SAAF. Yet, Moscow gave only vague concessions, which led a Cuban delegate to conclude: “We believe that the Soviet response is inadequate.” Why the Soviets did not do more is unclear. Perhaps, the superpower had reached the maximum of its abilities and simply was overextended. More likely, however, was that Gorbachev, who was busily mending relations with Washington, simply did not trust Cuba that it would use the equipment only for defensive purposes but might invade Namibia, an event that most certainly would have resulted in a heavy setback in East-West-relations.

What is certain, however, is that Moscow not only let down Havana again, but also ignored all its rightful objections. Once again, Moscow failed to be on the same page with its most important ally in southern Africa.

4.4.2. Escalations

1986 began in the same way as the previous year had ended, with a lot of broken military and diplomatic china. Castro met Gorbachev for the first time in February, basically repeating what the Cuban

---

581 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, pp. 210-211.
583 Quoted in; ibid., p. 34 and p. 35.
584 Ibid.
delegation had brought forward the previous month. Yet, not even the Cuban leader was able to elicit more than empty words from his Soviet counterpart. In Luanda, Kurochkin seriously strained the Cubans’ nerves when he proposed yet another attack on Mavinga, ignoring the fact that their military situation had not improved a bit. The tug of war over a common military strategy entered a second round with Havana and Moscow holding the respective ends, while Luanda was once again standing in the middle, trying to figure out on which end it should help pulling. In the meantime, the oil price continued its decline, further reducing Luanda’s revenues. Angola lost US$200 million in 1986 alone, its economy was, apart from the oil business, basically non-existent.

The only silver lining was that the continuing fight against UNITA was marked by some success. Savimbi’s movement was still very strong, yet it had lost ground in the northern and central regions. Despite the advanced military hardware received from the United States, UNITA was not able to seriously challenge the MPLA outside the areas it controlled. Savimbi’s pet-plan, an attack on Cuito Cuanavale, the MPLA’s southernmost base, was an utter failure after 4,000 men of UNITA’s infantry took their heels when the MPLA launched a tank-supported counterattack on the enclosing attackers. The SADF did not, apart from initial artillery support, partake in the attack. This incidents once again highlights how utterly dependent UNITA was on Pretoria. By mid-1986, South Africa began to lose confidence that Savimbi could come to power in Luanda. A member of the SSC noted: “Although UNITA is able to tie down the MPLA forces, a large number of proxy [Cuban] troops and a significant amount of SWAPO terrorists by means of revolutionary warfare…it is now unlikely that UNITA will be able to make the MPLA accept its participation in a government of national unity.”

Nevertheless, by late 1986 Luanda once again regarded new rounds of negotiations as the only escape route out of the crisis. In this notion it was joined by an increasing number of white South Africans. According to a survey conducted in 1986, 52 percent of the Afrikaners believed that Botha should start direct negotiations with SWAPO and the MPLA to end the war. Crocker was ready to seize the opportunity. He had been able to improve his image in Luanda, following a visit of Savimbi in Washington. There the UNITA leader had stressed the necessity that the United States needed to terminate its economic ties with Luanda for they ran counter to UNITA’s and Washington’s objectives. Given the fact that Washington was Luanda’s biggest trading partner (which is quite surprising since the MPLA was still not recognized), the consequences would have been disastrous. It was largely Crocker’s merit that Reagan was convinced not to cut the remaining ties with Angola. By March 1987, Luanda informed Havana and Moscow that new rounds of negotiations would begin. No one objected and Cuba gave its reassurance that its troops will remain in Angola until apartheid was defeated. Contrary to the negotiations which had led to the Lusaka Accords, this time the MPLA closely consulted with Cuba.

586 Quoted in ibid., p. 372-373.
What followed were several rounds of talks during which Crocker alternately met with Pretoria and Luanda to find out the lie of the land; basically, there were bilateral talks about future multilateral talks. The first round between Luanda and Washington, held in Brazzaville, was a false start. It was followed by another round in Luanda in July. A week earlier, dos Santos had travelled to Havana where he hammered out a negotiating strategy with Castro. The Cuban leader stressed that Angola should not accept anything from the Americans unless they can guarantee that all external support for UNITA would be terminated and Resolution 435 in its current form would be implemented. Castro was optimistic that the Botha-regime was now weaker than ever and thus willing to grant major concession regarding the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. However, he was wrong as Pretoria still refused to negotiate seriously. It still refused to withdraw and hold general elections in Namibia and still dreamt of bringing Savimbi to power in Luanda. Washington had some issues with these notions, for it knew that they were unacceptable for Luanda. Regarding the Cuban troop withdrawal, both Pretoria and Washington agreed that Cuba had to call all its troops which were stationed south of the 13th parallel (which is approximately the lower third of Angola) back to Havana. Yet, the United States wanted a simultaneous withdrawal of the SADF from Namibia (i.e. Linkage), while the RSA wanted the Cubans gone first. While Castro told dos Santos that he was willing to negotiate a simultaneous withdrawal from the south of Angola and Namibia, South Africa’s refusal to implement Resolution 435 could not be accepted. From Luanda’s point of view, the entire negotiation process was immensely complicated by the fact that the United States continued to refuse to let Cuba participate, regardless of the fact that one of the most crucial issues (i.e. the Cuban withdrawal) directly affected Havana. Luanda had bowed to the pressure (which was coming from the Reaganites, not from Crocker, who deemed it essential), and it was only in mid-1987 that Luanda for the first time insisted on Havana’s partaking in the talks.

While Crocker and Angolan Foreign Minister M’Binda skirmished over Cuban participation. At the diplomatic table, the war in Angola raged on. In the tug of war between Moscow and Havana, Luanda had once again decided that Moscow was victorious and the preparations for another assault on Mavinga began. Moscow had slightly improved the air defense in the region, yet Havana still deemed it hopelessly inferior to the SAAF. On July 12, 1987, Operation “Salute to October” (a name chosen by the Soviets in commemoration of the USSR’s 70th anniversary of its revolution) was launched. Commanded by Angolan officers, it was the largest advance of MPLA-forces on Mavinga by then. Initially, the Soviet air defense did its job and the MPLA quickly advanced to the Lomba River, the natural barrier that needed to be crossed to reach Jamba. South Africa’s Intelligence Community had done its homework, the SADF knew exactly when and where the MPLA was approaching. It did not take long for them to figure out that UNITA, unless it was massively assisted by the SADF, would not have the slightest chance. By the time the MPLA forces were closing in on the riverbanks, the SADF had already lined up its long-range heavy artillery guns. These guns were to turn the scale in the SADF’s and UNITA’s favor.

589 If not indicated otherwise, the following paragraphs are based on Gleijeses’ brilliant analysis of the events in Chapter 14-18 in Visions of Freedom.
Air defense systems are useless against artillery fire and the MPLA’s guns were no match to those of the SADF. Cuba urged the MPLA-high command to pull back, but they followed the Soviet advice and dug in. For almost two weeks the front was static, with the MPLA enduring constant artillery fire. On October 3, the SADF struck and annihilated the 47th brigade, the MPLA’s most elite unit. The remaining three brigades started their retreat. On the Angolan side, history had repeated itself. The South Africans, however, had learned their lessons from the 1985 battle. Contrary to their first encounter at the Lomba River, the SADF now pursued the MPLA on their retreat to Cuito Cuanavale. With that, Cuba’s final act in Luanda had begun.

Castro was surprisingly sober in his analysis of the situation. With a mixture of worries and hope he looked at the MPLA as it was in an orderly retreat towards Cuito. What irritated him the most, however, was an announcement made by RSA Defense Minister Malan in the wake of the SADF’s decisive victory. For the first time ever did a South African official publically announce that the SADF was not only supporting UNITA but actively fighting on its side against Cuba and the MPLA (until then, it only admitted to directly engage SWAPO). The government had decided to make its involvement public since, given the massive scale of the SADF’s involvement, it was no longer possible to hide it, so it might as well preempt possible speculations. Castro concluded that Pretoria finally had opted for an all-out war and was prepared to attack the Cuban defensive line, a heavily fortified line 250 kilometers north of the Namibian border, ranging from the Atlantic all the way to the Zambian border. Despite the large number of troops that had already been sent to Angola, Castro knew that they would not have a chance against a massive attack from South Africa. Something had to be done.

Only days after Malan’s announcement, Castro decided to accept Pretoria’s challenge. After more than ten hours of a heated debate among Castro’s innermost circle, the Cuban leader decided to send the best of everything Cuba had to Angola. He intended to do much more than to save Cuito Cuanavale which was about to get besieged by the SADF. He wanted to deal the SADF the final blow and evict them once and for all from Angola. Well aware of the challenges this task would bring about, he said: “By going there [Cuito Cuanavale], we placed ourselves into the lion’s jaws.”

This was strong stuff. The Cuban leader decided to leave his island without a protective shield in order to fight a multiply larger counter more than 10,000 kilometers away from home. Castro had longed for more than two years to finally expel South Africa from Angola, yet his efforts were stymied by Moscow’s refusal to deliver the necessary weaponry. Therefore, the only option Castro had was to send its own elite troops to Angola, something he did not dare for he still considered a US attack on Cuba a possibility. By the end of 1987, however, the situation had changed. Détente between Washington and Moscow had reached a new peak as the two superpowers were finalizing the INF-treaty (Intermediate Nuclear Forces), the first bilateral agreement that not only limited (as it was with the SALT-treaties) but entirely abolished an entire type of nuclear weaponry. Second, Washington was amidst another political

---

scandal, a year earlier the Iran-Contra-bomb exploded. The scandal had weakened Reagan and caused him to fire several hardliners within his administration who were all replaced by moderate Republicans. Additionally, CIA-director Casey was incapacitated by a brain tumor and Secretary of Defense Weinberger, the single remaining hardliner, resigned in November 1987, after he had lost all his influence over Reagan. These two events convinced Castro that “the possibility of war there [in Angola] is twenty times greater than here in Cuba. For us the greater danger…is in Angola…The war is there, not here.”

Cuba’s decision had been triggered off by South Africa’s escalation, reflected Castro’s desire to evict the SADF and was enabled by Iran-Contra and détente. Ultimately, Castro was no longer depending on the Soviet Union.

The Cuban operation, named “Maniobra” began in utmost secrecy. Yet, the South Africans were soon aware that something significant was afoot. While those newspapers loyal to the Botha regime interpreted the Cuban action as ultimate proof for the “total onslaught”, Malan downplayed the significance of the Cuban reinforcements. He was to be proven otherwise. Meanwhile, Castro had informed dos Santos that henceforth the Cubans will be in charge. “It is essential to have the closest cooperation and understanding…When Soviets, Angolans and Cubans disagree, everything becomes paralyzed, and then wrongheaded decisions are made. The majority of our troops are in the south, we are responsible for these men, and we will not allow anyone to dictate a strategy that is wrong or foolhardy.”

Above all, this last sentence was directed at the Soviet Union.

Moscow had never been consulted about “Maniobra”. General Ulises, Chief of Staff of the Cuban Armed Forces, was sent to Moscow only eight days after the first shiploads had been deployed to Angola, again presenting Moscow with a fait accompli. Moscow was not happy. Gorbachev and his Secretary of Defense heavily criticized the Cuban decision as an inappropriate overreaction. They feared negative repercussions on the signing of the INF-treaty, which was only a fortnight away after Castro had made his decision. But as it was in 1975, Moscow’s irritation eventually yielded to acceptance over the fait accompli. Already on December 8, Risquet met with Yegor Ligachev, second only to Gorbachev in the Kremlin’s hierarchy, to discuss the issue of reinforcement for Angola. Ligachev showed some understanding and asked what the Soviet Union could do to assist Cuba. Risquet replied that they should replace as much of the war material that the Cubans were sending to Angola as they could, so that Cuba’s arsenals could be restocked. Ligachev made only vague concessions and in the weeks that followed, Moscow lost no more words about the weapons requested by Risquet nor did it start to deliver them. Castro’s constant pressure did not change anything. Yet, Moscow’s silence did not stop Havana from depleting its own arsenals. “We must keep thinking about planes and more troops for Angola,” Castro said. “Our troops are necessary there, not here [in Cuba]. It is there that we need the air force, not here.”

592 Quoted in: ibid., p. 410.
In Raul’s more graphic words: “Today I told the Soviet [General Zaitsev] that we’ll go without underpants if we have to. We will send everything to Angola.”593 Ultimately, Castro’s fait accompli had left the Soviet Union with few alternatives. Cuba had made it plain clear that they would continue their operation even without Soviet support and a Soviet refusal would only have endangered the Cubans and Angolans which sooner or later would have led to confrontations with Castro. And as a Soviet official had pointed out, “it was dangerous to push Fidel into a corner.”594 After all, Havana was an important, yet difficult ally for Moscow. Finally, Gorbachev gave the green light and the Soviets assured to provide most of the weapons Ulises had requested in November. Moscow had, however, one remaining concern, namely that Cuba wanted the sole command over all military operations. To the Soviet statement that the once close coordination between Havana and Moscow in Angola had been lost, Ulises only replied: “I agree with you…It ended in 1985 with the offensive against Mavinga.”595 The Soviets conceded the point and accepted the fact that henceforth it was Cuba’s campaign; Moscow would be informed, but not consulted. Castro’s boldness had made the Soviet superpower the alliance’s junior partner.

The immediate task of “Maniobra” was to relief Cuito Cuanavale. In January 1988, 1,500 Cubans arrived in the small town, where they found a disorganized and demoralized MPLA in an atmosphere of profound panic. The SADF, which believed that time was on their side, had halted its advance, waiting for reinforcements, unaware of the fact that Cuba was preparing to strike. Once again, they underestimated Cuba’s capabilities. Cuban MiG-23 fighter jets, piloted by Cuba’s best pilots, appeared in the skies above Cuito. In every way they were superior to what the SAAF had to offer and it did not take long until South Africa lost its air superiority. To take Cuito Cuanavale, the SADF high command had deployed between 5,000 and 6,000 soldiers, the largest concentration of SADF-troops ever in Angola. They were supported by a large UNITA contingent. But the SADF’s time had run out. With Cuba now controlling the skies, resupplies had to be brought in on the ground, which was a hazardous and fruitless endeavor. The impressive Cuban performance had reassured the Angolan soldiers and they successfully repelled the enemy’s attacks. On March 23, South Africa launched its last attack on Cuito Cuanavale, which resulted in a total defeat. The Cuban/MPLA victory lastingly turned the tide in the war and became a symbol in the fight against apartheid. When Nelson Mandela received word of the events, he said that “Cuito Cuanavale destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressor… [and] inspired the fighting masses of South Africa…Cuito Cuanavale was the turning point for the liberation of our continent.”596

Defending Cuito Cuanavale was the primary, but not the largest objective of “Maniobra”. The lion’s share of “Maniobra”, which were more than 20,000 of Cuba’s best soldiers, was ordered to carry out Castro’s ultimate plan – to drive the South Africans out of Angola. In order to do so, Castro’s final plan foresaw a broad massive offensive in southwestern Angola against the bulk of the remaining SADF in

593 Quoted in: ibid., p. 419.
594 Quoted in: ibid., p. 419.
595 Quoted in: ibid., p. 420.
596 Quoted in: ibid., p. 426.
Angola. By January 1988, Cuban soldiers numbered more than 55,000, equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry the Cuban army had. For the first time, two thousand SWAPO-soldiers join the Cubans and MPLA in their steady advance south to the Namibian border, slowly pushing the South Africans out of Angola. The SADF was completely taken aback by the enemy coalition’s fire power. Colonel Breytenbach looked back at the situation twenty years later: “Bloody Fidel Castro outwitted South African generals. It became dangerous.”

4.4.3. REALIZATIONS

With the pro-Luanda coalition increasingly gaining the upper hand in the military conflict, South Africa got gradually deprived of its biggest advantage in the reemerging negotiations. Pretoria could no longer use its armed forces as an unrestricted threatening gesture. Cuito Cuanavale and the Cuban-led offensive in the southwest clearly pointed out the SADF’s limits. The SADF had lost over 230 soldiers while the material losses were catastrophic. Above all, Cuito Cuanavale showed that UNITA, which was literally of no help during the siege of Cuito Cuanavale, was no match in a conventional warfare, which the Angolan war certainly had become by then. Any beliefs that UNITA could still seize power in Luanda were therefore purely illusory.

These factors, in turn, strengthened Angola’s position. In January 1988, Luanda could thus make the participation of Cuba in the negotiations a sine qua non. This demand was further backed by the circumstance that Crocker, in the wake of the Iran-Contra-Affair, for the first time had supporters outside the State Department which increased his influence in the outgoing Reagan-administration significantly. By the end of January, Washington gave the green light and Cuba was allowed to join the negotiations. Yet, before the talks could start, an agenda had to be defined.

The Cuban delegation, headed by Jorge Risquet, quickly made a professional impression. Castro kept them on a tight leash and carefully hammered out Havana’s negotiation strategy with Risquet prior to each round. The Angolans on the other side were entirely different. As a member of the US delegation observed: “They were like a deer in the headlights. They were frightened. They didn’t want the Cuban troops to leave. The Cubans were clearly the senior partner throughout the negotiations. But they treated the Angolans with respect.”

