

**London School of Economics and Political Science**

**Grand Aims and Modest Means:  
The Parallel Evolution of US and South African Foreign Policies  
Towards Africa in the 1990s**

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**Thesis submitted to the University of London in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations**

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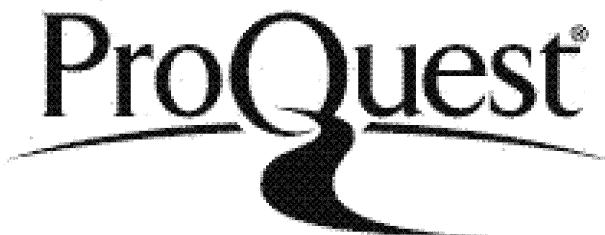


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## ABSTRACT

The United States is a global superpower at the heart of the international system; South Africa is a regional hegemon on a peripheral continent. Yet, despite the US and South Africa's disparate positions in the international order, this thesis illustrates that the foreign policies of each towards Africa in the 1990s evolved in parallel fashion through four comparable periods, ultimately becoming strikingly similar near the end of the decade. A central feature of this parallel evolution, and eventual congruence, was the correlation between 'grand aims' and 'modest means'.

'Grand aims' refers to the overarching tenets and doctrines that prevailed in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa. During the Cold War and apartheid eras (roughly from the 1950s until 1990), only two predominated (i.e., containment and security). In the 1990s, there were no less than ten. As noted above, such dynamism (over a comparably short period of less than a decade) was tied to the presence of 'modest means' -- that is, the limited availability or limited utilisation of resources.

In sum, the study argues that when modest means were *imposed* upon US and South African foreign policy makers, they were often *forced* to devise new grand aims. Yet even when modest means were *willingly* employed, this too resulted in the articulation of new grand aims, as actions and ends were *made* to correspond. In both cases, new foreign policy periods emerged as attention, efforts, and resources were re-prioritised. Modest means, therefore, were a force that not only shaped, but drove, the four-period parallel evolution of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s.

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## ACRONYMS

ACRF	African Crisis Response Force
ACRI	African Crisis Response Initiative
AGOA	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
Aids	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ARMSCOR	Armament Corporation of South Africa (Ltd.)
BEMs	Big Emerging Markets
BLSN	Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia
CAAA	Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act
CONSAS	Constellation of Southern African States
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
EPG	Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group
FNLA	<i>Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola</i>
FRELIMO	<i>Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Mocambique</i>
GEAR	<i>Growth, Employment, and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy</i>
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
IDAAP	International Defence and Aid Fund (Southern Africa Information Service)
IMET	Expanded Military Education and Training Programme
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWG	Inter-Agency Working Group
MPLA	<i>Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola</i>
NSSM	National Security Study Memoranda
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
PEGOA	Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa
R	South African Rand
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
RENAMO	<i>Resistencia Nacional Mocambique</i>
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Co-ordination Conference
SADF	South African Defence Forces
SANDF	South African National Defence Forces
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
TBVC	Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei
TNS	Total National Strategy
UNCHR	United Nations High Commission of Refugees
UNITA	<i>Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola</i>
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	United States Dollar

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# Introduction

A superpower at the heart of the international system, a regional hegemon whose influence and potential dwarfs all others in sub-Saharan Africa, and a peripheral continent susceptible to the foreign policy preferences of two countries so placed — that was the appeal. I knew I wanted to conduct a study that explored the foreign policies (plural) of both the United States and South Africa as they applied to the continent of Africa. However, academic appeal and desire do have to be grounded with a degree of practicality. In proposing a study which covered two countries' foreign policies (albeit towards the same continent), there was the danger of conducting two individual studies with little more than a shared title. There had to be a common focus, and that focus is embodied in three objectives:

- 1) to identify the 'grand aims' (i.e., the overarching tenets and doctrines) of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s;
- 2) to illustrate the dynamism associated with the grand aims, including what led to, and the nature of, the dynamism;
- 3) to evaluate the prominence of US grand aims in South African foreign policy towards Africa, and *vice versa*, determining the extent to which one country's grand aims complimented, complicated, or contradicted those of the other.

But arriving at that common focus was by no means direct.

When I started this project, my first step was to conduct a literature survey. From a cursory effort I came up with hundreds of titles by countless authors covering innumerable dimensions of the subject area I was considering. For example, within one twenty-item range I found authors and titles addressing US and South African bi- and multi-lateral relations, the United States' arming of the Horn of Africa, the South African arming of Mozambique, the 1975 South African invasion of Angola, the 1992 American intervention in Somalia, and

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## Introduction

biographies about individuals who had been instrumental in some, or all, of the above. I had to create some parameters. To these ends, I formed a hypothesis that was as broad as it was simple. It stated: In the 1990s, the United States and South Africa have each exerted influence in African affairs.

In testing this one sweeping generalisation, three observations emerged. First, it appeared that through the Cold War and apartheid eras (roughly from the 1950s until 1990), US and South African foreign policies were dominated, respectively, by two 'grand aims' -- that is, two overarching doctrines. In the US case, it was Soviet 'containment'; for South Africa, 'security', but of a very specific kind: security for the white minority. The second observation was that at the start of the 1990s, US and South African foreign policies were exposed to incredible changes, and subsequently, underwent transformations. Third (and I found this to be most intriguing), it seemed that the foreign policies of each towards Africa had become strikingly similar near the end of the 1990s, if not in content, then in tone. These observations begged the questions: In the interim between the foreign policy sea-changes *circa* 1990 and the latter half of the decade, what 'happened' generally in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa? And how was it that, in spite of the United States' and South Africa's disparate positions in the international order and available resources, their foreign policies towards Africa apparently became similar?

Thusly focussed on a particular dimension of the subject I wanted to explore, I did another literature survey. In contrast to the voluminous number of works I found with my first literature survey, this time I turned up relatively few contemporary works. Quite simply, not many existed. As for the works that did exist, most were either: 1) speculative; 2) event-inspired; or 3) topically eclectic. In the first category, studies such as *The United*

*States and Africa: Into the Twenty-First Century*<sup>1</sup> and *Towards A Post-Apartheid Future: Political and Economic Relations in Southern Africa*<sup>2</sup> come to mind. These were studies that attempted to examine the prospects on everything from future foreign aid contributions and development, to regional security and co-operation. As for works like *African Conflict Resolution: The US Role in Peacemaking*,<sup>3</sup> done in the wake of mass-starvation in Somalia and genocide in Rwanda, and *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa*,<sup>4</sup> which recounted the historic South African elections of April 1994, these fell under the second category. Lastly, in the third category, studies such as *US Foreign Policy: An African Agenda*<sup>5</sup> and *South Africa and Southern Africa: Reconfiguring the Region*<sup>6</sup> stand out. Studies like these had one or two editors, a number of contributing authors, and articles a few thousand words in length that often encompassed topics ranging from the effects of HIV, to regional integration, to the global information economy and Africa's place within it. While I do not mean to imply that contemporary works like the ones

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<sup>1</sup> C. Lancaster, *The United States and Africa: Into the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> G. Maasdorp and A. Whiteside (eds.), *Towards A Post-Apartheid Future: Political and Economic Relations in Southern Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> D. Smock and Chester Crocker, *African Conflict Resolution: The US Role in Peacemaking* (Washington, D.C.: US Institute of Peace, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (London: Viking, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> W. Minter (ed.), *US Foreign Policy: An African Agenda* (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 1994).

<sup>6</sup> D. Simon, *South Africa and Southern Africa: Reconfiguring the Region* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998).

noted above were not serious academic efforts -- indeed, many have influenced this study -- it was clear that research gaps existed in the subject area I was probing.

Returning to what contemporary works existed, I was struck once again by the prevalence of *grand aims*. As was the case in the Cold War and apartheid eras, overarching tenets and doctrines continued to be a feature of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s. However, unlike the Cold War and apartheid eras, where containment and security overshadowed all else for nearly half a century, it appeared US and South African foreign policy makers had articulated a sundry of grand aims, and did so over a comparably short period of less than ten years. So many grand aims in such a short time suggested either ambition or necessity, but certainly confirmed dynamism. It was only then that I arrived at the aforementioned focus of this study.<sup>7</sup>

As has been acknowledged, many studies have covered aspects of what this thesis explores, and were useful in terms of ideas, style, and especially background information. In particular, Peter Schraeder did a study of American foreign policy between the years 1950-1992, focussing on Ethiopia/Somalia, Zaire, and South Africa as case studies, entitled *United*

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<sup>7</sup> To reiterate, the focus of this study is threefold:

- 1) to identify the 'grand aims' (i.e., the overarching tenets and doctrines) of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s;
- 2) to illustrate the dynamism associated with the grand aims, including what led to, and the nature of, the dynamism;
- 3) to evaluate the prominence of US grand aims in South African foreign policy towards Africa, and *vice versa*, determining the extent to which one country's grand aims complimented, complicated, or contradicted those of the other.