But the Cuban professionalism did not change the American standpoint. In order that the actual negotiations could start, Cuba and Angola had to make concessions regarding the former’s withdrawal which would be acceptable for South Africa. Castro did not cave in. Knowing that their military situation would improve, he ordered Risquet to stand firm and not give in to American

597 Quoted in: ibid., p. 430.
598 When reading this figure it is important to keep in mind that South African casualty reports were only mentioning white soldiers. Black soldiers who died in the ranks of SADF were never included in these figures. Thus, the actual number of killed SADF members has to be much higher than the mentioned 230.
600 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 440.
pressure. The preparatory talks for the actual multilateral negotiations reached an impasse. The Cuban-led offensive thus continued with its advance towards the Namibian border in order to increase the pressure on South Africa. It took another two months of continuous military retreat until Pretoria came to the realization that it was no longer in the position to bring up major demands. Finally, on April 13, Pretoria informed Crocker that it was willing to resume the negotiations over the implementation of Resolution 435 and the Cuban withdrawal from Angola. The parties had reached the starting line, quadrupartite negotiations between South Africa, Cuba, Angola and the United States could begin.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 432-441.}

The first round of quadrupartite negotiations started in London in May 1988. The big question at the beginning was which position South Africa would take. Contrary to Angola and Cuba, Crocker never demanded an acceptable starting point from Pretoria, probably knowing that in doing so South Africa’s willingness to join the talks would recede further into the distance. Pik Botha had stressed already in February 1988 that it would be difficult to achieve any progress (i.e. to get Pretoria back to the negotiation table) if Resolution 435 would not be adapted. Above all, the timetable should be changed according to Pretoria’s demands. These demands foresaw an initial unilateral withdrawal of Cuban forces, followed by Savimbi’s takeover. This would weaken SWAPO significantly and Pretoria’s puppets in Windhoek would be able to stay in power. If at all, only then should a South African withdrawal from Namibia begin. Cuba, which was expecting South Africa to start the negotiations with such propositions, opened the first round of tasks with a blunt demand. Risquet stated that unless South Africa accepted Resolution 435 “in letter and spirit”\footnote{Ibid., pp 445-446 and 451-453.}, there can be no progress. Havana’s and Pretoria’s claims were diametrically opposed. As it turned out, Pretoria’s willingness to resume the talks did not imply its willingness to give up its unacceptable demands. The South Africans used the London talks simply to sound out their opponents’ positions.

Castro was not impressed. He still believed that the further his troops would advance south, the more would South Africa get nervous. He was also aware that with each mile his troops advanced, their risk of being attacked by the SADF grew. Since the offensive had started, the SADF had been continuously retreating, a major battle had not occurred. Apart from numerous bloody skirmishes, South Africa pulled back, knowing their odds were rising the closer they got towards “home turf”. Again, the biggest problem for Cuba was air superiority. On its retreat, South Africa destroyed all air fields in southern Angola, forcing the Cubans to rely only on those in central Angola. Yet, with the Soviet Union failing to deliver range-extending fuel tanks for the fighter jets, it became increasingly difficult for Cuba to provide air coverage for its troops. Furthermore, Cuba was convinced that Pretoria was in possession of nuclear bombs (in fact, they had six). Castro believed that they would not dare to use them, at least as long as the Cuban army did not cross the border to Namibia. Nevertheless, he ordered his troops to advance in
groups of no more than 1,000 men, only at night and only if they had a sufficient air coverage. Also, they should advance at a prescribed distance from each other.\footnote{Saunders/Onslow, The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976-1990, pp. 222–243, here pp. 240.}

For both the United States and South Africa the key question of the whole offensive was, whether or not the Cuban’s would halt their advance at the Cunene River, which marked the western part of the Namibian-Angolan border. Castro never intended to cross the border, for it would be a clear breach of international law and would trigger off incalculable repercussions. Yet, not a single member of the Cuban delegation provided an answer to this question, for it gave the Cubans a big advantage in the negotiations if Pretoria and Washington were left in the dark.\footnote{Gleijeses, Moscow’s Proxy? Cuba and Africa, 1975–1988, here p. 41-42.}

By June 1988, the Cuban/MPLA/SWAPO army, now numbering close to 50,000 soldiers, had advanced within 50-125 miles of the Cunene River. While the RSA’s military commander appeared, at least on the outside, to be unimpressed by this proximity, domestic concerns grew. In combination with the boiling domestic tensions, even the staunchest proponents of the Botha-regime grew worried about the developing events. Now even the press loyal to the regime wrote articles which seriously doubted that the SADF would be able to halt the Cuban army.

The only factor that was, according to the South African press, playing in favor for them was the Soviet Union’s rush towards implosion. Gorbachev was eager to leave all regional conflicts behind. He had already realized in 1986 that the war in Afghanistan was lost and the Soviet resources were drained to such an extent that continuing international involvement became impossible.\footnote{Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 456.} This also explains the fact that Moscow never even asked to join the quadripartite negotiations. From the very moment Cuba was allowed to join, the Soviet Union was also benched on the diplomatic front. Without protest, the Kremlin had folded its cards in Angola.

The South Africans concluded that these developments would make the MPLA vulnerable, since, in their view, they implied that the movement could no longer rely on Soviet assistance, a notion that also caused fear in Luanda. Castro remained upbeat and once again reassured Luanda that his troops had continuously proven that they could do well even without Soviet support. As he later admitted, he never had any doubts whether the Soviets would help. And indeed, the crumbling Soviet Union and the beginning disintegration of the Eastern bloc should have caused worries, not reassurance within the SSC. The Soviet withdrawal was definite proof that Moscow was not and never had orchestrated a “total onslaught”. Reagan came to the realization that the MPLA, SWAPO, ANC and FRELIMO were first and foremost indigenous movements, driven by national interests and not by a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology.\footnote{Saunders/Onslow, The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976-1990, pp. 222–243, here pp. 240-241.} As the rapprochement between East and West continued, the Cold War card increasingly lost its value in the poker game of negotiations.

Unimpressed, the RSA delegation continued to be in denial. In preparation for the next quadripartite round in Cairo in late June, it handed a draft proposal to the other negotiating parties. South Africa’s...
stance had not changed a bit. Fidel Castro foamed. “This is a proposal written by idiots!” he exclaimed. His brother Raul, however, interpreted the draft correctly: “I think this is their opening position, and then they will soften it…I think they want an agreement. We’ve flipped the tortilla, and things are getting rough for them.”

He argued that South Africa had realized that their situation was worsening and that they needed to make concessions. To give themselves as much room for concessions as possible, they therefore made space for maneuvering as big as possible. He convinced Fidel. Risquet was sent to Cairo with the straightforward instructions not to terminate the negotiations but to condemn Pretoria’s demands as “absurd and unacceptable.”

The victorious tone of the draft proposal did in no way reflect Pretoria’s appearance in Cairo. In a meeting with the Americans, Pik Botha admitted that his government was worried about the Cuban advance. Asked for an assessment of the situation, the Americans had to answer that they did not have more information than the South Africans had. They simply did not know whether or not the Cuban troops would stop at the border. When the Cairo conference opened, Risquet went into the offensive. He branded Pretoria’s proposal as a “tasteless joke” and said that “the South Africans must understand that they will not win at this table what they have failed to win on the battlefield…They cannot act like victors when they are in fact an army of aggressors that is battered and in retreat. The South Africans want to know the exact number of Cuban troops in Angola and where they are stationed. This is not information one gives to the enemy. Let them try to get it on the battlefield.”

The proposal was never brought up again. Instead, South Africa suggested to discuss a ten-point document the Cubans had presented. Finally, the South African delegation had admitted that its demands were unrealistic.

SADF’s high command begged to differ. Only a few days after the setbacks in Cairo, the SADF launched a surprise attack on the advancing Cubans. Heavy artillery rained down on the enemy coalition while tanks tried to break through the lines. Cuba answered by attacking a river dam only twelve kilometers north of the border, killing twelve SADF-soldiers, fifty according to Cuban sources. It was Pretoria’s turn again. The Cubans waited for Pretoria’s reaction. “We have delivered the first blow,” Castro cabled Ochoa and Polo [the commanders of the Cuban forces]. “Now it’s up to them to decide whether to fold or raise the ante.” He warned: “Remain at the highest alert…You must be ready to strike hard at the enemy’s bases in northern Namibia.”

South Africa decided to fold. When the next round of negotiations opened in New York on July 12, Pretoria no longer demanded national reconciliation between UNITA and the MPLA and it no longer spoke of a unilateral Cuban withdrawal. Before the parties departed, they agreed on a statement of basic principles that included a pledge to establish a date for the implementation of Resolution 435 and reaffirmed the principle of “a staged and total” withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola – but no dates

---

608 Quoted in: ibid.
609 Quoted in: ibid., p. 466.
610 Quoted in: ibid., p. 469.
were set for either. The statement also stipulated that the parties supported “noninterference in the internal affairs of states.” This meant that if a final agreement was reached, South Africa would stop helping UNITA and Angola would stop assisting the ANC. On July 22, the Cubans accepted a ceasefire in exchange for a SADF withdrawal from Angola by September 1, 1988.

On August 2, the parties met in Geneva to set up a timetable for the issues that were agreed upon in New York. In Geneva, the South Africans made one last effort to reshuffle the deck. Not even mentioning the SADF’s withdrawal, they proposed a new plan which foresaw the implementation of Resolution 435 as of November 1, 1988, free elections in Namibia by June 1, 1989, and a complete Cuban withdrawal also by June 1, 1989. Risquet did not even bother to notify Castro. The plan was turned down without any further consultation and Cuba, having gained the upper hand on all fronts, imposed its version at the negotiation table. The talks ended with the drafting of the Geneva Protocol. The protocol foresaw a complete SADF withdrawal by September 1, 1988, and the implementation of Resolution 435 was to begin on November 1, 1988. Havana and Luanda agreed to set up a timetable for a complete Cuban withdrawal, yet it was not further specified as to how this timetable might look like. South Africa was left with no other option but to accept the protocol teeth-grindingly.612

This left one remaining issue open for discussion, a tenacious bargaining over the timetable and tempo of the Cuban withdrawal. Crocker suggested that the Cubans should leave within 24 months, with 73 percent of them during the first years. Cuba, which was thinking in terms of four years, flatly rejected the proposal. That Cuba’s prevalence in the negotiations had been a serious blow for Crocker is reflected when he exploded after Cuba rejected his proposal. He said that Angola and Namibia were “unknown quantities for the people of the United States, who thought ‘Angola’ was an exotic cloth and ‘Namibia’ a disease that afflicted old people. The U.S. government had no interest in wasting time in expensive negotiations that were going nowhere. They should look for another mediator.”613 The Cuban response was sharp. Aldana, the head of the Cuban delegation, stressed that they would have no problem to announce that the negotiations had deadlocked. He went on by pointing out “the ignorance, the racism and the contradictions” that characterized American society. It was not surprising, he went on, that in a country, whose president mistook Brazil for Bolivia and placed Jamaica in the Mediterranean (both lapses Reagan had made), the population would not know what Angola or Namibia is.614 Crocker was not used to this type of language, but it had its intended effect. The incident was never mentioned again, yet it pointedly reflects what the two sides thought of each other. The bargaining over how many troops should leave after how many months continued, with both sides haggling over single months and percentage differences in the tempo of the withdrawal. At the end of August, Crocker approached his Soviet

---

611 Quoted in: ibid., p. 472.
612 Ibid., pp. 478-480.
613 Quoted in: ibid., p. 484.
614 Ibid., p. 484.
counterpart and urged him to help convincing the Cubans and South Africans respectively, “not to be-
have like carpet dealers in the Middle East.” Finally, after several more rounds of negotiations, South
Africa, Angola and Cuba agreed on a timetable of 27 months with 66 percent leaving during the first
year. It was further consented that this agreement, as well as the Geneva Protocol, should be signed by
Angola, Cuba and South Africa during a ceremony held in New York on December 22, 1988.

By then, the SADF had long left Angola. The last soldiers had crossed the border on August 30.
Defense Minister Malan, who was present when the last troops returned to Namibia, acknowledged:
“We are no longer the strongest armed force in Africa.” For the second time within a bit more than a
decade, Cuba, a Third World country more than 10,000 kilometers away, had defeated the mighty apart-
heid-regime in its very own backyard.

4.5. A Hot Theater of the Cold War?

With South Africa gone and a timetable for the Cuban withdrawal set, major steps towards the end
of the Angolan conflict had been made. Throughout the thirteen years of war, the prospects for peace
had never been better than they were in 1989. But what was the Angolan conflict? Was it a civil war
between the MPLA and UNITA on who would govern in Luanda? Was it a regional conflict in which
black majority rule challenged white minority rule? Or was it part of the global ideological struggle
between East and West?

In its core, it certainly was a civil war. The Portuguese left a power vacuum after their withdrawal in
1975, which the FNLA, MPLA and UNITA were trying to fill. Immediately, their struggle for power
turned into an armed conflict that caused the country to descend into further chaos.

Yet, at the latest when South Africa invaded in October 1975 and Cuba rushed to the MPLA’s rescue
the following November, the war blended over into a regional conflict whose objectives went beyond
the issue of who would take control of a poor, war-damaged Third World country in southern Africa.
For South Africa, an MPLA-ruled Angola was a serious threat to its aspired CONSAS, an obstacle on
its way to solidify its role as the unquestioned hegemonic power in the region and, above all, a direct
threat to its besieged apartheid-regime. South Africa’s intentions of overthrowing the MPLA then got
Castro’s attention, who, always true to his revolutionary cause, took extraordinary measures to thwart
Pretoria’s plans.

With the complexity of the situation growing, it demanded increasing attention from the superpowers
in order to secure their interests in the region. To overcome a paralyzing deadlock, Crocker, in his re-
lentless efforts to find a solution for the complex conflict in southern Africa, introduced the concept of

615 Meier, Die Reagan-Doktrin, p. 213.
616 Quoted in: Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 447.
Linkage. Washington became the chief mediator, succumbing to the temptation of putting its own interests high up on the agenda. The Cuban presence was henceforth primarily treated as a Cold War issue, thus linking the regional conflict closely to Cold War.

Due to the overwhelming dominance of the Cold War in all aspects of foreign policy around the world during the second half of the 20th century, it is tempting to conclude that the Angolan conflict was therefore ultimately a typical proxy war of the Cold War. Yet, as it is shown in this chapter, there are several factors that contradict this conclusion.

First, there was South Africa’s approach to the conflict. If it had been Pretoria’s primary objective to act as Washington’s proxy in the region in order to enforce containment and, after Reagan came to power, rollback, it certainly failed in accomplishing this task. At first, its continuous aggression against Angola provoked a steadily growing involvement of Cuba in the region. While it can be argued that South Africa was not aware that Castro would respond in such a fast, large and ultimately successful way during the SADF’s first invasion in 1975/76, Pretoria should have known better by 1985. Yet, Pretoria deliberately violated the Lusaka Accords. The motives for this violation were clearly not Cold War related but aimed at ensuring South Africa’s illegal occupation of Namibia by eliminating the threat coming from SWAPO. That Pretoria continued its war against SWAPO despite knowing that it would trigger off increased Cuban involvement, only emphasizes the fact that the Cold War was not the number one priority for Pretoria.

This notion is further supported by the way Pretoria approach the negotiations with Angola, and later with Cuba. Again, if the Cold War had been on the forefront of Pretoria’s thinking, it would have made the Cuban withdrawal the clear number one priority in the negotiations and would have accepted Linkage without further questions. Yet, as a matter of fact, Pretoria did not. By continuously introducing demands concerning the situation in Namibia, it undermined Linkage and thus delayed the Cuban withdrawal.

In fact, South Africa, to a certain extent, even needed the Cubans in southern Africa. For Pretoria, their presence was the ultimate proof that a “total onslaught” was happening. As it is elaborated in chapter two, TNS, on which Pretoria’s entire political acting was based, needed such a total onslaught to function. Only thus was Pretoria able to ensure Western and, in particular, American support.

South Africa’s military as well as its diplomatic strategy thus ran counter to that of Washington, as it prolonged the Cuban involvement in Angola, which in turn made UNITA’s struggle for power way more difficult, a factor the enforcers of the Reagan Doctrine certainly did not appreciate.

Second, the argumentation that Pretoria had truly acted as Washington’s proxy in the region is based on the premise that the Cuban involvement was a Cold War matter, implying that Havana acted on Moscow’s orders. Yet, as it is pointed out, Cuba had not. Havana acted solely on the orders of its leader
Fidel Castro whose motives for the intervention in Angola were not determined by the struggle of capitalism versus socialism or the Eastern hemisphere against the Western. He rightfully understood the Angolan conflict as a struggle of a new black majority ruled country against a powerful white minority regime. Given the strong cultural and historical ties the Cuban leaders felt to have with the African continent, it is therefore more than likely that Castro would have intervened on the MPLA’s behalf against South Africa even if the Cold War had not been the dominating issue of global foreign policy at that time.

Not only did Castro act independently, he also acted contrary to Moscow’s plans. He continuously defied his most powerful and important ally while humiliating the other superpower. He was willing to place his own political agenda above that of superpower relations, thus risking possible negative ramifications for détente not only between Washington and Moscow but also between Cuba and Washington. While his engagement in Angola hardly affected rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union (another indication that the Cold War was not the dominant issue in Angola) it certainly had its negative impacts on the relation with Washington, at least during Reagan’s first tenure. Therefore, like South Africa, Cuba’s involvement in Angola was driven first and foremost by regional motives and not global Cold War thinking.

So, if the war was a regional conflict, why then did the two superpowers, with their Cold War-focused agenda get involved in the first place?

In regard to the United States, they misinterpreted the conflict. For Reagan and his followers it was out of question that Cuba’s involvement was an issue of the Cold War. Some of the staunchest Reaganites, despite countless evidence stating the opposite, even stuck to the theory that Cuba was acting as Moscow’s proxy. Reagan and much of his followers failed to recognize the manifold facets of the conflict, since they looked upon it with a dualistic, Cold War mentality that was so typical for the better part of this administration. That Castro in Angola was promoting his revolutionary idealism and not socialism made by Moscow, never crossed the minds of the most influential decision makers in Washington. Thus, the number one priority had to be to get the Cubans out of Angola and not to deal with Pretoria’s outrageous domestic and foreign behavior. The same applies for the MPLA. The question whether the MPLA was truly a Marxist-Leninist movement was never raised, despite the fact that Luanda held strong economic ties with Washington and repeatedly sought Western recognition and integration. It was only in 1988 that Reagan recognized that the MPLA was driven first and foremost by national interests and not by communist motives.

The Soviet Union, on the other side, felt obliged to assist the MPLA in its Angolan struggle. Regarding itself as the source of world revolution, it was beyond the question of a doubt that a fellow Marxist-Leninist oriented movement needed to be supported. But as did the United States, so did the Soviet Union overemphasize the MPLA’s commitment to the Soviet model of socialism. Moscow failed to realize that the MPLA sided so closely with the Soviet Union primarily out of opportunistic reasons and
not out of ideological conviction. Once Moscow had come to that realization, it was Cuba that kept it from withdrawing completely. Moscow’s reluctance to remain involved in the Angolan conflict grew with every year, yet it was Havana’s relentless pressure that forced Moscow to continue and even increase its support for the MPLA. So if anything, especially in the final years of the 1980s, Moscow acted on Havana’s orders and not vice-versa.

Finally, if the Angolan war had primarily been a proxy war in the Cold War, superpower relations would have been directly reflected in the Angolan conflict. As a matter of fact, however, the opposite was the case, as the renewed détente between Washington and Moscow escalated the war. Castro no longer had to fear US retaliation and could therefore launch an all-out offensive against SADF which eventually drove SADF out of Angola once and for all. During the Cold War crisis of 1983 and 1984, however, the Angolan conflict came to a temporary halt when the Lusaka Accords were signed. It was only in the most final stages of the conflict that détente had a direct impact. This is reflected in the last rounds of negotiations, when only “regional” matters (i.e. the SADF’s presence in Angola and Pretoria’s illegal occupation of Namibia) were discussed. The “Cold War issue” (i.e. the Cuban presence) was no longer of significance and was settled after the “regional issues” had already been solved.

On the basis of this analysis it can therefore be concluded that the Angolan conflict between 1975 until 1988/89 was first and foremost a conflict driven by regional motives. The role played by the superpowers was nonetheless crucial, as their diplomatic and military actions significantly prolonged the conflict. Without Washington’s veto in the UN, international pressure on the RSA would have been too high to bear while Cuba and the MPLA on the other side would never have been able to win the upper hand in the war against the SADF if it had not been for the Soviet weaponry. In other words, while the conflict was definitely driven by regional factors, the Cold War had a catalyzing effect.

In any case, the consequences that thirteen years of war had brought to Angola were both catastrophic and impressive. While the author was unable to come across specific numbers regarding civilian deaths, Westad provides one number regarding people injured by landmines up until 1991. Citing a Human Rights Watch report, he states that 70,000 people were disabled by landmines, one of the highest rates of landmine injuries in the world.617 Against the background that Angola had a bit over 10 million inhabitants in 1990618 this is a horrifyingly high number. Specific numbers are available only for Cuban casualties. Between 1975 and 1991, when the last troops left, 2,103 Cuban soldiers died in Angola. Relative to the respective populations, this death toll is comparable to the 58,000 American soldiers that died in Vietnam.619

---

617 Westad, The Global Cold War, p. 392.
Apart from the human toll, the economic destruction was matched only by that in Mozambique. Fourteen years of anti-colonial war which had gradually blended over into decades of civil war prevented the nation from rebuilding a strong, reliable economy. The damages between 1975 and 1987 are estimated at US$ 12 billion. Especially the southern part of Angola was hit hard since vast areas were subjected to the SADF’s scorched earth campaign conducted during its retreat in 1976. Furthermore, most of the fighting took place in the south. The fact that the civil war would go on for another decade aggravates this situation even further. Thousands of landmines had been laid out by both sides, some of them still remaining today. As it was with Mozambique, the apartheid-regime’s thrive for self-preservation had managed to completely destroy another country in the southern African region.

Yet, in some regards the conflict was impressive. There is no other instance in modern history where an underdeveloped, small, Third World country has changed the course of events in a region in the far distance. Never before (and so far, after) had an underdeveloped country committed itself to a campaign of technical assistance of such a scope and selflessness. Cuba’s contribution was more than helping the MPLA to remain in power. It significantly influenced what Castro has called “the most beautiful cause”, the struggle against apartheid. The Cuban victory over the SADF destroyed the myth of Pretoria’s invincibility and helped setting in motion the final act of apartheid South Africa.

---

CHAPTER V

Namibia – The Gordian Knot?

There can be no progress without your full acceptance, in letter and spirit, of Resolution 435. Only its full implementation would cut the Gordian knot of the conflict in southwestern Africa.”

(Cuban diplomat Jorge Risquet to South African delegates in 1988)

5.1. Pretoria, Windhoek and Resolution 435

As the previous chapter has shown, the road towards the implementation of Resolution 435 was long and difficult. What seems quite interesting is that this road mostly did not run through Namibia but rather through Angola, since the faith of Namibia was not decided within its own borders, but by the situation on the battlefields of its northern neighbor. Throughout the 1980s, the struggles of both countries became more and more intertwined until they eventually merged into one large regional conflict fueled by enormous international involvement. Although the armed struggle in Namibia had been going on for about a decade by the time the Cuban presence became an issue of concern for Pretoria and Washington, the settlement of Namibia’s independence eventually became subordinate to the issue of Havana’s presence in Angola. These developments bring up several questions to which the previous analysis does not provide sufficient enough answers. What were the underlying dynamics that rendered these two conflicts seemingly inseparable? Was it really just Crocker’s diplomatic tool of Linkage that set this merger in motion or had Namibia been the region’s “Gordian knot” already prior to its linking with Angola? If the former is the case and the “Namibian Gordian knot” was indeed laced by Linkage in the first place, does this imply that Crocker’s approach actually made the entire conflict (at least initially) even more complicated? The following analysis attempts to find answers to these questions.

5.1.1. REJECTED LIBERATION

When the “wind of change” had finally hit southern Africa, it nourished the hopes of the majority of the Namibian people that it would blow away South Africa’s illegal occupation. The United Nations General Assembly had revoked South Africa’s mandate over Namibia already in 1966; a decision that was confirmed by the International Court of Justice in 1971. At the latest from this moment on, Pretoria’s

622 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 452.
claim over Windhoek was officially considered to be illegal. Yet, Pretoria remained intransigent, neither the “wind of change” nor Vorster’s détente policy reached Namibia. Pretoria was not ready to cease its claims to the country. Admittedly, the Vorster government had realized that Namibian independence was inevitable and had officially abandoned the idea of annexing the country (i.e. to fully incorporate Namibia into South Africa). Yet, it wanted to control Windhoek at least indirectly. Remaining in charge of Namibia turned out to be more important than ever following the events of 1974, when Angola became independent and Pretoria henceforth needed its “fifth province” to be a buffer state between the hostile MPLA government in Luanda and South Africa. This buffer should be maintained by preventing SWAPO from seizing power and installing a pro-South African government instead.

In June 1974, Vorster stated that “it is not the government of South Africa’s task to decide the future of South-West Africa, but Pretoria would also not permit any outsiders to do so.” This statement was directed first and foremost at the United Nations, which had increased pressure on Pretoria throughout the previous years. In September, the South-West African National Party (the puppet-party of the NP in South Africa) announced plans to hold constitutional talks, a step made due to immense pressure from the United States, the United Kingdom and France. These three countries had just applied their veto in the UNSC to block a resolution that would have evicted Pretoria from the UN. Since this decision was met with sharp criticism from other UN members, the three veto powers were forced to exercise pressure on Pretoria outside the UN framework in order to uphold their credibility. Yet, Windhoek’s announcement to hold these constitutional talks was but empty words, the apartheid-regime still wanted to proceed with the so-called “internal settlement”, meaning the imposition of a government beholden to Pretoria.

For that purpose, Pretoria sponsored the “Turnhalle Constitutional Conference”, a multi-racial conference that met in a converted gymnasium outside Windhoek in 1975. The delegation was appointed by South Africa which was very careful to only invite representatives obedient to the apartheid-regime. The conference then called for a constitution that would grant administrative autonomy to each population group of Namibia, while white minority rights would be protected. SWAPO called the draft a “farce…aimed at perpetuation of white minority rule.” The proposal was also rejected by the major Western powers, who all endorsed UNSC Resolution 385 of January 1976. This resolution called for general, UN-supervised elections to a constitutional assembly in Namibia. Subsequently, this elected assembly should draft a constitution for an independent Namibia. As it had been with all the previous rulings by the United Nations, Pretoria also defied this verdict of January 1976 and pursued its plan for an internal settlement.

Simultaneously, the war in southern Africa escalated. The SADF’s invasion of Angola had led to a massive Cuban presence, which increasingly attracted American attention in the region. Kissinger, who feared a growing Cuban and Soviet presence in the region if the numerous conflicts would not be resolved, demanded an internationally negotiated settlement for Namibia on the basis of Resolution 385.

---

624 Quoted in: Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, p. 80.
625 Quoted in: ibid., p. 83
Yet, diplomatic efforts on this issue would gain momentum only in 1977, when Jimmy Carter took office. In this year, the three Western permanent members of the UNSC (UK, US and France) and the two Western non-permanent members (Federal Republic of Germany and Canada) formed the so-called “Contact Group”, also known as the “Western Five” or just the “Five”. Throughout the following years, this group tried to find a diplomatic solution to the problem of Namibian independence by working as a mediator between the RSA and SWAPO, whose respective positions were diametrically opposed to each other. Pretoria, on the one hand, wanted to create a Namibia that was independent in name only, by implementing the aforementioned internal settlement. SWAPO, on the other hand, wanted to achieve independence through a combination of military operations and internationally backed diplomatic actions. In this context, the Contact Group pressured both sides to abandon their first-track approach in favor of a second-track approach, which foresaw a negotiated, internationally accepted resolution of the conflict, based on Resolution 385.626

A big advantage of the Contact Group were the conditions under which it was able to operate. First, it enjoyed the backing of the United Nations which provided the group with numerous diplomatic channels as well as a considerable authoritative weight. Second, the three veto powers, who all were very important trading partners for South Africa, had significant leverage since they had the stick of threatening economic sanctions against Pretoria. Third, the Five worked closely together with the Frontline States (FLS). In this constellation, the Five were able to apply pressure on Pretoria while the FLS could do so on Sam Nujoma’s SWAPO. Like the United States, also the FLS had a strong interest in an early settlement in Namibia. For the FLS, the situations in Namibia and Rhodesia were, to a certain extent, linked together, as both countries struggled for independence against a minority regime. In the view of the FLS, a settlement in Namibia would give momentum to the stalled negotiations over the independence of Rhodesia.627

Negotiations between the Contact Group, the Frontline States and South Africa began in February 1977. What became apparent immediately was that Pretoria was playing a double game. While it participated in the multilateral talks, it pressed on with the internal settlement plan. In March, the Turnhalle conference presented a constitution proposal for an interim government that would lead Namibia to “independence”. The U.S. State Department explained that “at the bottom line, ethnic divisions will be the controlling principle…[this system] gives whites the power of veto over all actions of the national government.”628 In an attempt to derail Pretoria’s plans, the Contact Group threatened to impose economic sanctions on the RSA. Vorster obeyed and shelved the constitution proposal.

As the multilateral talks continued, another major obstacle surfaced. Following the threat of economic sanctions, Vorster was willing to talk seriously with the Contact Group and the FLS, except for

---

626 Tetsuro Iji, Contact Group Diplomacy. The Strategies of the Western Contact Group in Mediating Namibian Conflict, in: Diplomacy & Statecraft 22 (2011), No. 4, pp. 634–650, here pp. 634-635.
627 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, here p. 132; Iji, Contact Group Diplomacy, here pp. 635-638.
628 Quoted in: Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, here pp. 92-93.
one issue – Walvis Bay, Namibia’s only deep water port. The harbor had been annexed by Britain already in 1878 and was part of the British Cap Colony throughout the German occupation of Namibia. In the wake of World War I, Walvis Bay was exempted from the League of Nations mandate, whereupon Pretoria made the territory a legal part of the Cape Province in 1922. Consequently, Pretoria regarded Walvis Bay as an integral part of South Africa and not of Namibia and thus refused to hand the port over to a prospective independent Namibia. SWAPO on the other side claimed that, irrespective of its colonial past, Walvis Bay was an integral part of Namibia. For an independent Namibia, the port would be of vital importance, since the country’s entire economy was heavily concentrated on Walvis Bay. If the port was to remain under South African control, Namibia would, in economic terms, continue to be utterly dependent on Pretoria. All the pressure exercised by the Five and the FLS could not convince either party to dismiss its claim, the negotiations reached a dead-end. Additionally, disagreements emerged whether SADF should leave prior or after UN-supervised elections were held and over which size a possible UN peacekeeping force should have. As SWAPO did not give in to any of Pretoria’s demands, the latter threatened to proceed with the internal settlement. To underpin the threat, the Turnhalle conference created the “Democratic Turnhalle Alliance” (DTA), an alliance of several political parties, which should become a dominant political force within Namibia and the main opposition to SWAPO. It was clear to everyone that this was yet another puppet party controlled by Pretoria. The Western reaction to the DTA was the imposition of a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa by the UN in November; the first and only time that mandatory UN-sanctions were imposed on South Africa.

Again, it was diplomatic pressure and maneuvering from abroad that brought things back in motion. The Contact Group and the FLS were able to convince the two parties to accept a proposal by Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere. He suggested to isolate the issue over Walvis Bay from the Namibian settlement and postpone negotiations over it to after Namibia gained full independence. A distinct UN-Resolution should function as a guarantee. This eliminated the major obstacle and on April 25, 1978, Pretoria agreed on a proposal presented by the Contact Group. The proposal called for UN-supervised general elections for a constituent assembly, based on Resolution 385 from 1976. South Africa was allowed to keep 1,500 soldiers within Namibia until the date of the election, although they would have to be confined to two bases in the north of the country which would be under UN-supervision. Additionally, the elections were to be held with the South African administrator general still in office, yet he had to work in cooperation with the UN special representative. Independence should be granted by December 31, 1978. After the FLS had convinced SWAPO to accept this proposal in July, the Contact Group handed the draft to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to iron out “a number of uncertainties and ambiguities”, such as the size of the UN peacekeeping force and the duration of their operation.

629 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, here pp. 124-125.
630 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 95.
632 Ibid., p. 148.
Waldheim presented his proposal for a UN resolution in August 1978, with only minor adaption made to what the Contact Group had suggested. Yet, Pretoria turned down the Waldheim-version one month later under the pretext that it “deviated too much from the April-proposal.” This drastic change of course, however, was not motivated by Waldheim’s proposal, but by a major change of personnel within the SSC. In the same televised press conference where Vorster announced Pretoria’s rejection of the Waldheim proposal, he also announced his resignation as prime minister of South Africa in favor of P. W. Botha. The hardliner had opposed negotiations over Namibia from the beginning on and put a lot of effort into sabotaging them. For this purpose, he, among others, ordered the raid on Cassinga only days after Vorster had accepted the Contact Group’s proposal in April, hoping that SWAPO terminate the negotiations.

Despite Pretoria’s refusal to accept the draft, the UNSC adopted the Waldheim-proposal as Resolution 435 with twelve to zero votes on September 29, 1978. The USSR and Czechoslovakia initially wanted to object the resolution because they considered it “imbalanced and incomplete.” Only after intense persuasion on behalf of the FLS were they convinced to express their protest just by abstaining.

For the hardliners, who now dominated the SSC, Resolution 435 was a no-go. The foreign ministers of the Five met with Botha in Pretoria the following October to get his acceptance for Resolution 435, again threatening economic sanctions. Yet, Botha had seen through them. He knew that neither of the five countries was willing to risk the important economic ties with his country by implementing mandatory economic sanctions. That he was right was proven one month later in November, when the Five abstained from voting on a UN resolution which would have threaten sanctions if Pretoria was not to abandon any internal settlement plans. The Five had revealed its Achilles heel. What could have been the biggest leverage over Pretoria was nothing but an empty threat. Western credibility was destroyed, consensus with the FLS broken and thus a major advantage of the Contact Group gone.

Knowing it had not to fear punitive actions, Pretoria held pseudo-democratic elections in Namibia at the beginning of December. The DTA won 41 out of 50 seats in the constitutional assembly. SWAPO, who boycotted the elections, the UN and the Contact Group condemned Pretoria’s move and declared the election as null and void. Again, it were empty words as no punitive actions followed. Within this context, it seems almost naïve that the Contact Group continued its negotiations with the FLS and Pretoria on how to implement Resolution 435. Without any credible leverage, none of the involved parties was able to resolve the differences that continued to exist. To complicate matters even further, discrepancies also emerged within the Contact Group. By 1981, the negotiations once again reached an impasse.

At this point, all diplomatic efforts by the Five and the FLS had become but a “game of procrastination” for Pretoria. What the Contact Group failed to realize was that the two different approaches –

---

634 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 96.
636 Iji, Contact Group Diplomacy, here p. 645.
internal settlement and Resolution 435 – were not mutually exclusive for Pretoria. South Africa was willing to go along with the UN settlement plan, but only under the assumption that the DTA would win the elections. Yet, Robert Mugabe’s victory in Zimbabwe had pointed out the improbability of a DTA victory in UN-supervised elections. In Pretoria’s view, the only way to prevent a SWAPO-victory at the ballots was to defeat the liberation movement in battle, an effort that would take time. Thus, any delay in the negotiations was more than welcomed by South Africa. And as a member of the SSC stated in 1980, Pretoria was willing to pay a price: South Africa “would rather break with the United Nations than deliver South-West Africa to SWAPO…[and] that it would rather fight where its troops are now [Namibia] than along the Orange River [the river marking the border between South Africa and Namibia].” Additionally, Pretoria’s willingness to ignore Resolution 435 was further encouraged by the prospect of the incoming Reagan administration which would embark on a much more liberal course towards Pretoria.

Resolution 435, today regarded as one of the best diplomatic achievements in the history of the United Nations, would have been the perfect mechanism to achieve Namibian independence, which is evident by the fact that the Resolution was the basis for the successful independence of Namibia in 1990. What caused its failure by the early 1980s was the negotiators’ inability to set this mechanism in motion. Ultimately, it was the Contact Group’s inconsequence and Pretoria’s intransigence that made the implementation of Resolution 435 in 1978 a fruitless effort and thus the prospect of Namibian independence to look grim for the coming years.

5.1.2. SWAPO’S STRUGGLE

The breakdown of negotiations and Pretoria’s rejection to grant independence to Namibia was another bump on SWAPO’s long road of struggle against the racist oppressors. Major resistance against South Africa officially began in 1966 when SWAPO’s president Sam Nujoma announced the launch of an armed struggle. The military conflict was mainly contained to the north of Namibia, focusing on the regions of Ovamboland, Kavango and the narrow Caprivi Strip. South Africa responded by flooding northern Namibia with thousands of SADF soldiers and SAP officers. The scene for a rapid escalation of violence in the region was set as Pretoria’s security forces began combing the bush for guerillas, randomly terrorizing and arresting hundreds of villagers.