*States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis, and Change*.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, Simon Barber and John Barratt did a study of South African foreign policy entitled *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security, 1945-1988*.<sup>9</sup> In two separate works, Thomas Borstelmann and Chris Coker, respectively, provided a thorough account of US-South African bi-lateral relations during the Cold War in *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War*<sup>10</sup> and *United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics*.<sup>11</sup> And then there were those works that helped with more specific topics, like Deon Geldenhuys' *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South Africa's Foreign Policy*<sup>12</sup> (diagramming the 'old' South African foreign policy establishment's structures and ideology), Chester Crocker's *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Dangerous Neighbo(u)rhood*<sup>13</sup> (chronicling the resolution of the 'Angolan/Namibian Question'), Merle Lipton's *The Challenge of Sanctions*<sup>14</sup> (discussing the

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<sup>8</sup> P. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis, and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> S. Barber and J. Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security, 1945-1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> T. Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> C. Coker, *United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986).

<sup>12</sup> D. Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making* (Johannesburg: Macmillan South Africa Publishers (Ltd.), 1984).

<sup>13</sup> C. Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Tough Neighbo(u)rhood* (New York: Norton, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> M. Lipton, *The Challenge of Sanctions* (London: London School of Economics, Centre for the Study of South African Economy and International Finance, 1990).

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effectiveness of sanctions against apartheid South Africa), and *Who's Who of Southern Africa*<sup>15</sup> (providing biographies on some of the most prominent persons in African affairs this century). Yet, for all the above studies' merits, most were pre-1990s in focus. This study fills a hugely under-explored void because it encompasses the years 1990 to mid-1998.

As one might imagine, conducting a study in a subject area where relatively little has been written in the contemporary period is a mixed-blessing. On one hand it is exhilarating because a person can almost wholly make his or her own way; one the other hand, it poses some distinct difficulties in terms of sources. A significant number of facts and figures cited in the pages to come are drawn from the public reporting of events in newspapers like the *Washington Post* or the *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa). However, discussion has also been based on, or been cross-checked by, three additional sets of primary sources: 1) the United States and South African governments' vast public records, including official speeches, statements, and proceedings, such as those published in the voluminous congressional and parliamentary records; 2) the memoirs and autobiographies of relevant officials; and 3) personal interviews. These varied primary sources helped to ensure objectivity and accuracy, and collectively, provided a wealth of information. Indeed, it became a challenge to sift through relevant information, to glean pertinent points, and to present those points, along with findings, in a way that is clear to the reader -- which leads to the issue of findings and structure.

One of the findings of this study is that the grand aims that existed in US and South

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<sup>15</sup> S.V. Hayes (ed.), *Who's Who of Southern Africa; Including Mauritius and Incorporating South African Who's Who and the Central Africa Who's Who* (Johannesburg: Who's Who of Southern Africa (Pty.) Ltd., 1992).

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African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s were manifestations or extensions of what came before. In other words, US and South African grand aims *evolved*. But not only did US and South African grand aims evolve. I contend that US and South African foreign policies evolved through four comparable periods -- an obsolescence period, a flux period, a focus period, and finally, a coalescence period<sup>16</sup> -- ultimately becoming strikingly similar near the end of the decade. Accordingly, the study starts with a pre-1990s overview, but then the four remaining 'sections' correspond, in order, to the periods (see the illustration on the following page). The end result is that the integral variables in the evolution of US and South African policies -- events, conditions, personalities, and processes, and where, when, and how they interacted -- are addressed chronologically, illustrating how, for example, an act in early 1990 might have culminated in a foreign policy pronouncement made in the middle of 1998. And this brings up a second point about findings and format.

As one might expect when exploring the foreign policies of a global superpower and a regional hegemon, US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s possessed their own dynamics. Cases will be shown where policy makers in Pretoria wanted a quick response from their counterparts in Washington on what they deemed an urgent African matter, yet those in Washington did not share the same sense of urgency. As a result,

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<sup>16</sup> Though beyond the objectives of this study, the four periods identified -- obsolescence, flux, focus, and coalescence -- could provide a useful model for other studies. For example, it could be used generally to analyse foreign policies over a period of time, similar to what this study does, for any number of countries (either singly, or in various combinations). Or, the model could be utilised to understand a sequence events in the wake of a specific incident (e.g., US and Mexican policy changes following the peso's collapse in 1995, or Japanese and South Korean responses to North Korea's test-firing of a long-range missile across Japan in 1998).

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events surrounding the matter proceeded in Pretoria even as they became buried under ‘more pressing concerns’ in Washington. To overcome these differences in dynamics, the study’s first four chronological periods have two chapters each: first a chapter covering US foreign policy towards Africa *with an emphasis on the view from Washington*, and then a second chapter covering South Africa’s foreign policy towards Africa *with an emphasis on the view from Pretoria*. This structure enables a narrative to unfold in such a way that underscores a second finding: that though there were issues of mutual concern and bi-lateral relations, US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s evolved distinctly -- to the point that for much of the decade they progressed in parallel fashion with only the occasional divergence or convergence occurring.

### Illustration of Study’s Structure

Period	Chapter Title	Years
<i>Overview:</i> Stasis	Chapter One: ‘An Anti-Communist Crusade’	United States 1957-1990
	Chapter Two: ‘Security, the Gun, and the Maize Train’	South Africa 1959-1990
<i>Period One:</i> Obsolescence	Chapter Three: ‘Africa Descendant’	United States 1990-1991
	Chapter Four: ‘Transitions to Duality’	South Africa 1990-1994
<i>Period Two:</i> Flux	Chapter Five: A New World Embraced, A New World Alienates	United States 1991-1995
	Chapter Six: High Expectations Meet Harsh Realities	South Africa 1994-1996
<i>Period Three:</i> Focus	Chapter Seven: Of Bad Neighbourhoods and Big Emerging Markets	United States 1995-1997
	Chapter Eight: Coming to Terms With Self and Situation	South Africa 1996-1997
<i>Period Four:</i> Coalescence	Chapter Nine: Liberal Economics Preponderate	United States and South Africa 1997-1998

As for the periods and chapters themselves, *Overview: Stasis* provides a summary of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa from the 1950s until 1990. Chapter One, ‘An Anti-Communist Crusade’, shows how US foreign policy towards Africa from 1957 to 1990 was driven by an almost crusade-like need to contain Soviet influence and the perceived viability of communism on the continent. In Chapter Two, ‘Security, the Gun, and the Maize Train’, it is explained how South Africa’s foreign policy came to be dominated by the need to ensure the white minority’s security, a goal that was thought obtainable through a combination of violence and coercion.

*Period One: Obsolescence* consists of Chapters Three and Four, ‘Africa Descendant’ and ‘Transitions to Duality’, respectively. In this section, the far-reaching effects of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the freeing of Nelson Mandela are shown. It is explained how these watershed events denoted an end to the Cold War and the demise of apartheid, and subsequently, made decades-old policies obsolete. What resulted was an equivocal American foreign policy, and a South African foreign policy at once serving outgoing and incoming regimes.

*Period Two: Flux* is comprised of Chapter Five, ‘A New World Order Embraced, A New World Alienates’, and Chapter Six, ‘High Expectations Meet Harsh Realities’. The chapters analyse how, even as US and South African foreign policy makers were confronted with archaic African policies and the challenges associated with developing appropriate new ones, their efforts were complicated by changes in national leadership and government, bureaucratic biases, and resilient, inherited policies. Consequently, many aspects of the agendas that emerged eventually failed.

In *Period Three: Focus*, the study investigates how US and South African foreign policy makers were able to move beyond the recent past and to develop clearer goals for the future. In Chapter Seven, 'Of Bad Neighbourhoods and Big Emerging Markets', it is detailed how US foreign policy makers in the Clinton administration formulated an African agenda stressing economics, democracy, and stability. In Chapter Eight, 'Coming to Terms With Self and Situation', it is explained how South African foreign policy makers conducted a cold assessment of their assets and abilities and eventually settled upon an agenda which simultaneously saw President Nelson Mandela interacting with old friends (including so-called 'pariahs'); Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki courting western governments and international investment; and both working in conjunction with the other, along with much of the rest of the foreign policy establishment, to tackle selected developments. This said, the goals US and South African foreign policy makers pursued during this time were to prove untenable due to a combination of political realities and miscalculations.

Unlike the previous periods, the final one, *Period Four: Coalescence*, is comprised of only one chapter, 'Liberal Economics Preponderate'. This is because by 1997 US and South African foreign policies towards Africa had evolved to a point that saw their grand aims being more alike than different. This section illustrates how US and South African foreign policy makers were able to formulate clear objectives, and unlike previous periods, how they combined these clear objectives with the employment of strategies most likely to ensure their attainment. As the title of the chapter suggests, it was a time in US and South African foreign policies when an intense desire prevailed to increase trade and commercial links, and to integrate better Africa into the global economy.

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## Introduction

The study concludes with a chapter summarising findings. While I will leave the finer points for the conclusion itself, one last finding warrants being mentioned because it cuts straight across all that is in chapters to come: *the theme of modest means*. At times modest means were *imposed* on US and South African policy makers and they were *forced* to devise new grand aims. At other times, modest means were *willingly* employed, yet this too resulted in the articulation of new grand aims, as actions and ends were *made* to correspond. In both cases, new foreign policy periods emerged as attention, efforts, and resources were re-prioritised. Modest means, therefore, were a force that not only shaped, but drove, the evolution of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s.

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## OVERVIEW: STASIS

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*From the 1950s until 1990, United States and South African foreign policies towards Africa were dominated by two respective grand aims: containment and security.*

*For the United States, containment entailed checking Soviet influence. US foreign policy makers viewed Moscow as the epicentre of global communism, and as such, the policies and acts emanating from there as instrumental in communism's spread. If the US could contain the Soviets, the reasoning went, then so too would communism be contained. All told, containment as an almost crusade-like objective spanned more than four decades and nine presidents; it was pursued with such a strength-of-purpose in US foreign policy towards Africa that virtually all else was subordinate -- including, quite often, imperatives and aspirations articulated by Africans themselves.*

*For South Africa, 'security' meant the security of the white minority who held power. Ironically, that which was portrayed by policy makers as the best guarantee for security, apartheid, was also the greatest source of insecurity because it brought international isolation (coupled with domestic unrest). Isolation terrified consecutive apartheid regimes because it was equated with the white minority facing, alone, a hostile and overwhelming majority possibly intent on 'sweeping them into the sea'. As a result, for more than forty years, South African foreign policy towards Africa consisted of trying to strengthen ties -- to give others a vested interest in the welfare of the white minority, or to increase dependency -- and to weaken or to eliminate threats. Security was thought obtainable, and was sought, through a combination of violence and coercion.*

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## Chapter One: An Anti-Communist Crusade

In many ways the United States did not discover Africa until the late 1950s. Specifically, it was 1957 when US Vice President Richard Nixon recommended to President Dwight Eisenhower that he authorise the creation of a separate Bureau of African Affairs within the US State Department, an idea which reached fruition in 1958.

The late emergence of State's Bureau of African Affairs can be attributed to the United States' traditional view of Africa as a foreign policy backwater. This marginal interest in the continent at best, and indifference at worst, was largely because US foreign policy makers looked upon Africa as a European sphere of influence, as confirmed by European colonialism. But with the growing forces of nationalism on the continent in the 1950s, many US foreign policy makers had concerns about what might happen should the colonies gain independence. Senator John F. Kennedy spoke for many when he warned: 'The only real question is whether these new nations will look West or East -- to Moscow or Washington -- for sympathy, help, and guidance in their effort to recapitulate, in a few decades, the entire history of modern Europe and America.'<sup>1</sup> In this light, it was not mere happenstance that the Bureau of African Affairs was founded when it was. By 1957, Africa was coming to be viewed by a growing number as 'an open field of manoeuvre in the worldwide competition between the (communist) bloc and the non-communist world'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Kennedy, 'The New Nations of Africa', in T.C. Sorensen, *Let the Word Go Forth* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1988), p.365.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the US Department of State document 'Guidelines for Policy and Operations, Africa', in *Africa: National Security Files, 1961-1963* (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America Microfiche Series, Reel No.1, March 1962): p.1.

The interest the Eisenhower administration showed in regard to Africa -- interest deep enough to justify the Bureau of African Affairs' founding -- sprung from the Eisenhower Doctrine. It dictated that the United States was to 'contain' the Soviet Union, the leader of the communist world, and thus global communism.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, US foreign policy makers were to keep an eye on the growing African nationalist movements to determine whether they were pro-Soviet or not. This said, because Sudan and Ghana were the only African countries to have gained independence by 1957, US foreign policy towards Africa in the late 1950s was little more than an endeavour in monitoring as deference continued to be yielded to western European powers traditionally involved on the continent.

When John F. Kennedy became president, his administration split between the so-called 'New Frontiersmen', who favoured a less confrontational approach with the Soviet Union, and those individuals who favoured a continuation of a form of the Eisenhower Doctrine. Although anti-communist, the New Frontiersmen sought to understand better African nationalism and advocated the formulation of constructive relationships with nationalist leaders. Though sympathetic to the New Frontiersmen's views, Kennedy's overriding belief was that African nationalist movements were susceptible to manipulation by

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<sup>3</sup> George F. Kennan, often considered the intellectual father of US foreign policy for the Cold War, first put forward the notion of 'containment' in a 1947 article in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs* ('The Sources of Soviet Conduct', *Foreign Affairs* (25 July 1947): p.566-582), famously signing the article 'X'. In the article, Kennan argued that the Soviet Union would lead an activist -- even aggressive -- foreign policy. Though the US could not prevent Soviet foreign policy makers' formulation and pursuit of certain objectives, it could keep them from having a free reign to do so. '...It is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union', Kennan concluded, 'must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant *containment* (italics added).'

Moscow. As a result, he was convinced that US foreign policy towards the continent could ill afford not to be assertive. However, before Kennedy could fully articulate what type of agenda he envisioned, he was assassinated while visiting the American city of Dallas. In the wake of the assassination, the traditionalists prevailed. Lyndon Johnson, Kennedy's successor, showed a clear preference for appointing individuals who divided the world into black-and-white categories of either pro-US or pro-Soviet countries. Nevertheless, US foreign policy makers, for the most part, continued with the status quo of watching Africa.

It was not until Richard Nixon became president in 1974 that a shift occurred in US foreign policy towards Africa, and even then it was more in tone than content. Rather than viewing the Soviet Union as the leader of a monolithic communist bloc bent on world domination, the Nixon administration, and later the Ford administration, adhered to *realpolitik*. In brief, the logic underpinning *realpolitik* was that the United States and the Soviet Union could work together to maintain and regulate the existing balance of power. Through overtures of *detente*, the reasoning went, Moscow could be enticed into forming political and economic ties with the US; US foreign policy makers could then transform the Soviet Union from a superpower competitor into a status quo partner working to maintain global order and stability. Ultimately, this would mean that the spread of global communism would be checked. What *realpolitik* meant in terms of US foreign policy pertaining to Africa was that as long as the Soviets did not make any undue efforts to establish or spread influence on the continent, Americans wouldn't either. Indeed, when explaining his view of *realpolitik*, Nixon had all but said that he did not want US involvement in Africa (or anywhere else in the Third World) to increase, stating: 'America cannot -- and will not -- conceive all the plans, design all the program(me)s, execute all the decisions, and undertake

all the defence of the free-nations of the world.<sup>4</sup>

Because of his human rights convictions, when Jimmy Carter became president there promised to be a new chapter opened in US foreign policy towards Africa, one that went beyond *realpolitik*. But for all Carter's personal beliefs, these beliefs did not translate into significantly different policies. The conflict between what Carter personally desired and political reality can be attributed to the divide that existed between Carter and his two closest foreign policy advisors, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski tended to view African issues through the lens of an overall US-Soviet strategic relationship, speaking of an 'arc of crisis' stretching from Asia to the tip of Africa, with the Soviet Union exploiting instability according to a well-defined grand strategy to advance global communism. Although Brzezinski did desire *detente*, he argued that US-Soviet co-operation was highly unlikely because the Soviet Union was inherently expansionistic; therefore, the only viable option for US foreign policy towards the continent was one based on aggressive containment. By contrast, in a view reminiscent of the New Frontiersmen, Vance wanted to de-emphasise the East-West dimension in US foreign policy towards Africa in order to focus on imperatives and aspirations identified and articulated by Africans themselves.<sup>5</sup> Vance was of the opinion that in so doing, African regimes would

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Nixon, quoted in *American Foreign Policy*, eds. Charles Kegley and Eugene Wittkopf (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p.48.