While the military situation of SWAPO became increasingly difficult due to Pretoria’s massive use of force, the political situation looked more promising. The OAU had recognized the movement as the only legitimate representative of the Namibian people already in 1964, followed by the United Nations

---

638 Gleijeses, Cuba and the Independence of Namibia, here p. 290-291.
639 Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 156.
641 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, pp. 54-55.
and several non-African countries during the late 1960s. SWAPO could therefore enjoy significant diplomatic support which gradually translated into military and humanitarian aid. While arms were primarily sponsored by members of the FLS, humanitarian aid came from international organizations such as UNHCR or UNICEF and, especially, from Scandinavian countries. This enabled the movement to provide basic logistical support to a network of camps located in southern Angola, hosting Namibian refugees who had to flee from intimidation and violence in their own country.643

Diplomatic recognition was also vital for SWAPO’s exiled leadership. Offices were established in Algiers and Cairo, and most importantly, at the UN Headquarters in New York. While New York provided them with access to the most senior diplomatic level, the leadership underwent a rigorous apprenticeship in Cairo and Algiers. Observers were soon impressed by the dedication, high principles and self-discipline most SWAPO leaders showed. Consequently, contrary to many other southern African liberation movements, SWAPO’s initial performance on the diplomatic stage impressed many Eastern and Western leaders.644

Next to its relations with the international community, Namibia’s liberation movement cooperated closely with its southern African counterparts. Initially, SWAPO sided with UNITA, a fact that seems almost paradox in hindsight, given the circumstance that these two movements bitterly fought each other for the better part of the 1980s. Yet, upon closer examination, it becomes more apparent why this alliance came into existence. When SWAPO began its armed struggle in 1966, it was hamstrung by the geopolitical situation in the region. With their bases mostly in Zambia, the SWAPO guerillas, in order to reach Namibia, had either to cross the narrow Caprivi Strip, which was heavily fortified by the SADF, or advance through UNITA-controlled territory in southwestern Angola. Since crossing the Caprivi Strip would have been too dangerous, the SWAPO leadership entered an alliance with UNITA to secure a passage through Angola into Namibia for its fighters. Savimbi, for his part, also had his reasons to align his movement to SWAPO. Given its initial international isolation, this cooperation provided UNITA with the opportunity to utilize SWAPO’s large support network for its own needs. And indeed, as sources indicate, the first guerilla units of UNITA were trained in SWAPO camps during the late 1960s. This form of collaboration was facilitated by the fact that both SWAPO and UNITA drew their major support base from the same ethnic group. First and foremost, however, Savimbi affiliated UNITA with SWAPO out of opportunistic reasons. The short, yet prolific relation between the two movements ended in 1975 when Savimbi betrayed SWAPO by providing information to Pretoria as a quid pro quo for the SADF’s support of UNITA.645

This breakup coincided with the independence of Angola, causing SWAPO to conduct a major reorientation of its overall policy. The affiliation with UNITA was not exclusive, because the SWAPO lead-

644 Vigne, SWAPO of Namibia, p. 90.
645 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, pp. 54-65.
ership was also in close contact with the MPLA. Admittedly, Neto was not pleased by Nujoma’s entanglement with Savimbi, yet the SWAPO leader was not tired of stressing that the cooperation was of tactical nature only. Nevertheless, it took SWAPO well until mid-1976 to realign itself fully with the MPLA. From that point on, however, the two movements were, apart from a minor hiccup in the mid-1980s, strong allies not only on the diplomatic level, but also on the battlefield. In June 1976, SWAPO transferred its headquarters from Lusaka to Luanda and significantly expanded its network of bases in southern Angola. This led to a decisive improvement of the armed struggle against the SADF, which in turn provoked an increasing amount of SADF incursion into Angola.646

Yet, despite the increasing focus on military operations, SWAPO never ceased its political engagement. Following a massive strike among half of Namibia’s workforce, the movement was able to raise the political awareness of the Namibian people. A continuously growing number of people joined the movement on a political as well as on a military level.647 In the wake of the SADF’s defeat in 1976, SWAPO’s international prestige experienced another tremendous boost. While this was important for the movement’s credibility in the upcoming negotiations over the implementation of Resolution 435, the movement’s fast growth completely overwhelmed the leadership. A lack of resources caused severe problems in accommodating ten thousands of young Namibian’s, while a lack of knowledge made the task of organizing the masses militarily even more difficult. Dissatisfaction within the SWAPO camps reached such an extent that several camps instigated a mutiny against the leadership. While the leadership was able to quell these unrests quickly, it had realized that foreign assistance was urgently necessary. Following the lead of FRELIMO, MPLA and ANC, Nujoma went to Moscow and asked for logistical, educational and military support. After several rounds of negotiations, Moscow became the main foreign supporter of SWAPO.648

Nonetheless, SWAPO was still utterly dependent on the FLS, in particular on Angola whose territory was essential for launching guerrilla attacks into Namibia. When the multilateral negotiations over Resolution 435 took place, the FLS were thus able to exercise significant pressure on SWAPO to comply. Contrary to the Contact Group, the FLS were willing to do so, at the expense of making SWAPO an ally with whom it was not always easy to deal. SWAPO never regarded a negotiated settlement as the best solution but preferred a military solution because it neither trusted the West nor South Africa that the latter would adhere to the terms of a negotiated settlement. Pretoria’s aggressiveness continuously reinforced this claim, making the FLS’s job of convincing SAWPO of Resolution 435 all the more difficult. Ultimately however, the FLS were able, significantly assisted by Nujoma’s impressive sense of diplomacy and leadership, to bring SWAPO to the realization that the odds were against winning independence on the battlefield and that a negotiated settlement was much more reasonable.649

646 Ibid., pp. 101-104.
647 Ibid., pp. 73-77.
649 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, pp. 121-123.
Yet, throughout the negotiations, SWAPO never laid down its arms. It continued its guerilla attacks in northern Namibia and defended its bases in Angola against the SADF’s incursions. And with the failure of implementing Resolution 435 in 1978, SWAPO had no intention to end its armed struggle in the near future. The failed attempt to implement Resolution 435 had proven SWAPO right – neither Pretoria nor the Western powers could be trusted.

5.2. Conflicting Strategies

5.2.1. SEARCHING A LOOPHOLE

In the words of former US diplomat Chas Freeman, the southern African region was “a mess” by the early 1980s. The implementation of Resolution 435 had broken down, South Africa had renewed its aggressive behavior and the few remaining diplomatic initiatives had reached an impasse. These breakdowns were, to a large part, caused by the fact that the involved parties all set different priorities to the numerous problems in southern Africa. For most African countries, terminating apartheid was still of such tremendous importance that any other objectives, such as the Cuban presence in Angola or the illegal occupation of Namibia, seemed to be secondary. Others, most notably the US, regarded the Cuban mission in Angola and the Soviet involvement in southern Africa in general as the most daring issue that needed to be solved. Still others, most notably SWAPO, regarded the implementation of Resolution 435 as the sine qua non for solving the other problems in the region. That opinions differed over what part UNITA, SWAPO and the ANC should play in the region’s future, further complicated the matter. Each of these viewpoints had its lobbyists in southern Africa, Washington, Western Europe, and to a certain extent in Moscow. The presence of so many different sets of ideas and priorities ensured that resolving these conflicts would be impossible without an increasing willingness of the involved parties to make concessions. Nowhere had this been more evident than in the failed implementation of Resolution 435.

It was against this backdrop that Chester Crocker took over the African Bureau in the State Department and introduced Linkage to overcome this stalemate. Succinctly put, Linkage should be the mechanism that would set the implementation of Resolution 435 back in motion. Crocker understood Linkage to be a comprehensive approach which took into consideration the various sets of priorities, and not just an isolated response to the agenda of only one country. He staunchly believed that linking South Africa’s illegal occupation of Namibia to the Cuban presence in Angola would be a benefit for everyone. In Washington, so he believed, Linkage would first and foremost appease the Reaganites as it would deal
with their biggest concern in southern Africa, the Cuban presence. Furthermore, while it was the independence of Namibia which was the clear number one priority under Carter, Linkage put the Cuban issue to the forefront. This shift in focus would also significantly improve the situation of Pretoria as the apartheid-regime, backed by Washington, could blame Cuba for the still ongoing illegal occupation of Namibia. For Angola, an early end of the Cuban engagement would free significant financial resources which the country desperately needed otherwise. Cuba would gain the credit of having compelled South Africa to grant Namibian independence, which Pretoria would not have done without the intense Cuban pressure. Finally, for the FLS, a Cuban withdrawal would not only bring an end to the conflict in Angola but also terminate the presence of a country whose influence over the region steadily increased at the expense of the FLS.\(^{651}\)

These advantages certainly sweetened Linkage for the involved parties, yet Crocker overestimated their importance. Since the bulk of the costs of Cuba’s presence in Angola was shouldered by Havana itself, the burden for Luanda was not nearly as big as Crocker had thought. Furthermore, Linkage could not guarantee that South Africa would stick to its word once the Cuban troops had withdrawn and the FLS rather had a strong Cuban presence in southern Africa than having to deal with renewed aggressions from Pretoria. In regard to Pretoria, true, the Botha regime could blame Cuba for the SADF’s continued presence in Namibia, but Linkage offered them something that was of far more importance. For Pretoria, Linkage was a boon as it turned out to be a great stalling tactics. By haggling over minor details regarding the mutual withdrawal, Pretoria ensured that the stalemate in all negotiations would continue. The effectiveness of Linkage was further diminished by how the Reagan administration approached Resolution 435. While the new president paid lip service to the UN-sponsored settlement plan, his administration’s priorities were clearly on the Cuban withdrawal and no longer on achieving Namibian independence. Thus, the pressure being exercised by Washington on Pretoria to implement Resolution 435 decreased decisively.

It is therefore not of much surprise that reactions to this diplomatic scheme were almost entirely negative. Several diplomats considered it to be immoral, since it meant dealing with South Africa and Cuba; lawyers deemed it as illegal, because it was blocking Resolution 435 and academics pronounced it unworkable due to Cuban and South African intransigence.\(^{652}\)

Crocker was not deterred. He pressed on with Linkage and thereby fundamentally changed the understanding of the Namibian and Angolan conflicts. Henceforth, the issues of the Cold War were applied on a hitherto regional conflict. Moreover, it altered the seating arrangement at the diplomatic table. The FLS and the OAU formally rejected Linkage under the premise that it would be only another major obstacle in solving the conflict in general and the implementation of Resolution 435 in particular. However, since they could not offer any alternatives to overcome the deadlock, their mediation influence declined. Of the FLS-members, only Angola remained involved in the discussions which is owed to the

\(^{651}\) Ibid., pp. 130-131.  
\(^{652}\) Ibid., p. 131.
fact that the country was directly affected by the Cuban/Namibian situation. With regard to the Contact Group, the introduction of Linkage precipitated the group’s end. Apart from the US, none of the other four members agreed with Linkage. Tensions mounted until they came to a head during a UN sponsored summit in Paris in 1983. There, the French foreign minister severely criticized Crocker’s idea and suspended his country’s participation in the Contact Group. In 1984 and 1985, Canada, Great Britain and West Germany also expressed their opposition to Linkage. Yet, they did not actively work against it, mainly for two reasons: First, like the FLS, they had no viable alternative to offer. Second, they realized that only the United States had enough leverage to convince both Pretoria and Havana to withdraw and should therefore not undermine Washington’s efforts. Henceforth, the Americans were the only ones to have direct diplomatic ties with all involved parties except with Cuba. The United Nations, which had led the negotiations through the Contact Group and the FLS, were effectively sidelined when the two bodies lost its influence in the negotiating process. Therefore, the United States took the lead at the negotiating front.

5.2.2. PROCRASTINATIONS

Initially, Linkage seemed to fulfill its purpose when South Africa resumed negotiations over Resolution 435 and rounds of talks were opened on various different levels. The agenda foresaw that Linkage would be discussed between Washington and Pretoria, while the other members of the Contact Group would be bystanders. They would only focus on Resolution 435, in particular they would discuss the set of principles which Pretoria wanted to be included in a future Namibian constitution with the FLS and SWAPO. Moreover, direct talks between Washington and Angola would begin, also held outside the framework of Resolution 435. The United States was to inform the Contact Group on any progress made at the “Linkage-front”, and update Angola on any progress made between the Five and Pretoria. This complex network of diplomatic talks was to be overseen by Chester Crocker.

The difficulty of coordinating diplomatic talks on that many different levels, was drastically increased by Pretoria’s ongoing “game of procrastination”. South Africa repeatedly stressed the (communist) danger a SWAPO government would pose to the entire region. During a meeting in Zurich, Pik Botha bluntly told Crocker “that a SWAPO victory will mean a Soviet presence there [in Namibia] which could threaten South Africa and lead to war. You cannot have Nujoma without a red flag.”

Botha was preaching to the choir. The Reagan administration had long declared Nujoma a “terrorist” and SWAPO a “Marxist terrorist band” and Secretary of State Haig stressed that the United States would not allow “the Hammer and Sickle to fly over Windhoek.” These were utterances made against better knowledge. A CIA report stated that while “Moscow has considerable influence within SWAPO…and there is a significant element within SWAPO that is not pro-Soviet…Nujoma himself enjoys friendly relations

---

653 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, pp. 147-149.
655 Quoted in: ibid., p. 183-184.
with the Soviets and has leaned increasingly to the left in recent years, but he is probably more an opportunist than a committed Marxist. Nor is the USSR the only foreign influence on SWAPO. Most of SWAPO’s financial and humanitarian support comes from international organizations…”

Washington’s (wrong) perception of SWAPO, however, was interpreted by Pretoria as a free ride. Since both countries were apparently trying to prevent the same thing – a communist takeover in Namibia – Pretoria had no need to be concerned about rebukes from Washington. The South Africans believed that a SWAPO takeover in Windhoek would lead to an immediate nationalization of the entire country which would trigger off a civil war since too many Namibians would oppose such a new system. This in turn would cause the SADF to intervene in Namibia, requiring much more resources than the ongoing low-level conflict did.

Nonetheless, Pretoria increased the presence of its security apparatus in Namibia throughout the 1980s. As of 1980, more than 30,000 troops were operating in the northern half of Namibia which was under the status of martial law. In order to carry out military and police oppression, Pretoria relied on SAP and SWATF. The latter was set up in 1980 and comprised a number of SADF-units, and different tribal armies which had been formed in the 1970s. While the SADF maintained the overall control in the north, SAP engaged in counter-insurgency operations against SWAPO. Among SAP was one infamous unit, named Koevoet (crowbar), basically the Namibian equivalent to Battalion 32 of the SADF. Koevoet consisted mostly of Namibians under the control of white South Africans and was involved in assassinations and sabotage activities (also against civilians) that were then attributed to SWAPO. Pretoria justified this massively increased troop presence (by 1978, only 10,000 troops had been in Namibia) by an alleged SWAPO offensive.

Indeed, there was a rise of SWAPO activities following the numerous diplomatic setbacks during the outgoing 1970s. By 1982, the SADF estimated that 6,000 SWAPO fighters were involved in the biggest offensive the movement had conducted so far. Despite being outnumbered five to one, the guerrillas were able to push back Pretoria’s security forces and took control over large parts of the white-dominated farming area in northern Namibia. Fearing retaliation, the majority of the white population fled to the southern half of Namibia. Their trust in the SADF was shattered, especially since it took Pretoria two months to regain control over the northern areas. The guerrilla war went on and, like in Angola and Mozambique, took its toll on the country. Between 1975 and 1983, infrastructure worth US$ 10 billion was destroyed, making it impossible to cultivate vast areas of fertile soil.

SWAPO experienced another major setback when Luanda agreed to the terms of the Lusaka Accords. Ultimately, Angola’s immediate security interests outweighed the MPLA’s ideological commitment to SWAPO, which henceforth was denied to launch operations into Namibia from Angolan territory. SWAPO, not even a signatory of the accords, refused to comply and continued its guerilla warfare. This

---

656 Quoted in: ibid.
657 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, p. 152.
658 Ibid., p. 152.
caused some serious resentment between SWAPO and the MPLA as Luanda feared it would rekindle South African aggression.

SWAPO’s continuation of the armed struggle was partly a response to another step made by Pretoria on its way to an internal settlement. In April 1985, Pretoria instated a “Transitional Government of National Unity” (TGNU), consisting of members of the DTA and five other parties which were opposed to SWAPO. Although the formation of the TGNU ended the two-year-period of direct South African rule over Windhoek, Pretoria’s overall control continued. The South African parliament remained in charge of Namibia’s finances, its foreign affairs and security policy. Furthermore, all decisions made by the TGNU had to be approved by the administrator general who was directly appointed by Pretoria. When the new government was octroyed on the Namibian people in June 1985, it lacked what all its predecessors had lacked too – legitimacy and popular support.

By 1986/87 an increasing number within South Africa’s decision making body realized that an internal settlement was becoming more and more unrealistic as was a military victory over SWAPO. Yet, Botha and his staunchest hardliners continued to close their eyes to hard facts. They still rejected Resolution 435 and insisted on unrealistic terms regarding Linkage. Following a meeting with P.W. Botha in March 1987, the American ambassador in Pretoria cabled to Washington that

“we see almost no prospect that the SAG [South African government] can be cajoled or persuaded into accepting a 435 settlement regardless of what paper agreement on CTW [Cuban troops withdrawal] the MPLA might be prepared to sign.... We suspect... that the SAG might only be willing to contemplate a 435 settlement if faced with the prospect of severely punitive measures, e.g. closely coordinated and rigorously applied international censure and/or sanctions.”

Yet, neither the White House nor Capitol Hill were prepared to apply such measures as they would run counter to Constructive Engagement or their president’s personal sympathies. The only country that was willing and capable of pressuring South Africa was Cuba. Castro did so when he decided to go “all-in” by launching Maniobra, the military operation that would eventually drive the South Africans out of Angola and lead to Namibian independence.