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent perspective on the views of Carter, Brzezinski, and Vance, and how each affected US foreign policy towards Africa during the Carter years, see: J. Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (London: Collins, 1982); Z. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983); and C. Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983).

more willingly become American allies in the fight against communism, and be better ones at that because they would appreciate having not been treated as mere pawns. In the end, the disparities of opinion in the upper echelons of the administration meant that US foreign policy towards Africa under Carter, at least rhetorically, was disjunctured: the occasional proclamation that human rights needed to be advanced on the continent, references to the effect that the US needed to give select African leaders aid and arms in order to keep them out of the Soviet camp, and statements echoing Africans' wishes or demands. The end objective, though, remained consistent: to limit Soviet influence. Furthermore, with no clear lead, US foreign policy makers were left with little option but to pursue status quo policies on the ground, and these were ones associated with containment.

When Ronald Reagan succeeded Carter in 1981, American foreign policy towards Africa came to reflect a single-mindedness not seen in years. Harkening back to the Cold War beliefs of Eisenhower, Reagan spoke of the Soviet Union as the 'evil empire' and blamed it for all instability in Africa. Indeed, in 1982 Reagan declared: 'Let us not delude ourselves. The Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't involved in this game of dominoes, there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world.'<sup>6</sup> Such were the convictions of Reagan that he formulated what came to be known as the Reagan Doctrine -- a comprehensive, ideological agenda which favoured the arming of anti-communist insurgents throughout Africa.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Arthur Schlesinger, 'Foreign Policy and the American Character', *Foreign Affairs*, 62, 1 (Fall 1983): p.5.

<sup>7</sup> Tangible aspects of the Reagan Doctrine as they applied to Africa will be covered in greater detail later in the chapter.

Despite having been Reagan's vice president, when George Bush became president in January 1989, he embraced an overarching *realpolitik* vision reminiscent of the Nixon and Ford administrations. As a part of his vision, Bush described his hope of 'moving beyond containment, to seek to integrate the Soviets into the community of nations, to help them share the rewards of international co-operation.'<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, Bush tempered his objective with power politics by stressing military preparedness, and articulating a resolve to intervene where American interests were threatened (albeit a concerted effort, he promised, would be made to work with regional and international institutions whenever possible). However, before a clear understanding of how Bush's vision was to affect US foreign policy towards Africa, the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989. The impact of the event was dramatic. The Wall's falling was irrefutable proof that immense changes were underway in the international system -- changes which would require US foreign policy makers to evaluate virtually every aspect of how they viewed the world and worked within it.

In summarising US foreign policy towards Africa from Presidents Eisenhower to Bush, perhaps the best description is that it was a period of stasis. That is, for over forty years the single topic of how to limit Soviet influence, and therefore communism, lay at the heart of all US interest in the continent. Given, from one administration to the next there were changes in style, tone, and policy articulation, but on a whole, as Crawford Young, a former African Studies Association President, remarked: 'The actual change was far less

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Don Oberdorfer, 'Bush Finds Theme of Foreign Policy: "Beyond Containment"', *The Washington Post*, 28 May 1989, p.A30.

than what appeared in prospect from the blueprints.<sup>9</sup>

Illustrating the point of US foreign policy stasis, prior to 1961 Washington had given unflagging support to Portugal in its leaders' assertion that the management of its colonies was an internal affair. For example, whenever resolutions regarding the prospect of self-determination for Portuguese colonies emerged in the United Nations, US ambassadors either voted with Portugal, or chose to abstain. Yet, when Kennedy was inaugurated in 1961 he stated that he was committed to enacting policies that reflected his strong anti-colonial beliefs. To these ends, Kennedy managed to place restrictions on Portugal's practise of diverting US-supplied NATO weaponry to combat insurgency efforts in Africa, and then ordered the American ambassador to the United Nations to cast a vote in favour of a resolution demanding that Portugal make progress towards granting Angolan independence.<sup>10</sup> Needless to say, the Portuguese did not look favourably upon the new dispensation of US foreign policy under Kennedy. As a result, the Portuguese President, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, made the threat that unless American 'interference' ceased, he would refuse to renew a 1951 agreement, due to expire at the end of 1962, which allowed the American military to use a base on the Azores Islands in the Atlantic.

The impact of the Portuguese ultimatum in Washington was marked. Defence Department statements referred to the Azores base as one of the most important US assets in Africa, implying that the United States' ability to counter the Soviet Union and to contain

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<sup>9</sup> C. Young, 'United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Silver Anniversary Reflection', *African Studies Review*, 27, 3 (September 1984): p.14.

<sup>10</sup> P. Schraeder, *United Stated Foreign Policy Toward Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.22.

communism on the continent would become even more difficult without the facility. The Joint Chiefs of Staff strongly argued that, beyond Africa, the Azores base was an indispensable component for US security concerns in Europe and the Middle East, adding that it should not be compromised in favour of African nationalists. Taking a different tack, the State Department pointed out that the President's policies in regard to Africa risked not only losing the Azores facility, but could lead to greater instability within Portugal, possibly even revolution, and thus threaten the solidarity of the NATO alliance which, of course, was meant in part to deter any Soviet aggression in Europe. In a letter assessing what he thought the situation to be, Adlai Stevenson, US Ambassador to the UN, noted that the administration was approaching a 'decisive situation' in which the US had to make a choice. 'In oversimplified terms,' Stevenson explained, 'they (African countries) want to know whether, if it comes to that, we will stand for self-determination and human rights and, therefore, for the mind of Africa, or whether we will give our Azores base priority.'<sup>11</sup> Kennedy's decision came on 31 July 1963: he ordered Stevenson to abstain from voting on a UN resolution calling for economic sanctions against Portugal because of its refusal to consider Angolan independence.

While the 'Soviet Threat', and therefore the communist threat, encouraged American acquiescence in 1963 on the matter of Angolan independence, such acquiescence did not make the matter fade away. In fact, the matter came rushing back to the fore when, in 1974, a group of young Portuguese military officers carried out a *coup d'etat* in Lisbon; the officers said that the coup had been necessitated because the human and financial costs to Portugal

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<sup>11</sup> Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa*, p.203.

incurred in denying African aspirations for self-determination had become too intolerable. US foreign policy makers were duly concerned because nearly all of the guerrilla insurgencies in the Portuguese colonies were Soviet-supported. The fear was that if and when the Portuguese colonies achieved independence, the new states might become Soviet satellites. Opinion was thus galvanised in Washington. A CIA official spoke for many when he said 'that the Soviets should not be permitted to make a move in any remote part of the world without being confronted... by the United States'.<sup>12</sup>

When Portugal completed an abrupt and total withdrawal from its African colonies in 1975, US foreign policy makers were moved to action to fill the political vacuum with movements that were perceived to be most friendly to US interests, or at least not communist ones. The Ford administration increased US support to the *Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola* (FNLA) and the *Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA), both proclaimed anti-communist movements, from a total of US\$300,000 in January 1975 to US\$30 million a mere six months later. But far from resolving the political uncertainties US foreign policy makers felt they were facing on the continent, the support caused many more.

In response to the US foreign policy makers' decision to boost US support to Angola some ten-fold, the Soviets bolstered their aid to the *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA), a proclaimed Marxist movement competing with the FNLA and UNITA for post-independence power, sending nearly 100 tons of arms. It was at this point that the dangers of *realpolitik* became clear as Washington and Moscow strived to one-up each other.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), p.41.