---

660 Quoted in: Gleijeses, Cuba and the Independence of Namibia, here p. 291.
5.3. The Gordian Knot?

The analysis of the developments inside Namibia during the late 1970s and the 1980s provides possible answers to the questions raised at the beginning of the chapter. Without a doubt, Linkage played a crucial part during the final years of the Angolan/Namibian conflict. Nevertheless, its impact should not be overestimated. First, it would be wrong to assume that the conflicts in Namibia and Angola were completely separate issues prior to the introduction of Linkage. As we have seen, South Africa needed Namibia as a “buffer state” to protect its crumbling apartheid-regime from the influence of yet another majority ruled country. The SADF’s reasons for its involvement in the Angolan war were largely to protect Pretoria’s interests in Namibia. Furthermore, SWAPO used southern Angola as its deployment zone for its guerilla attacks into northern Namibia. Therefore, the struggle for Namibian independence and the Angolan War had been intertwined already prior to the introduction of Linkage. The new approach did not actually merge the conflicts together, it just marked the starting point from which they were treated as one.

Crocker introduced the concept with the intention to overcome the deadlocked negotiations over the implementation of Resolution 435. By addressing a much broader range of issues he wanted to increase the leverage of the United States. While Linkage might have worked in theory, Crocker made one decisive mistake. He failed to realize that the concept was in fact directly contradicting to his second diplomatic offensive in the region, namely Constructive Engagement. The latter was based on the idea that change in the RSA should be evoked by assisting Botha in his intended “reform program” and strictly refrain from imposing sanctions on the apartheid-regime. Linkage, however, only worked under the premise that Pretoria would face punitive actions from the international community if it continued to undermine a joint Cuban/SADF withdrawal and, subsequently, Resolution 435. Linkage created a powerful leverage which the United States could have applied to get Cuba out of southern Africa, yet Washington refrained to apply it. The Frontline States were right when they claimed that Linkage would only add another deadlock to the Angolan/Namibian conflict. Ultimately, it was but another tool that enabled South Africa to postpone independence for Namibia and thus, instead of solving the Gordian knot, only laced it tighter.

This leaves the question whether Jorge Risquet was right when he stated in 1988 that a settlement in Namibia would smash the Gordian knot of the conflict in southwestern Africa. By involving Cuba in the Angolan war, Castro wanted to help the MPLA to force the SADF out of Angola, to prevent the takeover of a South African puppet government in Luanda and to protect Angola lastingly from South African aggression. If one looks at the chain of events following Pretoria’s acceptance to implement Resolution 435 during the outgoing 1980s, all of these intentions seemed to fall in place. Namibia was successfully granted independence, which in turn created the vital buffer state between Angola and South Africa. Pretoria ended its aggression against Luanda and Cuba withdrew from Angola, thereby ending the “international phase” of the civil war. Thus, at a first glance it seems that Risquet was right.
Yet, as we have seen, the Namibian issue was only one of several problems that comprised the southern African conflict in the 1980s. While the Namibian issue was solved, South Africa was still ruled by a racist minority regime, Mozambique was exposed to RSA-sponsored RENAMO attacks and the civil war in Angola continued. Therefore, Risquet’s statement is only partly correct. The implementation of Resolution 435 smashed a Gordian knot, yet not that of the entire southern African conflict but that of only one part of the conflict – the part which was most important for Cuba.
CHAPTER VI

Adapt or Die

"We are moving into a changing world, we must adapt otherwise we shall die."661

(South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha in 1979)

6.1. Transition

Like 1975, the years 1989/90 were a caesura in the history of southern Africa. Decisive developments within the region, combined with fundamental changes in world politics, enabled a transition which would ultimately bring an end to fifteen years of apartheid and Cold War propelled struggle over the future of the southern African region.

6.1.1. A NEW WORLD ORDER – SUPERPOWER RELATIONS IN 1989

The Cold War ended suddenly, surprisingly and unexpectedly peaceful, closing a historical chapter that dominated world politics for the better part of the “short” 20th century. The end of the bipolar struggle had become synonymous with iconic events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the signing of the START I-treaty, or the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Yet, despite their importance, these “historic moments” did not cause but rather mark the end of the Cold War. The end of the East-West-conflict was brought about by a process that had developed for decades. The “incredibly swift transition”662 that transpired between 1989 and 1991 was but the result of that process. In any case, the impact the end of the Cold War had on world politics during and after 1989 was tremendous. This is most illustrated when US President Bush invoked a “new world order”663 in 1990.

The common perception is that the pressure of the Reagan administration and America’s military superiority left the Soviet Union with no other option but to concede to defeat. This “triumphalism” is problematic as it oversimplifies the process that brought about the end of the Cold War. In turn, this argumentation distorts the image of super power relations at the outgoing 1980s which are, however,

663 Ibid., here p. 534.
crucial to understand the impact they had on the resolution of the conflicts in the Third World in general and southern Africa in particular. The “triumphalist” argumentation is based on the premise that Washington pursued a confrontational course towards Moscow throughout the 1980s. While this might be true for the first half of the decade, it certainly is not for the second. Already by 1983, Reagan had established an advisory group, tasked to chart a course towards “constructive cooperation” with the Kremlin. Two months later, the president delivered a speech in which he announced the launch of a policy of “realistic reengagement” based on mutual “cooperation and understanding.” Despite all the hardline characteristics of Reagan and his administration, the president shared many fundamental goals with Gorbachev. Chief among these was their mutual rejections of the concept of “mutual assured destruction” and their desire to eliminate nuclear weapons. This desire and the new course of “constructive cooperation” culminated in the Reykjavik Summit of 1986 which resulted in the signing of the INF-Treaty in 1987. Above all, this pivotal desire sent the crucial message to Gorbachev that the United States would reciprocate bold initiatives on behalf of the Soviet Union (Reagan was well aware of Gorbachev’s reform plans) rather than exploit them. Bush then kept Reagan’s promise when he supported Gorbachev in the most difficult years from 1989-1991. The new US president did not exult over a Cold War “victory”, tried to blunt international criticism when Gorbachev sent the Red Army into Azerbaijan to quell riots and held back with critique as the Baltic uprisings continued throughout 1990 and 1991.

Both Reagan and Bush played a critical role in bringing an end to the Cold War as they supported Gorbachev in his monumental task of transforming the Soviet Union. Yet, their role was only secondary. Gorbachev revolutionized his country’s domestic and foreign policy, he made bold steps when he introduced Glasnost and Perestroika and allowed emancipation of the Soviet Republics. Gorbachev, Reagan and Bush all sought to end the Cold War. But for every half step the two US presidents made, Gorbachev had already made two. Against this backdrop, superpower relations in 1989 were therefore characterized by an atmosphere of cooperation and trust, rather than confrontation and mistrust.

The impact the end of the Cold War had on the Third World can hardly be overestimated as it marked nothing less than the end of the Third World as a political concept. Moscow’s exit from Afghanistan in 1988/89 became a global symbol for the failure of the Soviet Union’s Third World policy. It caused many intellectuals and political leaders to turn their back on communism and head towards different ideological identities, most notably political Islam. Asia, Africa and Latin America all began to move into different, almost opposite directions. In terms of their economy, Southeast Asia experienced rapid growth, Latin America stagnation, and Africa a disaster. Politically, Latin America moved away from military dictatorships, in Southeast Asia some non-Communist countries followed Latin America’s course and in Africa and the Balkans ethnic identities replaced political ideologies. The 1990s replaced

665 Ibid., here p. 277.
666 Ibid., p. 283.
667 Westad, The Global Cold War, p. 379.
the notion of Three Worlds with the concept of “globalization” and the United States, the only remaining superpower, became the symbol for what much of the former Third World wanted to become.668

6.1.2. WALKING INTO FREEDOM – THE END OF APARTHEID

In the wake of the Soweto riots, Nelson Mandela stated that South Africa’s “long walk to freedom” had begun. While the 1980s looked like the South Africans were walking backwards, the crumbling regime was about to make several giant leaps towards the finish line during 1989 and 1990.

Botha and his fellowship had little to celebrate when the year 1989 began. The war in Angola was lost, Namibia on its way towards independence, the domestic situation at the brink of civil war and international isolation prevailed. The end of the Cold War voided Pretoria’s trump card of presenting itself as Washington’s proconsul in defending communism in southern Africa, the trump card that shielded the regime from severe punitive actions on behalf of the international community. In this hopeless situation Botha gave the order to enter into negotiations with then still imprisoned Nelson Mandela. A few months later the apartheid-leader suffered a severe stroke.

After ten years at the top of the South African government, Pieter Willem Botha was replaced by Frederik Willem de Klerk, who served as acting president from February until his confirmation as president in general elections in September 1989. De Klerk stood in stark contrast to his predecessor who ever since his resignation has been universally condemned as a “reactionary who failed to cross his Rubicon.”669 With de Klerk’s assumption of power, one half of the duo that accomplished the immensely difficult task of ending apartheid peacefully was instated. The first great leap had been made.

After de Klerk had become the new president of South Africa, negotiations with the other part of the aforementioned duo were gaining momentum. Those who negotiated with Mandela immediately recognized his stature, integrity and lack of bitterness despite having been imprisoned for more than 25 years. Mandela continuously stressed that majority rule was non-negotiable, but he argued that certain guarantees had to be made in order to prevent the replacement of white domination with black domination. Mandela relentlessly reassured his counterpart, that it was not the intention of the ANC to overthrow the state, but to fulfill the long-aspired wish of the oppressed African people – one man, one vote. Both Mandela and de Klerk knew that a peaceful transition to democracy would only be possible if they, in a concerted effort, constructed a bridge over which the South Africans could walk. The most important construction material for this bridge were compromises.

In the view of the majority of the Afrikaners, the ANC was a dual threat. Politically speaking, they knew that the ANC would win the overwhelming majority in a one man, one vote election and therefore deprive them from political power. In economic terms, the ruling Whites feared that the communist ANC would nationalize their entire property and introduce socialism rapidly. Against the backdrop of

668 Ibid., pp. 387-388.
the ending Cold War, the ANC, however, announced that nationalizations and the introduction of socialism was no longer their aim. Thabo Mbeki, one of the most senior members of the ANC, ceased to quoted Marx and Engels and assured white and black business men that their businesses would be safe under an ANC regime. This renouncement of socialism, paired with the worldwide collapse of Soviet Marxist-Leninism, transformed the ANC from a communist party into a national movement that first and foremost sought full black political participation. Furthermore, with the Soviet Union’s change of stance from support for armed struggle to negotiated settlement, the ANC began to downplay the importance of the MK and its armed struggle.\(^670\) By making these compromises, it was much easier for de Klerk to make the second leap – in February 1990 he announced the unbanning of the ANC and other revolutionary movements, the repeal of discriminatory laws and the release of Nelson Mandela.\(^671\)

The NP leader made these decisions without consulting his cabinet or the NP caucus. It took a great deal of effort to convince the white electorate of the reasonableness of pursuing a negotiated settlement with the ANC. His strongest argument was that the shrinking white proportion of South Africa’s population would get a better deal out of negotiations than with their backs against the wall should the ANC escalate its armed struggle. The fact that de Klerk came from the most conservative NP faction, the Transvaal, certainly benefited his cause of persuading the NP caucus. For much of his political career he considered apartheid to be morally and politically sound, which reassured the white voters that he would protect their rights.\(^672\) In this persuasion he was supported by Mandela, who in a reconciliatory manner, repeatedly stressed that a majority ruled South Africa would respect the traditions of its minorities. Mandela had always regarded the Afrikaner nationalism as an equally legitimate indigenous movement in South Africa to African nationalism, as both fought against the British colonialists. Thus the third leap was made as it became apparent that the negotiations over a “new South Africa” would be characterized by an atmosphere of reconciliation and not by an African longing for revenge.

The scene was set and from 1990 until 1992, the ANC and the NP held numerous rounds of negotiations over a peaceful transition to a “new South Africa”. Mandela and de Klerk, the chief (and often only) negotiators for their respective people, both placed their highest political value on loyalty to their party and their people. They both acted without a mandate (Mandela more than de Klerk) and were determined to take the South African people to a place where the two leaders thought they ought to go rather than where they wanted to go. When resistance and concerns among the white population grew and violent assaults towards the black population reemerged, de Klerk announced that the white electorate should decide at the ballots whether or not negotiations with the ANC should continue. Held in March 1992, with a turnout of 87 percent, 69 percent of the electorate endorsed de Klerk to continue the negotiations. Mandela interpreted the referendum’s result “that whites understood that the days of white

---


\(^672\) Ibid., p. 628.
privileges were over.”673 Equipped and strengthened by the voters’ mandate, de Klerk gradually dismantled apartheid during the next two years, culminating in the general elections on April 27, 1994, the first in South Africa with universal suffrage. The ANC won 62.7 percent of the votes, attracting four-fifths of the black electorate while more than 94 percent of those who voted for the ANC were black. The National Party was able to win 20.4 percent.674 Two weeks later, on May 10, Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the first president of a new South Africa. After lasting for almost half a century, the era of apartheid was over.

### 6.1.3. PEACE AT LAST?

With the Cold War coming to an end, the moderates’ takeover in South Africa, the beginning dismantling of apartheid and a Cuban victory in Angola, prospects for peace in southern Africa seemed to be better than ever before. A de-escalation of violence was noticeable in the entire region after a number of ceasefire agreements were implemented and the involved countries made a fundamental reorientation of their strategies towards southern Africa. Despite all these promising prospects, however, the situation in southern Africa was elusive.

#### Namibia

After the New York Accords had been signed in November 1988, the implementation of Resolution 435 took a promising start. Cuba started to withdraw its troops in January, followed by South Africa’s onset to retreat from Namibia. The new date for the implementation of Resolution 435 was set for April 1989. On February 16, the first border control post between Namibia and South Africa was set up, four days later the curfew in northern Namibia was lifted. By the end of February, the TGNU met for one last time when it voted to dissolve itself.675

Until the election of a new legislative body in Windhoek, Resolution 435 foresaw that the United Nations oversee the process of preparing Namibian independence. In what would become the largest financial and personnel effort in UN history, the United States Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was set up for this purpose. First and foremost, UNTAG should ensure the ceasefire between SWAPO and South Africa, wherefore it got assigned a UN peacekeeping force. The deployment of the UN troops, however, got delayed by several months due to political and financial reasons within the United Nations. As a consequence, the first troops of the peacekeeping force arrived only in mid-April. Yet, fighting between SWAPO and the SADF had reemerged by April 1, the same day as the implementation of Resolution 435 was to begin. Since UNTAG only had a few advisors in Namibia at that time, it had no means to intervene – the entire transition process was suddenly in danger.

---

673 Ibid., p. 634.
674 Ibid., p. 647.
675 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, p. 188.
There are still controversies over what exactly happened during the first week of April 1989. SWAPO claimed that it sent a large number of its guerrilla forces into Namibia where they should hand themselves in to UNTAG, which conducted the disarming of the guerrilla force. The SADF, on the other side, stated that the guerrilla forces crossed into Namibia with the sole purpose of continuing the armed struggle against the SADF. In the heat of the moment, UNTAG, which was more in favor of the version of South Africa, allowed the SADF to send a combat unit into northern Namibia to push SWAPO back north of the 16th parallel. According to Resolution 435, this was the barrier SWAPO was not allowed to cross unless its fighters intended to turn themselves in.676

Throughout the next weeks, a bloody battle raged between the SADF and SWAPO. The SADF eventually succeeded to push the guerrillas back into Angola but more than 300 members of the SWAPO were killed. In hindsight, allowing the SADF to push back SWAPO was not a wise decision made by the UN, as it seriously undermined UNTAG’s credibility. The transition process was only saved by diplomatic intervention on behalf of the signatories of the New York Agreement, who could convince the SADF and SWAPO to cease the hostilities.677

In the wake of this near collapse of implementing Resolution 435, however, UNTAG was able to restore its image among the Namibian people. Following the reinstatement of a ceasefire, UNTAG successfully repatriated more than 42,000 Namibian refugees. Additionally, a large information campaign was conducted which prepared the Namibian people for the upcoming elections. UNTAG’s presence also had a huge psychological impact. The blue helmets of the UN troops were omnipresent, even in the most sparsely populated areas. They were assisted by a force of 1,500 international police officers and contributed largely to reduce intimidation, assaults and discrimination. Furthermore, the strong international presence improved the telecommunication systems, the health care infrastructure and revived the stunted businesses in Windhoek.678

When seven months after the unsuccessful start of the transition process elections were held, UNTAG had not only succeeded in laying the foundations for free and fair elections, but also in restoring its image among the Namibian people. In November 1989, UNTAG was the most dominating political factor in Namibia and the elections itself were without a doubt the culmination of the UN mission. In addition to the UN peacekeepers and the international police force, another 1,700 election observers oversaw the general elections of a constitutional assembly. The election, deemed free and fair by the UN, had a turnout of 98 percent and SWAPO won 57 percent, the DTA 28 percent of the votes. In the wake of the voting, UNTAG retreated into the background while the elected assembly negotiated a new constitution. The final draft was presented and adopted on February 9. On March 21, 1990, in a ceremony attended by representatives of 147 countries, F. W. de Klerk and UN Secretary General Javier

676 Schleicher, UNTAG und der Internationale Faktor im Unabhängigkeitsprozeß Namibias, here pp. 330-332.
677 Dreyer, Namibia and Southern Africa, pp. 188-190.
678 Schleicher, UNTAG und der Internationale Faktor im Unabhängigkeitsprozeß Namibias, here pp. 333-335.
Pérez de Cuéllar jointly conferred formal independence to Namibia. On the same day, Sam Nujoma was sworn in as the first president of the new Republic of Namibia.679

**Mozambique**

The thawing relations in southern Africa in 1989/90 were probably for no country of more importance than they were for Mozambique. Without any significant international backing, the country was hit the hardest by Pretoria’s POD and RENAMO’s murderous attacks. As has been concluded in chapter three, Mozambique was at the brink of collapse in 1989. With the end of the hardliners’ reign in Pretoria, however, the situation began to improve.