‘We have sought -- and with some successes -- to build more constructive relations with the USSR. To reduce tensions in areas where our vital interests impinge on one another; to avoid destabilising confrontations in peripheral areas of the globe -- such as Angola,’ Secretary of State Henry Kissinger explained to the Senate Subcommittee on Africa. However, to not respond to the Soviet supplying of arms to the MPLA, Kissinger warned (making no reference to the fact that the Soviets had acted in response to increased American aid to the FNLA and UNITA), meant that the existing balance of power between the two superpowers would be offset in the Soviets’ favour. Though Angola was of ‘modest direct strategic interest’, he noted, in the bigger picture it was very significant. Kissinger surmised: ‘If the United States is seen to emasculate itself in the face of massive, unprecedented Soviet and Cuban intervention, what will be the perception of leaders around the world as they make decisions concerning their future security?’<sup>13</sup>

While Kissinger’s statements showed that containment was justification enough for him for the course US foreign policy was taking in regard to Angola, other figures in the foreign policy establishment showed that Kissinger was not alone. When CIA Director William Colby appeared before the House Select Committee on Intelligence, he was supposed to help clarify how strongly pro- or anti-US the FNLA, UNITA, and MPLA were. To these ends, Colby remarked: ‘They are all independents. They are all for black Africa. They are all for some fuzzy kind of social system... without really much articulation, but

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<sup>13</sup> Henry Kissinger, ‘Implications of Angola for Future US Foreign Policy’, *Department of State Bulletin*, 74, 1912 (16 February 1976): 174-182. Also, see President Ford’s letter to Congress, reiterating the main points of Kissinger, under the title ‘President Ford Reiterates US Objective in Angola’, *Department of State Bulletin*, 74, 1912 (16 February 1976): pp.182-183.

some sort of “let’s not be exploited by the capitalist nations.”” Colby then made a very telling observation when a committee member asked him why the US was backing the FNLA-UNITA alliance -- along with the Chinese no less. He said: ‘Because the Soviets are backing the MPLA is the simplest answer.’<sup>14</sup>

Containment not only influenced US foreign policy towards Angola, but also coloured relations with South Africa. However, unlike Angola, where Washington officials had a hard time determining the exact political dispensation of the warring movements, the convictions of the South African regime were never in doubt: its leaders were fervently anti-communist. As a result, consecutive US administrations braved domestic and international criticism in order to maintain a ‘strategic relationship’ with the apartheid state. For example, a mere six months after the 20 March 1960 Sharpeville massacre -- where South African forces gunned down black ‘pass law’ protesters, killing 69 and wounding more than 180 -- US officials signed an agreement with the South African government enabling the US to build an Optical Tracking Station and a Deep Space Instrumentation Facility in the Republic, and to continue to use a Minitrack and Data Acquisition Station for tracking satellites, all facilities with Cold War ‘containment applications’.<sup>15</sup>

While the timing of the 1960 US-South African agreement might have been exceptional, the views which made it possible were not. In fact, when President Nixon assumed power in 1969, US foreign policy towards Africa became even more committed to

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Gerald Bender, ‘Kissinger in Angola: Anatomy of Failure’, in *American Policy in Southern Africa: The Stakes and the Stance* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1981), p.105.

<sup>15</sup> National Security Council, *Briefing for NSC Standing Group -- Subject: South Africa and South West Africa* (10 March 1964): pp.11-12.

maintaining some sort of working relationship with South Africa for the sake of containing communism. In that year emerged a National Security Council report on Africa, *National Security Study Memoranda 39* (NSSM 39), which evaluated US relations with the white minority governments in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. The report concluded that the key state needed to check Soviet influence in Africa, and therefore communism, was South Africa. Accordingly, NSSM 39 presented five options for US-South African relations, ranging from total normalisation and 'unlimited dealings' at one end of the spectrum, to complete disengagement at the other. Given the strength of containment convictions in Washington, the fifth option was not considered much of an option and ruled out immediately. After some deliberation, Nixon ultimately accepted a compromise of sorts, opting for an agenda which advanced 'communication' with South Africa.

At the heart of the Nixon administration's communication agenda with South Africa was the assumption that a white minority government could hold on to power indefinitely; consequently, constructive change could only be brought about through contact. As for how communication related to the larger doctrine of containment, the belief was that it was pointless for the US to support any violent campaign for majority political rights in South Africa because it would only produce regional chaos that could be exploited by communists.<sup>16</sup> Through communication, though, administration officials thought they could nudge the South African government towards reform, and more importantly, employ it as a *realpolitik* agent. In order to facilitate communication between the US and South Africa,

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<sup>16</sup> B. Cohen, M.A. El-Khawas, and E. Lockwood, *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1975), p.66.

Nixon approved a loosening of US enforcement of a UN arms embargo against South Africa (thereby providing for the sale of American-made computers and aircraft to the Republic), encouraged trade and investment through Export-Import Bank guarantees, sent US officials to South Africa and received South African government and military dignitaries in return, and instructed the US Ambassador to the UN to be less forthcoming with criticism about South Africa's apartheid policies.

For the most part, Nixon's communication agenda with South Africa was able to proceed unhindered for nearly half a decade -- until the Portuguese *coup d'etat* in 1974. With the *coup d'etat*, not only did Portugal's government change, but in the eyes of US foreign policy makers, so too did the entire political and security situation in Africa. With the imminent independence of the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, the fear in Washington was that the door was wide open for Soviet/communist forces to sweep over southern Africa due to the Marxist underpinnings of the movements that were poised to assume independent power. As mentioned earlier, US foreign policy makers reacted by initiating covert military support for the FNLA and UNITA in Angola, co-ordinating operations from Kinshasa, Lusaka, and Pretoria.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is apparent that far from deterring 'communist ambitions' in Africa -- in this case those of the Soviets -- US moves exacerbated events. US support for the FNLA and UNITA changed the nature of the precarious *realpolitik*-balance from the maintenance of the status quo at a lower level, to the see-saw pursuit of a status quo at ever higher levels. In time, matters progressed to the point that Washington and Moscow were embroiled in an open-ended, escalating proxy war. Following a South African invasion of Angola in 1975 -- undertaken in part because the South African government had been

promised US support -- the Soviets provided the means for Cuba to rush nearly 4,000 troops to Angola (subsequently rising to 12,000) on the side of the MPLA, and undertook a major airlift to distribute weapons and forces.<sup>17</sup>

The superpower escalation of the Angolan conflict could have continued indeterminably had the US Congress not adopted the Clark Amendment in 1976, an act which prohibited the type of US covert aid being given in Angola. In sum, the Clark Amendment not only changed the nature of US foreign policy towards Africa, but in the Angolan case, it was a blow to the FNLA, UNITA, and South African forces who had been counting on the continued delivery of US arms and materiel. Without US support, the South Africans were forced to cease their Angolan offensive and to withdraw to the south of the country; this, in turn, allowed the MPLA to deliver a series of military setbacks to the FNLA and UNITA. By March 1976, the MPLA had gained enough of an advantage that it was recognised by the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations as Angola's legitimate government, and was able to join other countries as a 'Frontline State' against the apartheid regime in Pretoria.

In an effort to recoup policy and prestige losses in Angola, US foreign policy makers in late 1976 turned to the Namibian and Rhodesian issues. By default, this meant that US foreign policy makers had to work with South African officials (now extremely distrustful, because of what they viewed as American betrayal in Angola) as Namibia was still under South African colonial rule, and the minority Rhodesian regime, in the words of one, 'was

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<sup>17</sup> R. Hallett, 'The South African Intervention in Angola, 1975-1976', *African Affairs*, 77, 308 (July 1978): pp.355-356.

wholly dependent upon South Africa for military and economic survival'.<sup>18</sup> The nature of this new direction in US foreign policy towards Africa was first made public by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in a speech delivered in Lusaka, Zambia on 18 June 1976. Kissinger stated that the US wanted to engage Pretoria, but that it wanted to do so in order 'to permit all the people and groups of Namibia to express their views freely, under UN supervision, on the political future and constitutional structure of their country'. Kissinger then added that the US wanted the declaration of 'a definite timetable acceptable to the world community for the achievement of self-determination (for Namibia)', and challenged Pretoria to show good faith by using its influence 'to promote a rapid negotiated settlement for majority rule in Rhodesia'.<sup>19</sup> The statements were meant to serve two key purposes: first, they were to minimise any 'advantages' gained by the Soviet Union following US foreign policy makers' perceived failures in Angola by showing that the US was, in fact, of a like mind with Africa in terms of self-determination; second, it was hoped that such statements would bring South Africa back into the American fold as an agent in the maintenance of a *realpolitik* superpower balance.

On the face of it, Kissinger's Lusaka statements appeared to be very much at odds with the second purpose of bringing South Africa back into the American foreign policy fold. After all, in previous years US foreign policy makers had always chosen their words carefully when speaking of apartheid, Namibia, or South African-Rhodesian relations for fear

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia into Zimbabwe, 1964-1981* (London: John Murray, 1987), p.132.

<sup>19</sup> For a full text of Kissinger's Lusaka speech, see 'Kissinger Speech', in *Southern Africa Record*, Vol.5 (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1976): pp.1-10.

of alienating the South African government, perceived as a bulwark in Africa against international communism. However, by the time Kissinger delivered his remarks, South Africa's domestic situation had taken a turn. On 16 June 1976, two days before Kissinger's speech, thousands of secondary pupils marching in the black township of Soweto clashed with South African police. The police responded with unconstrained force, firing into the crowd and truncheoning fleeing students. Rioting then ensued, and soon spread to other townships around the country. Knowing that South African Prime Minister Vorster was keen to stabilise his domestic problems, which threatened to incite regional ones, Kissinger felt emboldened to push South Africa to find a resolution for Namibian self-determination and possible Rhodesian majority-rule.<sup>20</sup> But Kissinger did not only state expectations. He also hinted that the US might be able to assist South Africa in limited, but nonetheless helpful, ways. Exactly how was made clear in October when the US vetoed (along with Britain and France) an African-sponsored UN resolution calling for an arms embargo against South Africa.

Yet before any further concessions could be made to South Africa, US-South African bi-lateral relations, at least initially, deteriorated with the advent of Jimmy Carter as president in January 1977. One of Carter's first acts was to appoint Andrew Young, a black civil rights worker, as US Representative to the UN. Carter then had delivered to Vorster a US 'Declaration on Southern Africa' calling for the elimination of apartheid, equal rights for all, an end to the illegal occupation of Namibia, and compliance with UN sanctions against

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<sup>20</sup> K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia into Zimbabwe 1964-1981*, p.132.

Rhodesia.<sup>21</sup> Finally, in an effort to drive home what was meant to be the administration's new dispensation, shortly after a meeting with Vorster in Vienna in May 1977, Vice President Mondale declared that the US 'cannot accept, let alone defend, governments that reject the basic principles of full human rights'.<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, for reasons noted earlier, in spite of the rhetoric and initial moves, the Carter administration failed to change US foreign policy towards Africa generally, and South Africa particularly. Once again, the aim to which US foreign policy makers subordinated nearly everything else was containment. To underscore how prevalent containment was in US foreign policy towards Africa -- even under Carter, whose personal beliefs in human equality were beyond reproach -- in a presidential directive issued in March 1977, Carter rejected any immediate punitive measures against South Africa for its apartheid policies, instead vaguely threatening to take 'visible steps' to downgrade US-South African relations unless the South African government made progress towards 'power sharing' with the black majority.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, even after the death of the 'Black Consciousness' Movement's leader, Steven Biko, while in police custody -- which again incited widespread riots and uprisings in South Africa -- the US vetoed no less than three UN resolutions condemning the apartheid regime. Whether the Carter administration intended to or not, its collective actions confirmed that US foreign policy makers placed greater value in having the South African government as a partner in containment than in punishing it for its apartheid policies.

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<sup>21</sup> *South African Institute of Race Relations Annual Survey* (1977), p.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Africa News*, 11 July 1977, pp.2-3.

When Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in January 1981 there was little room for misinterpretation as to what he wanted US foreign policy towards Africa to be. From the start of his term, Reagan made it clear that, first and foremost, he wanted the US to oppose 'Soviet expansionism' and international communism whenever and wherever possible. In line with the 'Reagan Doctrine', covert support to UNITA was renewed with the goal of overthrowing the Marxist MPLA Angolan government. Because UNITA was a South African ally, it was widely speculated that the Reagan administration's African plans had to include South Africa. The speculation was heightened when a reporter asked Reagan what support the US might offer in initiating sanctions against the white regime; Reagan's response: 'Can we abandon a country that has stood by us in every war we've ever fought,' he asked, 'a country that strategically is essential to the free world in its production of minerals we all must have and so forth?'<sup>24</sup>

Subsequently, Chester Crocker, Secretary of State for African Affairs under Reagan, was the person charged with enacting the bulk of a workable African agenda. Crocker turned most of his attention to southern Africa, and in line with his superiors' preferences, formulated a diplomatic strategy with South Africa as the cornerstone of US efforts. The reason US foreign policy makers had to focus on South Africa, Crocker pointed out, was that South Africa was a premier political and military power in Africa, and shared the administration's strong anti-communist convictions. If the US could 'constructively engage' South Africa, he reasoned, then changes could be fostered in African international relations, and possibly even in South Africa's domestic system of apartheid. This said, in a gesture to

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in P.H. Baker, *The United States and South Africa: The Reagan Years* (New York: Ford Foundation and the Foreign Policy Association, 1989), p.25.

those who opposed any interaction with the minority South African regime, Crocker did admit that the US could not support all South African leaders' 'actions and misadventures with their neighbo(u)rs'<sup>25</sup> -- a reference to the South African practise of regional 'destabilisation' through military strikes and economic measures. Moreover, Crocker stated that the US expected South Africa to make a good-faith first-step in return for Washington's constructive engagement. The first-step he advocated was for the South African government to begin to discuss openly the prospect of Namibian independence.

Crocker maintained that Namibia was crucial, because if the South African regime could show even a little less intransigence in regard to its independence, US foreign policy makers could 'work to end South Africa's polecat status in the world', and re-establish South Africa as a 'legitimate and important regional actor'.<sup>26</sup> Of course Crocker realised that there were limitations to his suggestion: namely, the South African government was under no military pressure to leave Namibia, and it was unlikely to do so unless its leaders' fears were addressed -- most notably, the fear that the white minority in South Africa might have to face violent revolution even as they became more isolated in the world. To these realities was Crocker's duty to adhere to his superiors' anti-communist priorities, which in themselves were not the most conducive to compromise. Faced with demanding objectives, Crocker proposed a 'linked' full withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola in return for South Africa granting Namibian independence.

While the theoretical underpinnings for constructive engagement and the linkage proposal were sound, making them a reality on the ground was most difficult. The MPLA

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<sup>25</sup> Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa*, p.222.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

government claimed that it needed its Cuban military allies so long as UNITA and South African forces posed a threat to it. By contrast, the view from Pretoria was that so long as there were Soviet-supported Cubans in Angola, there was a real danger of a 'communist onslaught' -- communism being equated with race warfare; holding on to Namibia meant that at the very least it would not fall into communist hands, and what is more, gave the Republic a buffer against revolutionary insurgents. As if these differing views did not make the prospect of an American foreign policy success complicated enough, matters were made even more so when Pretoria ordered eight large-scale operations into Angola in 1982, recommenced small-scale military raids into Mozambique, and redoubled paramilitary support for the supposedly anti-communist Mozambican rebel movement, RENAMO (*Resistencia Nacional Mocambique*). As a result, US foreign policy makers were faced with trying to bridge the divide between the mutually exclusive acts of 'stabilising diplomacy' through constructive engagement, and 'destabilising militancy' on the part of the South African regime with whom this was to be done.<sup>27</sup>

As time progressed, US foreign policy makers' challenges in Africa did not get any easier. Indeed, in the period between December 1983 and January 1984, South African troops undertook a massive Angolan offensive called 'Operation Askari', effectively precluding any diplomatic activity which might have moved forward aspects of constructive engagement or the linkage proposal. While the offensive caused frustration initially in Washington, as a result of the costliness of the fighting to all sides concerned, a major, unexpected breakthrough transpired. Faced with unacceptable losses of men and materiel,

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<sup>27</sup> Baker, *The United States and South Africa: The Reagan Years*, p.14.

the Angolan and South African governments in February 1984 began to consider terms which might reduce the chances for further confrontation. Taking advantage of the diplomatic contacts fostered as a part of constructive engagement, Angolan and South African representatives met in Lusaka, with Crocker and Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda acting as mediators. Ultimately, the negotiators agreed to a 'Lusaka Accord' establishing a cease-fire, and even more dramatic, the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola under the watchful eyes of a joint Angolan-South African monitoring commission.

In the wake of the Lusaka Accord, positive events gained pace. Encouraged by an improvement in their country's international image and profile, South African foreign policy makers once again took advantage of diplomatic contacts fostered by Crocker to begin talking to Mozambican officials. From these discussions emerged the 'Nkomati Accord'. In sum, Nkomati required South Africa to discontinue its support of RENAMO guerrillas in exchange for the Mozambican government's commitment to prevent ANC guerrillas from using Mozambique as a springboard for attacks against South Africa.