Encouraged by the change in Angola, Namibia and South Africa, several mediators emerged who tried to find a basis for peace between the warring FRELIMO and RENAMO. The latter had proposed ceasefire negotiations already in 1987, yet FRELIMO declared it would not join RENAMO at the diplomatic table as long as South Africa continued to support them. However, when Pretoria’s backing withered away as a result of de Klerk’s assumption of power, FRELIMO consented to talk directly with RENAMO. FRELIMO’s wish to pursue a mediated end to the conflict was further strengthened by a deteriorating domestic environment, continued setbacks in the anyway minor international support and inconclusive military actions. As for RENAMO, its leader Afonso Dhlakama began to transform the movement from a pure guerilla force into a politico-military movement which was capable of participating in complex peace talks.680

In July 1990, direct negotiations between RENAMO and FRELIMO were held in Rome for the first time. The momentum gained during this first round, which resulted in the commitment from both sides to find common ground which would end the war, carried the parties through two more rounds in August and November. The latter resulted in a partial ceasefire along the Beira and Limpopo corridors which soon became a safe haven for hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans.681 Meanwhile, the government in Maputo presented a draft to a new constitution which foresaw a multi-party system with elections based on a universal franchise, guaranteed freedom of expression, the press and religion, and an independent judiciary.

Despite these promising achievements, neither FRELIMO nor RENAMO were willing to forgo the military option. The third round was almost cancelled by RENAMO when FRELIMO launched an offensive against RENAMO’s headquarters in Gorongosa. As a consequence, RENAMO likewise continued its attacks on emergency relief convoys. One year after the negotiations had begun, both parties were again involved in full-scale hostilities against each other.682

680 Alden/Simpson, Mozambique, here pp. 112-115.
681 Newitt, A History of Mozambique, pp. 570-571.
682 Alden/Simpson, Mozambique, here pp. 118-120.
The reemergence of hostilities was further propelled by an improving situation for RENAMO at the expense of the official government in Maputo. Rising popular discontent with FRELIMO, caused by corruption, painful and futile economic measures and high crime rates seriously weakened FRELIMO’s position. Discontent with the FRELIMO government culminated in mid-1991, when the military staged a coup against Chissano. Although the coup failed, it caused many within FRELIMO to question the approach towards the negotiations the government had hitherto taken.

A major problem in the Mozambican peace process was that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States enjoyed the leverage to influence the peace process in Mozambique as they did in Angola. With a continuing decrease of international awareness of the civil war in Mozambique, it became increasingly difficult for the international community to influence the negotiations. In this situation, FRELIMO decided to stake everything on one card. Knowing that neither side was capable of winning the war, it opted for a political win, understanding that RENAMO’s biggest weakness was its lack of political sophistication. Without consulting RENAMO, Chissano implemented the aforementioned constitutional draft which included most of the demands RENAMO had made over the years. This put the latter into a dilemma. RENAMO could take the risk of challenging FRELIMO at the polls or continue to pursue the military option. Choosing the latter, however, would have seriously undermined RENAMO’s anyway hampered credibility, since most of the issues it claimed to fight for had already been implemented by FRELIMO. In combination with another draught – the worst in southern Africa for 70 years – which also affected RENAMO seriously, and increasing pressure from the aid donors, Dhlakama finally accepted Chissano’s challenge.

On October 2, 1992, the Rome General Peace Accords were signed, bringing an end to a seventeen-years-lasting utmost brutal civil war. The United Nations deployed a 7,500 men strong peacekeeping force to Mozambique to oversee the two-year transition until reaching democracy. The end of this period was marked by presidential and general elections held in December 1994. In the presidential elections, Chissano won 53 percent, Dhlakama 33 percent of the votes; in those for the national assembly, FRELIMO gained 44 percent, RENAMO 37 percent. The elections were deemed free and fair by the international observers and the result accepted by all the participating parties. Yet, they confirmed what everyone had suspected: the country was divided into two political factions, separated by an insurmountable trench which was a result of the bloodshed during the civil war.

Despite numerous efforts made by the international community in the two decades that have followed the end of the war, reconciliation between the two parties can hardly be described as successful. In recent years, armed struggles between the two parties have reemerged, causing Dhlakama to break the 1992 peace agreements in 2013. In October 2014, RENAMO accused the government to have forged the

683 Ibid., here pp. 122-125.
results of the 2014 general elections and refused to accept its outcome. In this ensuing political crisis, armed conflicts are becoming increasingly prevalent.\(^\text{686}\)

**Angola**

The New York Accords of November 1988 brought an end to the “international period” of the civil war in Angola. South Africa had withdrawn its troops already by October, Cuba began to fulfill its part of the bargain by 1989. Over the next two years, Havana gradually called its soldiers back home and on May 25, 1991, the last Cuban troops boarded the plans that would take them home. Sixteen years of Cuban engagement in Angola came to an end. With the combat troops leaving, Havana also called back the more than 2,000 aid workers that were in Angola by 1988. Castro argued that these workers could not be left behind without the protection of Cuban soldiers, as they would immediately be targeted by UNITA. Despite pledges from dos Santos to reconsider, the Cuban leader told his Angolan counterpart: “It pains me deeply to have to tell you that we will not continue our technical assistance, but it is not a question of what I want.”\(^\text{687}\) A few days after the last soldiers had left, thus also Cuba’s technical assistance to Angola ended.

Coinciding with the Cuban withdrawal, the guns fell silent in Angola. Savimbi and dos Santos signed a ceasefire and agreed that multi-party elections would be held by the end of 1992. These elections took place at the close of September 1992, under the auspices of the United Nations, which sent 800 observers to Angola. In comparison, the UN had sent 1,700 observers to Namibia, a country that was by a third smaller than Angola.\(^\text{688}\) Nonetheless, the observers “were struck by the scrupulous fairness of polling” and the head of the US liaison office told reporters that “the elections went increasingly well.”\(^\text{689}\) The MPLA won 53 percent compared to 34 percent for UNITA. In the simultaneously held presidential election, dos Santos achieved 49 percent and Savimbi 40 percent. Since neither of the two achieved the necessary absolute majority, a run-off election between the two candidates was needed.

Yet, this run-off election was never held. Savimbi dismissed the judgment of 800 observers and accused the MPLA of election fraud. Despite the fact that UNITA was not able to bring up one single piece of evidence which would support this claim and enormous pressure from the UN to accept the voter’s verdict, UNITA refused to accept its defeat. The country slid back into war.\(^\text{690}\) The United States, who no longer had use for Savimbi, changed their allegiance, recognized the MPLA government in 1993 and condemned UNITA’s renewed aggression. UNITA, however, had amounted vast stockpiles of US

---


\(^{687}\) Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 494.

\(^{688}\) James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. vii.

\(^{689}\) Gleijeses, Visions of Freedom, p. 500.

\(^{690}\) Ibid., pp. 501-502.
weaponry which enabled it to continue the civil war, although it received almost no international support. Once these stockpiles were depleted it acquired weaponry through illegal channels, financed by selling so-called “blood diamonds”.

Within only a few months, UNITA gained the upper hand against the MPLA, which was now, deprived of Cuban and Soviet support, largely on its own. To counter UNITA, it applied a successful, yet controversial tactic. By forcing the peasants from the countryside into the provincial cities, it wanted to empty the countryside from people which could support UNITA in any form. Those who remained were either UNITA soldiers or supporters and therefore “fair game” for the government forces. Assisted by Israeli Special Forces and US satellite images, the MPLA was able to locate most of the UNITA camps and eventually pinpoint Savimbi’s position. On February 22, 2002, the leader of UNITA got killed in a battle with government troops.691

Having lost their leader, the rebels sued for peace which was accepted by Luanda in April 2002. The Angolan government accomplished what only few governments have been able to do so far – it defeated a well-organized, trained and equipped guerilla force. Since April 2002, 40 years after the armed struggle against the Portuguese began, Angola has experienced peace.

6.2. The Balance Sheet

The turn from the 1980s to the 1990s did not bring full peace to the southern African region. However, it saw the end of a fifteen-years-lasting carnage which was caused by a racist regime’s brutal clinging to power, large scale international involvement and Cold War intervention on behalf of the superpowers. After most guns had fallen silent and the dust over the military and diplomatic battlefields had settled, it gradually turned out which of the involved nations had adapted successfully during these past, brutally chaotic fifteen years.

The United States seemed to have achieved everything they intended. The Soviet Union and Cuba had left Africa, Mozambique and Angola introduced a multi-party system, sought political and economic integration into the Western world and were Marxist-Leninist parties only on paper. Although the ANC eventually came to power in Pretoria, it abandoned almost all socialist elements of its ideology and continued its close cooperation with Washington. Finally, Namibia gained independence peacefully according to an agreement, whose accomplishment was the merit of United States – at least in the perception of the Western world. Was the resolution of the southern African conflict therefore a full success for America? From a pragmatic point of view, it certainly was. Yet, it would be wrong to accredit these

691 James, A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990, p. ix.
accomplishments only to the actions taken by the United States, and here especially by Crocker. Ultimately, his policies of Constructive Engagement and Linkage failed, because he overestimated Washington’s ability and willingness to influence South Africa. At the end it was Cuba’s boldness and the ANC’s domestic pressure that gained independence for Namibia and achieved majority rule in South Africa. Crocker’s biggest accomplishment cannot be seen in foreign policy but in the domestic power-play inside the Reagan administration since he kept the Reaganites at bay and prevented them from causing more damage in southern Africa. Nevertheless, for the better part of Reagan’s presidency, it were the hardliners who dominated the decision-making process and thus gave the actions of the United States, a country that praised itself as the beacon of liberty and defender of democracy, an extremely negative overtone. After all, the United States supported a racist, unjust and brutal regime in Pretoria, a merciless movement in Angola and hesitated far too long to assist FRELIMO in its fight against the murderous henchmen of RENAMO. Washington bet on the wrong horse in all countries, both morally and politically. That the superpower eventually achieved its most important goal – the containment of communism – is more owed to the fact that the southern African movements came to the realization that socialism was not the ultimate salvation to their numerous problems, than to Washington’s diplomatic maneuvering.

The decisions made by the other superpower, were, from a moral point of view, certainly more justifiable than those of the United States. Moscow’s military and financial aid enabled the MPLA, FRELIMO, SWAPO and the ANC to counter South Africa’s aggression. Yet, as did the US, so did the USSR fail in condemning human rights violations committed by its allies. The question whether or not Moscow should provide aid for the various movements was raised by the Kremlin primarily out of financial and strategic considerations and not because of concerns over the intentions of the liberation movements. In the long run, the Kremlin bet on the right horses from a political point of view, since all Moscow-backed movements eventually assumed power. Yet, these movements gradually left the “Soviet camp” throughout the 1980s and began to seek Western integration. At the latest by the mid-1980s, Moscow gradually lost its influence over southern Africa until it became a mere bystander throughout the outgoing decade. Due to the beginning disintegration of the Soviet Union, however, this “loss of Africa” never had a crucial impact on the country.

As for Cuba, the part played by the Caribbean island was certainly unique. Cuba’s and Castro’s primary goal in Angola was to defend the country from South African aggression and to assist the ANC and SWAPO. There is no other country in recent history whose foreign policy was dominated so largely by idealism as it was in Havana’s approach towards Angola. Did the cost-benefit-calculation prove to be successful for Cuba? In terms of Cuba’s pragmatic interests, certainly not. Havana gained no concrete benefits from its involvement in Angola. If one believes, however, in the duty of countries to help other countries – and this notion of internationalism is a centerpiece of the Cuban revolution – then the benefits
far outweighed the costs. His first visit abroad after being released brought Nelson Mandela to Havana. In July 1991, one month after the last Cuban’s had come home, he stated: “We come here with a sense of the great debt that is owed [to] the people of Cuba…What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations to Africa?”

For South Africa, the balance sheet was two-sided. In regard to the country’s overall capabilities, the shift from minority to majority rule did not bring much of a change. South Africa still was, both in economic and military terms, by far the most powerful nation in southern Africa, if not in the whole of Africa. Furthermore, the strong economic ties with the West survived the transition to majority rule. The difficult task of reconciliation with the FLS was certainly made easier by the fact that the “new South Africa” had been suffering equally under the plight of apartheid as had the Frontline States. After all, this reconciliation succeeded, South Africa reestablish close relations with its neighboring countries and has been an integral part in promoting and supporting development in southern Africa ever since. Domestically, Mandela tried to surmount the enormous trenches apartheid had caused by supporting the notion of a “rainbow nation”, a concept that stresses South Africa’s cultural diversity. To overcome the economic consequences of apartheid, the country embarked on a program to alleviate the standards of living and improve the massive shortage of social services. Despite this program, however, post-apartheid South Africa has experienced a continuing decline in the UN Human Development Index as poverty remains widespread and an AIDS-pandemic has hit the country.

Yet, as far as the apartheid regime itself is concerned, the country failed in every aspect. Despite all the brutal efforts which almost destroyed two countries and inflicted serious damage on two others, the National Party was not able to preserve apartheid. As has been pointed out in chapter two, decades of violent oppression could not prevent the inevitable – the transformation of South Africa into a majority ruled country. That the apartheid leaders escaped severe punishment for the crimes they committed during their reign is largely owed to the approach the new government pursued after 1994. The ANC government, focusing on reconciliation, refrained from a collective punishment of the apartheid leadership. While this approach certainly prevented further hatred, it left many questions of guilt and responsibility unanswered. A major step, however, was made by de Klerk in 1997 when he publically stated that “I apologise in my capacity as leader of the NP to the millions who…over the decades suffered the indignities and humiliation of racial discrimination.”

For Angola and Mozambique, the fifteen years from 1975 to 1990 had truly been disastrous. Angola, which could have become one of the richest countries in Africa due to its enormous mineral wealth was reduced to poverty and hunger. Massive foreign involvement prolonged the civil war for decades and

---

destroyed large parts of the country’s infrastructure. The country hit the worst, however, was Mozambique. Being exposed to Pretoria’s and RENAMO’s disastrous destabilization campaign and affected by one of the most severe draughts in African history, the country lost more than 1,000,000 people to war and hunger until the war was over in 1994.\textsuperscript{694} Today, both Angola and Mozambique are among the poorest countries in the world.\textsuperscript{695}

Of all the southern African countries that were affected by Pretoria’s coercion and Cold War intervention, Namibia recuperated the best. The transition from minority rule to majority rule was accomplished peacefully and, contrary to Angola and Mozambique, the internationally brokered peace endured and the country has become a stable democracy. According to the 2013 Human Development Index, Namibia is the eleventh most developed country in Africa.\textsuperscript{696}

6.3. \textit{Adapt or Die}

South Africans, Mozambicans, Angolans and Namibians had different perceptions of how they need to adapt to the conflict in southern Africa in order to survive fifteen years of struggle over the future of their region. These perceptions were shaped by a perverted vision of an ideal society, ideological idealism, nationalist opportunism and pragmatism. In their efforts to realize these perceptions, the involved countries did not refrain from using almost all means at their disposal, regardless of how brutal, immoral or destructive they were. This in turn caused the region to descend into the most severe conflict in its history. As has been concluded in the previous paragraph, these countries adapted with different amounts of success. Namibia and the “new South Africa” emerged as stable democracies and are, as of today, the most prosperous nations in southern Africa. Angola and Mozambique, despite numerous attempts to adapt their strategies, were caught in the crossfire of the conflict and hit the hardest. Both countries barely survived the war and have been struggling with its ramifications ever since. Finally, apartheid South Africa failed in every aspect and – to use Botha’s parlance – died. The southern African conflict has lastingly changed the political situation in the region and it went into the 1990s looking fundamentally different than it did at the beginning of the conflict in 1975.

\textsuperscript{694} The BBC, Mozambique's Renamo 'Ends 1992 Peace Deal' after Raid.
\textsuperscript{696} Ibid.
This discussion leaves one question which has been raised at the beginning of this thesis unanswered: Was the southern African conflict driven by regional factors or the global Cold War? After an extensive analysis of the underlying dynamic, several factors indicate that the conflict was first and foremost a regional struggle and not a theater of the Cold War.

Crucial to this argumentation is the complex role which South Africa played, since the apartheid-regime was at the center of the struggle as it was the only actor which was involved in the affairs of all other countries in southern Africa. According to TNS, which was the underlying rationale of Pretoria’s policy planning, the country was fighting a communist onslaught. To a certain extent, the Botha regime probably believed it. The regime claimed to do so in order to become an invaluable asset in Washington’s global power-play against Moscow which would protect them against punitive actions on behalf of the international community. Botha and his henchmen succeeded, the United States remained their closest ally throughout the 1980s. Yet, the analysis of Pretoria’s foreign and domestic policy has revealed that atop Pretoria’s agenda was a different objective: the protection of apartheid. It has already been mentioned that South Africa’s way of conduct in Angola was in stark contradiction to Washington’s Cold War strategy (see chapter 4.5).

The most important objective for Pretoria was to fight SWAPO, the biggest threat to its Namibian “colony”, and to overthrow the MPLA government in Luanda. True, both SWAPO and the MPLA declared themselves Marxist-Leninist movements, yet this was largely an opportunistic lip-service. Especially the MPLA continuously longed for Western integration, was for long periods at odds with Moscow and had close economic ties with the US. As for SWAPO, the CIA concluded already in the early 1980s that Nujoma was more an opportunistic nationalist than a committed Marxist-Leninist. Yet, the Reagan-administration’s bipolar view on world politics refused to acknowledge the existence of this type of nationalism, which was not only represented by SWAPO and the MPLA but also by the ANC, FRELIMO and ZANU-PF, and condemned them all as communists. Pretoria was more than happy to pick up this conclusion as it served its cause. Botha did not want the MPLA gone because of its alleged socialist ideology. He wanted the movement gone because it brought majority rule into South Africa’s backyard, because Luanda offered a safe haven for SWAPO and the ANC and because an MPLA-ruled Angola was a major obstacle to solidifying apartheid’s hegemonic influence in the form of CONSAS. As for SWAPO, Pretoria could not tolerate a Nujoma-led government in Windhoek as this would bring majority rule right to South Africa’s front door, opening the floodgates for the ANC into South Africa.