Though American foreign policy makers were heartened by the Lusaka and Nkomati Accords -- viewing them as the first substantive steps towards achieving the linked goal of having Cuban troops withdrawn from Africa and Namibian independence, and therefore seeing Soviet influence checked -- unfortunately, early on in Reagan's second term both accords unravelled. On 19 May 1986 South African forces launched co-ordinated military strikes into Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in what was to be a return of frequent South African military forays against its neighbours. But recommenced-violence was not just directed at countries outside South Africa, it was also directed at those who lived within them. In September 1984, massive popular uprisings once again erupted across the Republic

due to the South African government's founding of a tricameral parliament that failed to enfranchise the black majority. To give some perspective to the social unrest in South Africa, in the initial bout of violence more than 2,000 black South Africans died and nearly 30,000 others were detained, including nearly 3,000 under the age of thirteen.<sup>28</sup>

With the proliferation of new reports featuring South African forces conducting regional strikes and campaigns, and images, for example, of white police offices whipping township protesters and attacking them with dogs, a galvanisation of American opinion against the apartheid regime occurred. Large sections of the American electorate and Congress began to call for an end to any and all US involvement with South Africa.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, Congress overrode a Presidential veto in order to pass the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) of 1986 which mandated: 1) the withdrawal of all US investments from South Africa; 2) the imposition of a complete ban on US-South African trade; and 3) a prohibition on any US military or intelligence co-operation with the South African government.<sup>30</sup> In short, the CAAA was a deathblow to constructive engagement.

While a great deal of debate has taken place as to how effective American sanctions were in bringing the apartheid regime to the negotiating table, the fact remains that on 22

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<sup>28</sup> United States House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, 'Hearing, 4 December 1984, 98th Congress, Second Session', in *The Current Crisis in South Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985).

<sup>29</sup> Schraeder, *United State Foreign Policy Toward Africa*, p.230.

<sup>30</sup> United States House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittees on International Economic Policy and Trade, and on Africa, 'Hearing, 16 June 1987, 100th Congress, 1st Session', in *Oversight of the Administration's Implementation of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 -- Public Law 99-440* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988).

December 1988 South Africa signed up to the Namibia and Angola Accords, formalising the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola in return for Namibian independence by no later than 30 March 1990. This said, when George Bush became president in January 1989, US foreign policy towards Africa in the early months differed little from those in the last years of the Reagan administration -- especially in matters that involved South Africa because the CAAA remained *en force*. Additionally, dramatic social and political events in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were demanding, and receiving, ever more attention. As a result, Africa was relegated -- even knowingly pushed -- to a low position in the administration's foreign policy hierarchy.

Conceivably, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 marking irreversible changes underway in the international system, US foreign policy makers should have had an unmatched opportunity to set a new course in regard to Africa. Instead, the changes highlighted how, from Eisenhower to Bush, US foreign policy towards Africa was marked by one overarching crusade-like grand aim: to contain Soviet influence, and therefore, the perceived viability of international communism. As the Soviet Union's implosion gained pace after 1990, US foreign policy makers were challenged like never before to determine what profile for Africa was most appropriate or desired, and what agendas to pursue. It was a challenge which would continue unabated through the 1990s.

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## **Chapter Two: Security, the Gun, and the Maize Train**

Like their American counterparts, in many ways South African foreign policy makers did not discover Africa until the mid-1950s. Before that time it was assumed that colonial rule would remain indefinitely, and as a result, the white minority who governed South Africa could deal almost exclusively with the Western world -- a world to which they related because they perceived themselves as sharing the same values, a common economic system, and virtually identical security concerns.

However, in 1956 the British withdrew from the Sudan, in 1957 Ghana was granted independence, and serious talk could be heard in diplomatic circles of hastening the independence of other African colonies. To come to terms with the major changes happening on the continent, in 1959 the South African government endorsed the Department of External Affairs' initiative to create a separate 'African Division', the Department's first geographical division. This act was significant because while the South African government did oppose decolonisation and view the ability of blacks to govern themselves with scepticism, it was also aware that it needed foreign policy structures in place to deal with the decolonisation that had occurred, and to handle events should the trend continue. In essence, it was an act with the goal of finding ways to bridge the gap between a disappearing colonial order -- and therefore the South African regime's self-proclaimed 'indispensable special duty' to help develop Africa along the lines of Western European Christian civilisation, serving as a 'permanent link between the Western nations on the one hand and the population of Africa

south of the Sahara on the other<sup>1</sup> -- and emerging black independence movements in Africa.

Ironically, just when South African foreign policy makers were attempting in the late 1950s to establish mechanisms to interact with Africa, government leaders were setting an internal agenda that would prove to make amicable relations with the continent impossible. In 1958, H.F. Verwoerd unveiled grand apartheid, or 'separate development', as it was officially presented to the world, through the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act. At the core of Verwoerd's vision was the establishment of eight 'separate national units', or homelands, for South Africa's black population. The areas were to be under white guardianship but could gradually develop into self-governing entities, Verwoerd claimed, if it were in the ability of blacks to do so.

Verwoerd framed the creation of the homelands in terms of South Africa's realisation that its future lay not in exclusive identification with the old colonial order, but as a supporter of independent African power. Verwoerd's presentation was a diplomatic move intended to ensure some security for South Africa's white minority no matter what the future held: on one hand, it did not completely call for a break with the western powers with which it associated itself and whose involvement in Africa might continue, but on the other, it sought to associate the white regime with the decolonisation trend, and therefore, future independent African nations.<sup>2</sup> Of course Verwoerd felt confident presenting grand apartheid in this light because while some African territories had achieved independence in the late 1950s, these

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in J. Botha, *Verwoerd is Dead* (Cape Town: Books of Africa, 1967), pp.55-56.

<sup>2</sup> D. Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making* (Johannesburg: Macmillan South Africa Publishers (Ltd.), 1984), p.5.

were only a handful, were far from South Africa's borders, none had any white settler populations, and despite the talk of other colonies' independence, the rest of Africa was still under colonial control.

By mid-1960, though, Verwoerd and other South African foreign policy makers had a much different view of Africa. Africa decolonisation had gained such a pace that sixteen colonies had gained independence, and even possessions such as the High Commission Territories (i.e., Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho) -- which had previously been considered too small and impoverished to become sovereign states -- were now being groomed for independence. As the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan had noted in a speech before the combined South African Houses of Parliament in February 1960, a 'wind of change is blowing through the continent'.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to the rhetoric used when Verwoerd first presented grand apartheid, South African foreign policy makers were unable to come to terms with the changing scene in Africa, and especially the rate with which it was happening. Verwoerd stated that decolonisation and 'non-racialism' were euphemisms for promoting black interests at the expense of whites, and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eric Louw, gloomily predicted that soon white rule would be confined to the Portuguese territories, Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa itself, adding that even Northern Rhodesia was 'practically over the wall'.<sup>4</sup> And both accused the colonial powers of 'running away', of betraying the white man and his civilisation, and of exposing the continent to communist penetration by handing over power

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<sup>3</sup> See N. Mansergh, *Documents and Speeches on Commonwealth Affairs 1952-1962* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp.347-351.

<sup>4</sup> *South African House of Assembly Debates* (24 April 1960), col.5626.

to immature regimes.<sup>5</sup>

As if such rhetoric was not inflammatory enough, when the prospect of exchanging diplomats with the growing number of new states was brought before Verwoerd, he wrote that doing so was impossible because embassies of black-ruled nations could become centres of agitation within South Africa since they favoured a ‘multi-racial or Bantu government here’. Postponing the matter was best, he said, until separate development had advanced further in South Africa, and until black states ‘showed less inclination to interfere in internal affairs’.<sup>6</sup> Verwoerd also mentioned that social problems would arise if representatives of black states ‘moved in government social circles’ because South Africa’s own educated Bantu leaders would then want the same social rights, endangering ‘the whole position of the white man’.<sup>7</sup>

In these circumstances, though 1960 was to become known as ‘The Year of Africa’ -- the watershed year for states to break free from colonial rule -- because of South African leaders’ attitudes, it was also the year which set the tone for South African relations with the rest of Africa. Although the newly-independent African states were appalled by South African leaders’ racist rhetoric and acts and wanted them, along with apartheid, to end, for the most part these states in the early 1960s were geographically remote and had few economic links to South Africa. Moreover, with Western governments unwilling to be as

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<sup>5</sup> S. Barber, *South Africa’s Foreign Policy, 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.160.

<sup>6</sup> S. Barber and J. Barratt, *South Africa’s Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security, 1945-1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.77.

<sup>7</sup> See Sir R. Menzies, *Afternoon Light* (London: Cassell, 1967), 200-201 and 206-207.

openly critical as the emerging nations yet willing to extend economic relations, little tangible weight, such as sanctions, could be placed behind the new states' demands.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the South African regime became even more indifferent, if not intransigent, to international opinion.