The same argumentation can also be applied to Mozambique. If Pretoria truly acted as one of Washington’s Cold Warriors, why then did it get so heavily involved in the Mozambican civil war, a conflict which only played a minor part for Washington and Moscow? Made particularly evident in the Nkomati treaty, again Pretoria’s top concern was not communism but majority rule. What South Africa celebrated as the biggest achievement of the treaty was the eviction of the ANC from Mozambique while it accepted the fact, at least for a short time, that an allegedly communist government remained in power in Luanda. The “doves” within the SSC even preferred an end of South African involvement in its north-eastern
neighbor since, in their view, the Nkomati Treaty accomplished all of Pretoria’s goals in Mozambique. The hardliners within the SSC, however, begged to differ. Pretoria continued to destabilize Mozambique, regardless of the fact that a rapprochement between Maputo and Washington began in the wake of Nkomati. It continued to support RENAMO, a movement that was so brutal that an entitlement to assistance in the context of the Reagan Doctrine was even incompatible with the low moral standards of the Reagan administration. Again, Pretoria’s course towards Mozambique was in some regard contradicting with that of Washington, yet it continued its pursuit for the same reasons as in Angola. Like the MPLA, the FRELIMO government was a hindrance to achieve CONSAS, the apartheid-regime’s attempt to restore the cordon sanitaire which should protect apartheid. Above all, Mozambique was afflicted the most by the conflict, both in terms of war damages and the loss of human life, even though, or maybe precisely because of the fact that it had almost no superpower involvement.

Another factor that supports the assertion that the conflict’s underlying dynamic was propelled by regional factors was the role of Cuba. Although the Caribbean nation was located more than 10,000 kilometers away, its involvement was most crucial to resolve the conflict. By the late 1980s, Havana had surpassed both superpowers in being the most important non-African actor in the conflict. If Cuba had not taken matters into its own hands and exercised enormous pressure on Pretoria, something the United States refused to do until the very end, there would not have been much reason for Botha to back down in Angola and eventually in Namibia. As the analysis of chapter four has shown, Castro’s motives to fight apartheid were in no way related to the Cold War but derived from his idealistic notion that countries have the duty to help other countries. In consequence, the factor which, next to the domestic pressure within South Africa, was most decisive in stopping the dynamic that propelled the southern African conflict was not connected to the Cold War but to the regional struggle against apartheid.

Against the backdrop of this analysis it can therefore be concluded that the southern African conflict was primarily caused by a regional factor – South Africa’s efforts to secure the apartheid-regime.

Yet, it would be wrong to assert that the Cold War had no impact on the conflict at all. Given the tremendous influence the global struggle between East and West had on world politics, it cannot be left out of any political equation of the second half of the 20th century.

First, due to the involvement of the superpowers, the warring factions were granted access to an enormous pool of economic and military resources which in turn led to an intensification of the conflict. It is highly unlikely that UNITA would have been able to fight the MPLA on such a massive scale if it had not been for the military equipment provided by Washington. The same goes for the ANC, SWAPO, the MPLA and, to a certain extent, also for FRELIMO. Only because of Moscow’s massive support were these movements able to effectively counter Pretoria’s devastating policy which aimed at destabilizing an entire region. Even Cuba would not have been able to amass the large force in Angola if it had not been for the continuous resupply from the Soviet Union.
Furthermore, the bipolarity of the international system during the Cold War made it far easier for these liberation movements to gain a superpower ally. Sometimes, these alliances between liberation movement and superpower came almost by default – in the style of “my enemy’s enemy is my friend.” In other situations they were inspired by strategic considerations or by economic needs. Most of the time, however, the main factor why these alliances came into existence was because of some sense of an alleged ideological cohesion. The liberation movements did a remarkably well job in convincing both superpowers that they were fighting for their respective cause, which was the containment of either capitalism or communism. In fact, the movements chose to be Marxist-Leninist or pro-Western only because of opportunistic reasons while in the core they were motivated by nationalism and anti-colonialism. The task of deceiving the superpowers was made easier by the fact that both the United States and the Soviet Union, except for the presidency of Jimmy Carter and the final years of Gorbachev’s reign, failed to analyze the southern African conflict outside of the dualistic worldview that was determined by the Cold War. In consequence, they did not realize that the struggle in southern Africa was first and foremost a struggle of black majority rule versus white minority rule and not, as South Africa relentlessly claimed, a struggle of capitalism versus communism. Instead of trying to find a solution to the conflict in a joint effort, the two superpowers continued their tug of war over the region and thus decisively prolonged the conflict by escalating the armed struggle and jeopardizing diplomatic settlements.

Ultimately, the Southern African conflict and the Cold War were strongly interconnected. Yet, the Cold War was not the main factor that propelled the conflict, but it provided the framework in which the conflict could function the way it did. The adversity between Washington and Moscow facilitated Pretoria’s aggressive course as it had not to fear punitive actions from the Western community and it prolonged the armed conflicts due to the massive financial and material support on behalf of the superpowers. Above all, it integrated a conflict over regional issues into a complex global power-play which made the task of resolving the conflict significantly more difficult. To conclude this thesis, it can therefore be said that the fifteen-years-lasting conflict in southern Africa was first and foremost propelled by regional factors while the Cold War had a catalyzing effect.

Finally, if there is one lesson which can be learnt out of the events in southern Africa, it is the process of how the conflict eventually was settled. Castro was right when he said that countries have the duty to help other countries. There have been many conflicts which required interventions on behalf of the international community to prevent further bloodshed and destruction and, if history is any indication, these conflicts will certainly exist in the future. It is crucial, however, that the nations which intervene in regional or domestic conflicts, refrain from pursuing own strategic interests and only aim at restoring peace and stability in the country in question. Of course, this is an idealistic argument and it is diametrically opposed to Realpolitik, one of the basic principles of how policy is made today. Yet, the southern
African conflict is a prime example of what happens, when the intervening countries are motivated by own strategic interests. The United States and the Soviet Union intervened in southern Africa, equipped with a heavily ideologized agenda. Instead of solving the conflict, this agenda only brought escalation and made the entire matter significantly more complex. Havana, on the other side, approached the conflict without a hidden agenda, motivated only by the internationalism which was at the core of the Cuban revolution. For Castro, South Africa was the main aggressor and the biggest obstacle to achieve peace in the region. Pretoria’s presence in Angola and Namibia was illegal by international law and the two countries must be helped in restoring their own independence. And this is exactly what his country did. The Cubans helped Luanda to fight foreign aggression and made Namibian independence an issue of top priority, no more and no less. In stark contrast to Moscow and Washington, Havana was highly successful with this approach. It achieved its objectives in accordance with international law, always consulted with Angola over what steps should be made and left the country once its mission was accomplished.

The United States and the Soviet Union, on the other side, exemplify that an obstinate approach or even unilateral (military) actions do not work in anyone’s favor, they only complicate and escalate a conflict. Right now, when the international community is trying to forge a multinational alliance to counter what is about to become the most dangerous threat to world peace that has ever emerged from the Middle East, this lesson is certainly worth to be taken into consideration.

7.1. Theoretische Aspekte

7.1.1. **HANDLUNGSORIENTIERTER UNTERRICHT**


Auf die Praxis angewendet bedeutet handlungsorientierter Unterricht im Grunde nichts anderes, als „Probeprobiert“ für das spätere Leben. Anders ausgedrückt soll den Schülerinnen und Schülern durch handlungsorientierten Unterricht die Möglichkeit gegeben werden, Situationen, mit welchen sie im späteren Alltagsleben konfrontiert werden, bereits im schulischen Kontext zu erfahren. Als Beispiel sei hier etwa das Wählen eines Klassensprechers zu nennen, wodurch die Schülerinnen und Schüler mit einer Form der Mitsprache oder Partizipation vertraut gemacht werden. Das Errichten eines „Schulshops“ um betriebswirtschaftliches Denken zu üben wäre ebenso ein Beispiel für handlungsorientierten Unterricht.\(^{700}\) Im Vordergrund steht dabei die direkte Auseinandersetzung mit dem zu untersuchenden oder zu behandelnden Inhalt oder Objekt. Im Gegensatz zu den meisten anderen schulischen Fächern steht der Geschichtsunterricht jedoch vor dem Problem, dass im Wesentlichen keine Primärerfahrung mit dem zu untersuchenden Objekt möglich ist, denn Primärerfahrungen lassen sich naturbedingt nur sehr schwer auf Vergangenes machen.\(^{701}\)


\(^{698}\) Bärbel Völkel, Handlungsorientierung im Geschichtsunterricht, Schwalbach 2012\(^2\), p. 12.


Zunächst kann handlungsorientierter Unterricht als „Hilfsmittel zur Identifikation“ verstanden werden. Für viele Schülerinnen und Schüler erschließt sich oftmals nicht unmittelbar die Relevanz von bestimmten Themengebieten, welche im Unterricht behandelt werden. Dies liegt zu einem großen Teil daran, dass die Thematik für sie zu abstrakt erscheint und sie sich damit nicht identifizieren können. Folglich können die Lernenden dadurch keinen für sie persönlichen Nutzen ableiten, das Thema wird für sie „irrelevant und langweilig“. Das fehlende Erschließen von persönlicher Relevanz liegt allerdings zumeist nicht an der Thematik selbst, sondern eher an einem zu abstrakt-akademischen Zugang, mit welchem den Schülerinnen und Schülern versucht wird, das Thema zu vermitteln.


So können die Schülerinnen und Schüler beispielsweise an Stelle von allgemeinen Darstellungen mit konkreten Einzelschicksalen konfrontiert werden. Wie wirkte sich zum Beispiel das mittelalterliche Lebenswesen auf eine zur damaligen Zeit gewöhnliche Familie aus? Mit welchen Problemen waren sie konfrontiert, welche Freiheiten, die für uns heute als selbstverständlich gelten, wurden ihnen verwehrt? Den Schülerinnen und Schülern wird so die Möglichkeit gegeben, sich in eine konkrete Person hineinzuversetzen. Bestimmte Aufgabenstellungen ermöglichen es ihnen, deren Handlungen oder Entscheidungen nachzuvollziehen und sie können beispielsweise ihre eigene Situation in Relation zu der eines

gleichaltrigen Jugendlichen im Mittelalter setzen. Folglich wird die abstrakt-akademische Ebene durch eine persönlich-identifizierende Ebene erweitert. Dadurch können sie die damalige Situation aus einer „persönlichen“ Perspektive betrachten, wodurch es ihnen einfacher gemacht wird, die historischen Gegebenheiten zu verstehen und zu interpretieren.

Ein weiteres „Hilfsmittel zur Identifikation“ ist die Herstellung eines Gegenwartsbezugs. In unserer Gesellschaft herrscht die Vorstellung, dass wir aus der Vergangenheit lernen können und sollen. Dies wird gemeinhin als „historisches Lernen“ bezeichnet und dient dazu, Geschichte zur Orientierung in der Gegenwart zu verwenden. „Hinter dieser Vorstellung verbirgt sich die Hoffnung, dass dort, wo die eigene Lebensspanne ein erfahrungsgesättigtes Handeln in der Gegenwart noch nicht erlaubt, dieses durch einen Rückgriff auf die Erfahrungen von Menschen vergangener Zeiten möglich wird.“


sie sich dabei natürlich auch irren können, muss stets mitbedacht werden. Den Schülerinnen und Schülern wird so verdeutlicht, dass Quellen stets kritisch zu hinterfragen sind und dass immer die Möglichkeit einer falschen Interpretation besteht.


Diese „Subjektivität von Geschichte“ erfahren sie auch durch das Interviewen von Zeitzeugen. Sie werden feststellen, dass Personen einem bestimmten Ereignis unterschiedliche Bedeutung zuessen oder dass ein Ereignis aus Erzählungen ganz anders dargestellt wird, als dies im Archiv der Fall ist. Für die Entwicklung eines „historischen Handwerks“ wäre es sogar der Idealfall, wenn es zwischen Archivquellen und Zeitzeugeninterviews zu einem Widerspruch käme. In diesem Fall müssen die Schülerinnen und Schüler die Quellen kritisch gegeneinander abwägen und sie entwickeln ein Bewusstsein für Geschichtskultur und werden mit dem unerwünschten Phänomen des Geschichtspositivismus vertraut gemacht.705

„Handeln wie ein/e Historiker/in“ gibt den Schülerinnen und Schülern nicht nur die Möglichkeit, Geschichte selbständig zu erforschen. Sie verstehen gleichzeitig auch, wie Geschichte entsteht und dass

705 Ibid., here pp. 44-46.
sie nichts Absolutes ist und stets kritisch hinterfragt werden muss. Außerdem werden ein kritisches Bewusstsein gefördert und wesentliche Kompetenzen wie jene der „Quellenkritik“ vermittelt.


Eine weitere Möglichkeit ist das Erstellen eines „historischen Rundgangs“ durch ihre Stadt oder Gemeinde. Dazu müssen sich die Lernenden zunächst überlegen, was könnte andere Personen überhaupt erst interessieren, was ist für welche Zielgruppe relevant? So stellen sie den sehr wichtigen Bezug des Vergangenen zur Gegenwart her. Warum wurde gerade dieser Person eine Statue gewidmet? Warum trägt dieser Platz diesen Namen? Bedeutet der Name dieser Straße für alle Menschen dasselbe oder sind unterschiedliche Assoziationen damit verbunden? Sie lernen, verschiedene Dinge anhand ihrer „historischen Wichtigkeit“ zu sortieren und zu kategorisieren und setzen sich nebenbei noch intensiv mit der Vergangenheit ihrer eigenen, persönlichen Umgebung auseinander. Durch Diskussionen mit ihren Mitschülerinnen und Mitschülern lernen sie andere Sichtweisen kennen und erfahren, dass einem Objekt nicht von jedem die gleiche Bedeutung beigemessen wird. Wenn es schließlich zur Konzeption der Stadtführung kommt, müssen sie ihre eigenen Standpunkte präsentieren und gegebenenfalls verteidigen können. 706


706 Ibid., here pp. 46-47.
707 Sauer, Geschichte Unterrichten, p. 89.
rinnen und Mitschüler mit anderen Sichtweisen konfrontiert. Als Beispiel können hier die internationa-
len Verhandlungen zu den Friedensverträgen nach dem ersten Weltkrieg genannt werden. Die komple-
 xen Positionen und Forderungen der einzelnen Länder können sicherlich besser verstanden werden,
 wenn aus der Sicht des Vertreters eines der betreffenden Länder argumentiert wird.\footnote{Ibid., p. 90.}

Um die Diskussion auf den vorangehenden Seiten abzuschließen kann also gesagt werden, dass
Handlungsorientierung den Anspruch erhebt, ganzheitliches Lernen zu ermöglichen. Im Kontext des
Geschichtsunterrichts ist der Begriff „ganzheitliches Lernen“ so zu verstehen, dass die im Lern- und
Arbeitsprozess gewonnenen historischen Erkenntnisse dahingehend umgewandelt werden, dass sie für
die Lernenden bedeutsam werden. Dies geht jedoch weit über den bloßen Gegenwartsbezug hinaus.
Durch die zuvor erwähnten vielfältigen Zugänge setzen sich die Lernenden nicht nur auf einer faktisch-
historischen Ebene mit der Vergangenheit auseinander, sondern auch auf einer emotionalen und persön-
lichen Ebene. Handlungsorientierung kann demnach als eine „Übersetzungsleistung“ gesehen werden,
welche die Vorstellungskraft der Lernenden aktiviert. Dies bewirkt, dass die historischen Inhalte an
vorhandene, persönliche Erfahrungsmuster angebunden, mit diesen kontrastiert und verglichen werden
können und dadurch Sinn erhalten. Ein historischer Sachverhalt wird in eine fachdidaktische Vermitt-
 lungsstruktur gebracht, durch die „tote Menschen“ und vergangene Ereignisse in ihren Handlungen,
Motiven und Absichten wieder lebendig und „hautnah“ werden können.\footnote{Bärbel Völkel, Handlungsorientierung, pp. 49–64, here pp. 52-56.}

Dennoch bleibt zu beachten, dass auch der handlungsorientierte Unterricht einen reflektierten Um-
gang voraussetzt, damit der Unterricht nicht in bloßen Aktionismus und fragwürdige Handlungsmuster
verfällt. Die Ziele einer Unterrichtsstunde müssen stets den möglichen Aktionen übergeordnet und Ak-
tionen an die Ziele angepasst werden, und nicht umgekehrt. Weiters sollte jede geplante Aktion auf ihre
Sinnhaftigkeit zur Erreichung des gesteckten Ziels hinterfragt werden. Gelingt es jedoch, die hier be-
handelten Punkte einzuhalten, bietet der handlungsorientierte Geschichtsunterricht eine sinnvolle Er-
gänzung zu dem oftmals sehr wort- und faktenlastigen Geschichtsunterricht.
7.2.  Praktische Anwendung

Die im vorangegangenen Kapitel beschriebene Theorie soll im nun folgenden Kapitel an einem praktischen Unterrichtsbeispiel, welches inhaltlich an die Thematik dieser Diplomarbeit anlehnt, angewendet und verdeutlicht werden.


Bevor nun die Unterrichtseinheit konkret beschrieben wird, sollen hier zunächst noch einige grundlegende Überlegungen zu dieser Thematik angeführt werden.

7.2.1.  RELEVANZ UND LEHRPLANEINBEZUG

Wie im einleitenden Absatz dieses Kapitels bereits erwähnt, sind die Geschichte von Afrika im Allgemeinen sowie die des südlichen Afrika im Speziellen, im Geschichtsunterricht stark unterrepräsentiert. Dies bedeutet jedoch in keiner Weise, dass dieser Teil der Historiographie für eine fundierte Allgemeinbildung beziehungsweise für die Erziehung der Schülerinnen und Schüler zu kritisch denkenden Bürgern von keiner Relevanz ist.

Dies wird zunächst vor allem durch den Prozess der Globalisierung verdeutlicht, welcher im Begriff der Globalisierung in der Vergangenheit und für die Zukunft bestimmt. Dadurch gelangen zahlreiche afrikanische Staaten, welche bisher eher an der Peripherie unserer Wahrnehmung angesiedelt waren, zunehmend in den Mittelpunkt von geopolitischen, vor allem aber wirtschaftlichen Interessen des bereits globalisierten, und somit auch unseren Teiles der Welt.

Für weite Regionen Afrikas eröffnet sich durch die Globalisierung die Möglichkeit, in den Bereichen der politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Entwicklung den Rückstand zu den sogenannten Industriestaaten der „Ersten Welt“ aufzuholen. Die vergangenen Jahrzehnte haben uns jedoch gezeigt, dass die Globalisierung nicht nur durch positive Eigenschaften gekennzeichnet ist. Vor allem aufgrund der Tatsache, dass es sich bei der Globalisierung um einen sehr rasanten, gleichzeitig aber immens komplexen Prozess handelt, kann es dadurch rasch zu Fehlentscheidungen oder Fehlentwicklungen kommen, welche den Entwicklungsprozess der verschiedenen Staaten nicht nur behindern, sondern im Extremfall auch ins Negative drehen können. Umso wichtiger ist es, aus solchen Fehlentwicklungen die richtigen Schlüsse zu ziehen, um eine „Wiederholung der Geschichte“ in Afrika verhindern zu können.


Zusammenfassend lässt sich also sagen, dass die jüngste Entwicklung des südlichen Afrika nicht nur als Erklärungsmuster für die momentane Situation in der Region dient, sondern sich außerdem durch eine große Relevanz für unsere Schülerinnen und Schüler auszeichnet sowie sie mit jenen Faktoren vertraut macht, welche für das Funktionieren oder eben Scheitern eines Staates verantwortlich sein könnten.

Die Legitimität der Behandlung dieses Themas im Unterricht ist außerdem durch den Lehrplan für die AHS-Oberstufe, herausgegeben vom österreichischen Bildungsministerium, gegeben. So heißt es im Lehrplan für Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Politische Bildung beispielsweise, dass Schülerinnen und Schüler dazu befähigt sein sollen, „Sachverhalte und Probleme in ihrer Vielschichtigkeit, ihren Ursachen und Folgen zu erfassen und ein an den Menschenrechten orientiertes Politik- und Demokratieverständnis zu erarbeiten“ und sich „mit politischen Fragestellungen der Gegenwart [auseinandersetzen zu
können], die zur Entscheidung anstehen, auf die Einfluss genommen werden kann und die Konsequenzen für die Zukunft haben. Außerdem soll „Interesse an Politik und politischer Beteiligung geweckt und die Identifikation mit grundlegenden Werten der Demokratie, der Menschenrechte und des Rechtsstaates sichergestellt werden. Diese grundlegenden Lehraufgaben, wie sie im Lehrplan formuliert sind, können mit dem in dieser Diplomarbeit behandelten Thema somit ohne Zweifel erfüllt werden.


7.2.2. KONTEXTUALISIERUNG UND ZIELSETZUNG DES UNTERRICHTSBEISPIELES


711 Ibid.
712 Ibid., p. 3.
713 Ibid., p. 4.
wurde. Dabei wurde ein besonderer Fokus darauf gelegt, wie diese Staaten mit ihrem kolonialen Erbe umgegangen sind und welche Faktoren sowohl positiv als auch negativ zu deren Entwicklung zu stabilen, demokratischen Staaten beigetragen haben beziehungsweise eine solche Entwicklung gar ganz verhindert haben. Zu diesen Faktoren zählen politische Ereignisse sowohl auf regionaler (also südafrikanischer) als auch auf globaler Ebene (hier vor allem der Kalte Krieg), wirtschaftliche Gegebenheiten und soziale Konstellationen. Das vorrangigste Ziel dieses Themenschwerpunktes ist es, den Schülerinnen und Schülern ein Verständnis dafür zu geben, wieso bestimmte Staaten mit ihrem postkolonialen Erbe überfordert sind und letztendlich als gescheiterte Staaten dastehen, wogegen andere Staaten verhältnismäßig gut aus den Wirren des Postkolonialismus hervorgekommen sind und heute als stabile demokratische Nationen bezeichnet werden können.


7.2.3. SPIELBÜCHLERS MODELL DES „AFRIKANISCHEN TEUFFELSKREISLAUF“

Entwicklungsstadien befinden und individuelle kulturelle, politische und sozioökonomische Rahmenbedingungen aufweisen, präsentiert sich der „schwarze Kontinent“ auf eine sehr heterogene Art und Weise. Vor diesem Hintergrund entwickelte der Historiker Thomas Spielbüchler das Modell des „afrikanischen Teufelskreislaufs“, durch welches versucht wird, die zuvor genannten Fragen zu beantworten und gleichzeitig dem Paradoxon aus Vereinheitlichung und Individualismus zu entgehen. Diese Kreislaufdarstellung unterliegt natürlich genauso den Schwächen, denen jedes Modell unterliegt; es basiert auf Idealvorstellung und ist eine Generalisierung. Dennoch betont Spielbüchler, dass das Modell Raum lässt, auf individuelle Entwicklungen einzugehen. Somit stellt das Modell des afrikanischen Teufelskreislaufs ein sehr hilfreiches Werkzeug dar, die oftmals chaotisch anmaßende Geschichte des afrikanischen Postkolonialismus genauer und besser verstehen zu können.\(^715\)

Am Anfangspunkt des Modells steht der postkoloniale Rumpfstaat (A), welcher (aus verschiedenen Gründen) von den europäischen Mächten in die Unabhängigkeit entlassen wurde. Zu Beginn der eigenen Unabhängigkeit standen die neuen (demokratischen) Regierungen vor der gewaltigen Aufgabe, den von den Kolonialmächten hinterlassenen Scherbenhaufen wieder zu einem funktionierenden, stabilen Staat (B) aufzubauen. Ein funktionierender Staat wird gemeinhin als ein Konstrukt definiert, welches über ein Staatsvolk, ein Staatsgebiet und eine Staatsgewalt verfügt. Zwar hatten die postkolonialen Rumpfstaaten nach der Unabhängigkeit ein Staatsgebiet, von einem einheitlichen Staatsvolk konnte in den meisten

---


\(^{716}\) Ibid., p. 6.


717 Ibid., here pp. 6-10.


Bei jeder politischen Strukturveränderung, sei sie nun demokratisch gerechtfertigt oder gewaltsam herbeigeführt, werden die Karten neu gemischt und der Kreislauf beginnt auf ein Neues. Dies trifft im Übrigen nicht nur auf gescheiterte Staaten zu. Auch bereits halbwegs stabile Nationen können durch einen solchen Machtwechsel in einen negativen Zyklus geraten (H), wenn die neuen Machthaber in das Schema der „bad governance“ geraten oder durch externe Faktoren hineingetrieben werden.

Die Hoffnung der afrikanischen Staaten aus diesem negativen Kreislauf ausbrechen zu können, wurde Mitte der 1990er Jahre wiedererweckt, als der Begriff der „afrikanischen Erneuerung“ aufkam.

---

718 Ibid., here p. 13.

Ob diese afrikanische Erneuerung tatsächlich das Potenzial aufweist, die sich im negativen Zyklus befindlichen Staaten auf einen positiven Entwicklungskurs zu bringen, wird sich allerdings erst in den nächsten Jahren oder Jahrzehnten sagen lassen.

### 7.2.4. EXEMPLARISCHES UNTERRICHTSBEISPIEL

Wie bereits erwähnt, bildet das Modell des „afrikanischen Teufelskreislaufs“ die Grundlage für die Abschlussseinheit des Themenschwerpunktes, das zugrundeliegende Unterrichtskonzept ist der eingangs erläuterte handlungsorientierte Unterricht.


Je nach Leistungsstand der Klasse, kann das Modell entweder in seiner Gesamtheit herangezogen werden oder aber in einigen Aspekten vereinfacht werden. Eine Möglichkeit zur Vereinfachung wäre

---

719 Quoted in: ibid., here p. 16.


Durch die Inkorporation dieses Teufelskreislaufmodels in eine handlungsorientierte Unterrichtsstunde gelingt es, viele der zuvor erwähnten Aspekte der Handlungsorientierung in dieser vierstündigen Einheit anzuwenden.

An erster Stelle sei hier der Gegenwartsbezug zu nennen. Die Schülerinnen und Schüler gelangen im Laufe dieser Unterrichtseinheit zur Erkenntnis, wie es zur gegenwärtigen Situation im südlichen Afrika gekommen ist. Weiters müssen sie sich gezielt in die Situationen der Handlungsträger der einzelnen Staaten hineinversetzen, um zu verstehen, wieso sich die Ereignisse in eine bestimmte Richtung entwickelt haben. Somit wird die Relevanz des Themas für die Lernenden deutlich gemacht und sie können sich persönlich mit der Thematik identifizieren.


INDEX OF PERSONS

Banda, Hastings (1898 - 1997): Leader of Malawi from 1961-1994. He led his country into independence from the United Kingdom in 1963 and became its first President in 1966. He consolidated power by declaring Malawi a one-party state under the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). In 1971, he became President for Life of Malawi. In 1993 a referendum, following widespread protests ended his life-term presidency. He was defeated in a democratic election one year later.

Botha, Pieter Willem (1916-2006): Prime Minister of South Africa from 1978-1984 and first State President from 1984-1989. Nicknamed “Die Groot Krokodil”, his aggressive policy contributed largely to the severe outbreak of violence both in South Africa and in the entire region during the 1980s. Widespread human rights abuse led to an increasing isolation of his administration and transformed South Africa into a de-facto military regime. In 1989 he was succeeded by F. W. de Klerk. Until his death, he remained an ardent opponent of black majority rule.

Botha, Roelof Frederik "Pik" (*1932): Foreign Minister under P. W. Botha's administration. Although defending apartheid for almost his entire career, he was considered to be a liberal, at least compared to others in South Africa’s ruling elite. He served as Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs in Nelson Mandela's government from 1994-1996. He is not related to Pieter Willem Botha.

Castro, Fidel (*1926): Revolutionary leader and former President of Cuba. After the Cuban Revolution he transformed the country into a one-party socialist state and formed a close alliance with the Soviet Union. As a leftist anti-imperialist he was lauded by his supporters as a “Champion of Imperialism” and was not only one of the biggest opponents of the United States throughout the Cold War, but also a prominent supporter of numerous independent/guerilla movements around the world. In 2008 he stepped down from the President’s office in favor of his brother Raúl Castro.

Chissano, Joaquim (*1939): Second president of Mozambique from 1986-2005. Following the end of the civil war in the mid-1990s, Chissano put a lot of effort to rebuild and reconcile the country. He chose not to run for a third term in 2005 and resigned from the office in the same year.

Crocker, Chester (*1941): American diplomat and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the United States State Department from 1981 to 1989. He was the chief architect of “Constructive Engagement” and led the US delegation during the negotiations over the independence of Namibia.

de Arriaga, Kaúlza (1915-2004): Portuguese general and commander of the Portuguese forces in the Mozambican War of Independence. As Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State, he was a major political figure in the “Estado Novo”.

de Klerk, Frederik Willem (*1932): Served as South Africa's last State President under the apartheid era from 1989-1994. Together with Nelson Mandela, he brokered the end of apartheid and transformed South Africa into a multi-racial democracy. With Mandela, he got awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 and served as his deputy president until 1996. Until the ascension of Guy Scott as President of Zambia, de Klerk was the last white African to be president of a continental African country.

Dhlakama, Afonso (*1953): Leader of RENAMO since 1979. Despite his role as leader of RENAMO, he never faced charges for the crimes against humanity his forces committed. While RENAMO was
transformed into a political party once the civil war had ended, Dhlakama repeatedly threatened to reestablish the guerilla force and “let the country burn”.

**dos Santos, José Eduardo (*1942):** President of Angola since the death of Agostinho Neto in 1979. He managed to remain in power by adapting the constitution several times and has been accused electoral fraud numerous times.

**Gorbachev, Mikhail (*1932):** Last leader of the Soviet Union from 1985 until its dissolution in 1991. His policy of Perestroika and Glasnost were key elements in enabling the rapprochement with the United States in the outgoing 1980s and thus a peaceful transition into a post-Cold War world order. For his crucial role in ending the East-West conflict he was awarded the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize.

**Machel, Samora (1933 - 1986):** As leader of FRELIMO he was the first President of Mozambique and held office from the country’s independence in 1975 until his death in 1986, when his presidential aircraft crashed in the mountainous border region of Mozambique and South Africa.

**Macmillan, Harold (1894-1986):** Member of the Tory Party and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1957-1963. His tenure was marked by decolonization of sub-Saharan Africa. His “Wind of Change” speech in Cape Town is considered a landmark in the process of decolonization.

**Malan, Magnus (1930-2011):** General and Chief of the South African Defense Force (1976-1980) and Minister of Defense from 1980-1991. Probably the most influential member of the SSC, he played a predominant role in South Africa’s decision making process throughout the 1980s. An extreme hardliner, he was usually propagating military actions in the southern African region.

**Mandela, Nelson (1918-2013):** First black president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. Probably the most important member of the anti-apartheid movement, he played a crucial role in ending apartheid in the early 1990s for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. Held in deep respect within South Africa, he is often described as the "Father of the Nation".

**Mobutu, Joseph (Sese Seko) (1930-1997):** He overthrew Zairean President Patrice Lumumba during the 1960 Congo Crisis and was President from 1965-1997. As an anti-communist, he enjoyed significant support from the United States. During his reign, he established a highly centralized state, amassed a large personal fortune through economic exploitation and corruption. The country suffered from uncontrolled inflation, large debt and massive currency devaluation. In 1997 he was expelled by rebel forces and died three months later in Marocco.

**Mondlane, Eduardo (1920-1969):** Founder of FRELIMO who got killed in a bomb attack in Tanzania. Until today it is not entirely clear whether PIDE or FRELIMO is responsible for the attack.

**Neto, Agostinho (1922-1979):** First President of Angola and leader of the MPLA. He lead the MPLA throughout the war of independence and the civil war until his death.

**Nujoma, Sam (*1929):** Elected President of SWAPO and also the first president of Namibia. In his position as SWAPO leader, he played a crucial role during Namibia’s struggle for independence and also in the early years of post-independence. After being reelected twice in 1994 and 1999, he stepped down from the presidential office in 2005. Awarded with numerous awards for his outstanding peaceful leadership, the Namibian people refer to him as the “Father of the Namibian Nation.”

**Reagan, Ronald (1911-2004):** Served as 40th President of the United States from 1981-1989. Publically labelling the Soviet Union an "Evil Empire", he transitioned Cold War politics from détente to rollback by escalating the arms race with the USSR while at the same time engaging in talks with Gorbachev. Under his tenure, the United States supported numerous guerilla movements around the world under the pretext of the infamous “Reagan Doctrine”. 

---

Page | 232
Appendix I | Index of Persons
Roberto, Holden (1923-2007): Founder and leader of the FNLA. As a staunch anti-communist and opponent of Agostinho Neto he received support from the United States and Zaire. In 1991 he was allowed to return to Angola when he ran unsuccessfully for President against José Eduardo dos Santos.

Salazar, António de Oliveira (1889 - 1970): Prime Minister of Portugal from 1932 to 1968. As the founder of the "Estado Novo" he ruled Portugal as a virtual dictator.

Savimbi, Jonas (1934-2002): Founder and leader of UNITA. He first waged a guerilla war against the Portuguese, then confronted the MPLA in the Angolan civil war. Opposed to the MPLA, he and UNITA received considerable amount of support from the United States and South Africa. He was killed in 2002 in a battle with Angolan government troops.

Tambo, Oliver (1917-1993): South African anti-apartheid politician and central figure in the ANC. As General Secretary from 1967-1991 he led the ANC through its period of exile. He was a major proponent of the ANC’s armed struggle and authorized many of these attacks himself. He died in 1993 due to complications from a stroke.

Verwoerd, Henrik (1901-1966): Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958 until 1966 and mastermind behind the implementation of apartheid. It was during his tenure that the ANC and PAC were banned and that South Africa left the Commonwealth and became a republic. He was assassinated in 1966.

Vorster, John (1915-1983): Prime Minister of South Africa from 1966-1978. As a staunch adherent of apartheid, he completely abolished non-white political representation, yet he had a more pragmatic stand towards South Africa’s white neighbors than Verwoerd. The Soweto riots led to a deep crisis within his administration which led to his replacement by P. W. Botha in a palace coup.
Bibliography

Monographies

Bärbel Völkel, Handlungsorientierung im Geschichtsunterricht, Schwalbach 2012.


Bernecker, Walther./Herbers, Klaus, Geschichte Portugals (Ländergeschichten), Stuttgart 2010.

Brown, Chris/Ainley, Kirsten, Understanding International Relations, Basingstoke 2009.


Dierks, Klaus, Namibian Roads in History. From the 13th Century till Today, Frankfurt/Main 1992.


Sauer, Michael, Geschichte Unterrichten. Eine Einführung in die Didaktik und Methodik, Seelze-Velber 2001\textsuperscript{1}.

Schimmelfennig, Frank, Internationale Politik, Paderborn [u.a.] 2013\textsuperscript{3}.


Van der Waals, W. S, Portugal's War in Angola, 1961-1974, Pretoria 2011\textsuperscript{2}.

Weimer, Bernhard, Das Ende der Weißen Vorherrschaft im Südlichen Afrika. Die Wirtschaftskrise in Südafrika und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Beziehungen zu den Nachbarstaaten, Baden-Baden 1992\textsuperscript{1}.


**Contributions in Anthologies**


**Articles in Periodicals**


Spence, J. E., South Africa’s ‘New Look’ Foreign Policy, in: The World Today 24 (1968), No. 4, pp. 137–145.


**Newspaper Articles, Primary Sources and Legal Documents**


Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre, dass ich meine Diplomarbeit/Masterarbeit selbständig verfasst und alle in ihr verwendeten Unterlagen, Hilfsmittel und die zugrunde gelegte Literatur genannt habe. Alle Stellen, die wörtlich oder inhaltlich den angegebenen Quellen entnommen wurden, sind als solche deutlich gemacht.

Die vorliegende Arbeit wurde bisher in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch nicht als Magister-/Master-/Diplomarbeit/Dissertation eingereicht.

Ich nehme zur Kenntnis, dass auch bei auszugsweiser Veröffentlichung meiner Diplomarbeit/Masterarbeit der/die Arbeitsbereich/e und das/die Institut/e, an dem/denen die Diplomarbeit/Masterarbeit ausgearbeitet wurde, und die Betreuerin/nen bzw. der/die Betreuer zu nennen sind.

__________________________
Ort, Datum

__________________________
Name