As a sign of his government's regard for international opinion, in March 1961 Verwoerd withdrew South Africa's request for continued membership in the Commonwealth while attending the Prime Ministers' Conference in London. Though Verwoerd went committed to maintaining South Africa's membership -- as this gave South Africa another international forum in which it could try to reconcile its internal policies with its international ones -- his decision arose from the fact that he was unwilling to endure the vehement criticism of apartheid he had to face, particularly from the newest 'non-white' members. Verwoerd's unapologetic attitude was fortified when, upon returning to Johannesburg, he was met by nearly 50,000 people who turned out to show their support for his decision to keep South Africa out of the Commonwealth. In an impromptu speech, Verwoerd told them: 'We have triumphed -- not over another country, nor over Britain, but we have freed

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<sup>8</sup> Indicative of how Western governments were willing to place economic concerns before moral ones, between 1960 and 1966 South African exports to Germany rose from R35 million to R150 million, and to Japan from R30 million to R97 million. Additionally, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that in the 1960s 260 American companies' investments in South Africa were some of the most profitable overseas investments anywhere, while a United Nations report described British capital earnings from South Africa as 'remarkable'. Furthermore, between 1964 and 1966 Britain earned more from capital investments in South Africa than from any other part of the world (Source: *International Defence and Aid Fund -- South Africa Information Service* (Economics Section) (January-June 1968): p.94; also, *International Defence and Aid Fund -- South Africa Information Service* (Economics Section) (January-June 1971): p.111E).

ourselves from the pressure of the Afro-Asian nations who were busy invading the Commonwealth. We were not prepared to allow these countries to dictate what our future should be... Therefore, we go forward alone.' When asked if a return to the Commonwealth was possible, he ruled it out, stating that 'must entail giving up the white man to maintain himself in this country'. He then added: 'Without any hesitation, my choice is to have fewer friends and ensure the survival of my nation.'<sup>9</sup>

For the most part, an uneasy status quo prevailed in South African international affairs for several years until 6 September 1966, when Verwoerd was assassinated while taking his seat in the House of Assembly. When Verwoerd's successor, B.J. Vorster, became Prime Minister, Vorster formulated a less reactionary, less indignant African foreign policy. Calling it an 'outward movement', Vorster hoped to establish cordial relations with black Africa in the hopes of improving South Africa's image. Working from his country's position of economic hegemony in southern Africa, Vorster advocated close economic and technological co-operation among African countries, even going so far as to offer aid and medical and agricultural assistance. Critics claimed the outward movement was an attempt to 'buy, bribe, or bluff its (South Africa's) way into the hearts and minds of the world'.<sup>10</sup> Regardless, the ultimate goal, quite obviously, was to obtain tacit acceptance of white rule in South Africa and for apartheid, both presented as necessary for guaranteeing the security of the white minority in South Africa.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy*, p.24.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Quoted in Geldenhuys, p.110.

<sup>11</sup> D. Geldenhuys, 'SA's Fruitless Quest for Neighbouring Friends', *ENERGOS*, 14 (1986): p.85.

Nevertheless, at the time that Vorster was making his outward movement initiative, decolonisation had reached its peak. By 1968, the 'winds of change' were at South Africa's very frontier. In southern Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia, Malawi, and Swaziland had joined Zaire and Tanzania in gaining their independence; moreover, in Angola and Mozambique, Portuguese colonialism was having to contend with guerrilla warfare as movements there sought their own independence. Looking north with anxiety as the 'white buffer' began to disappear, Vorster was even more motivated to go forward with the outward movement: he wanted to reach a tentative agreement with as many African countries as possible before the changing African scene possibly incited revolution in South Africa.

Yet, in the heady days of newfound self-determination, emerging black regimes found it morally reprehensible, if not politically impossible, to work openly with South Africa. For example, the Organisation of African Unity was particularly vocal about discouraging African states from interacting with South Africa. President Kaunda of Zambia voiced the sentiments of many black leaders when he declared: 'Apartheid is on the offensive, the Boer trek is still on';<sup>12</sup> and the exiled African National Congress warned of 'a spider's web carefully and systematically spun (by the South African government) to ensnare weak African governments'.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, many regimes, such as Nyerere's Tanzania, were advocating socialism, which was inherently at odds with South Africa's economic realities. As a result, Vorster formulated an alternative foreign policy agenda.

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in G. Cockram, *Vorster's Foreign Policy* (Pretoria: Academica, 1970), p.126.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in *International Defence and Aid Fund -- Southern Africa Information Service* (January-June 1971): p.427.

Beginning in the early 1960s, the South African government had initiated a massive defence programme to modernise its forces. As initiatives associated with Vorster's outward movement met with failure, Vorster became more inclined to substitute threats and the use of force in the place of dialogue and the granting of aid. To these ends, Vorster stated clearly that if guerillas 'take to flight we shall chase them and we shall do so right into the countries from which they come'. Vorster's threats even went so far as to single out African leaders; for example, with Zambia's President Kaunda, he issued a warning that if Kaunda was helping guerillas, South Africa 'will hit him so hard he will never forget it'.<sup>14</sup>

In August 1966, Vorster turned rhetoric into action when he ordered the South African Defence Forces (SADF) into northern Namibia to destroy a guerrilla training camp -- the beginnings of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). Additionally, in 1967 forces were dispatched to Rhodesia, ostensibly to intercept ANC insurgents en route to South Africa, and some evidence points to limited SADF military involvement in counterinsurgency operations in Angola and Mozambique.<sup>15</sup> It was this use of force that marked the passing of Vorster's outward movement based on bi- and multi-lateral initiatives. While still publicly receptive to dialogue, Vorster did not hide the fact that he had hopes for making South Africa a major African power, and to do so, would assert unilaterally South Africa's regional hegemonic options, including the use of its military.

As clear signs of South Africa's preeminence in Africa, and therefore supporting Vorster's confidence that he could influence the region's destiny, virtually all of the newly

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<sup>14</sup> *South African House of Assembly Debates* (15 September 1970), col.4208.

<sup>15</sup> *International Defence and Aid Fund -- Southern Africa Information Service* (January-June 1968): p.51E.

independent states were dependent on the Republic for major ports and the rail systems serving them. In terms of trade, South Africa accounted for 80 percent of southern Africa's total, with exports from South Africa -- two thirds of which went to Rhodesia and Zambia alone -- accounting for 92 percent of Botswana's imports, 91 percent of Swaziland's, and 84 percent of Lesotho's.<sup>16</sup> Also, the citizens of many countries -- namely Lesotho, Mozambique, and Malawi -- depended heavily on remittances sent home from workers in South African mines, where higher wages could be found. Finally, but not lastly, South African investment in southern Africa was substantial, steadily growing from the US\$1 billion mark in 1967.<sup>17</sup> In short, South Africa was the hub from which the transport and economic spokes extended throughout the region. Accordingly, the political and security concerns of the South African regime mattered because depending on how the regime interpreted events, its subsequent actions were sure to affect other regional actors. Thus, when Pretoria learned on the morning of 25 April 1974 that there had been a military coup in Lisbon, a chain of events was set in motion that would change the face of southern Africa. The major impetus for the coup, Pretoria was soon to discover, was that the group of young military officers who carried it out believed that the human and material cost to Portugal for maintaining its colonies in Africa was unsustainable.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> A. Guelke, 'Africa as a Market for South African Goods', in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 12, 1 (1974).

<sup>17</sup> K. Grundy, *Confrontation and Accommodation in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p.48.

<sup>18</sup> In 1970, the military effort needed to ensure the safety of Portuguese officials and civilians, and to suppress insurgency movements, was sapping nearly 40 percent of Portugal's annual budget. Additionally, by 1972 Portuguese troops serving in Africa numbered 150,000, and had suffered 13,000 deaths.

Whereas the South African regime had come to terms with the independence of states such as Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the imminent independence of big and strategically important territories like Angola and Mozambique posed numerous dangers. First, Pretoria feared northern Namibia would be vulnerable to SWAPO guerrillas from Angola, and in the east, the long Mozambican border would be open to ANC and PAC penetration, both directly and via Rhodesia. Second, the political movements set to come into power were ideologically hostile, being avowed Marxists, and had succeeded through an armed struggle backed in part by communist powers. Finally, the South African regime feared that if force had triumphed against the Portuguese -- the first example of liberation through armed struggle in sub-Saharan Africa -- then force could be used in an effort to triumph over it, too.<sup>19</sup>

Almost immediately Vorster turned his attention to Mozambique. In a move that both surprised and impressed governments in the region, Vorster formulated an initiative known as *detente*, stressing non-intervention and non-confrontation with the *Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Mozambique* (FRELIMO) party coming to power. To some degree this was because Maputo was crucial as a port for industries around Johannesburg and for agriculture producers and mines in the east of South Africa, so being openly hostile with an incoming Mozambican government risked untold economic damage for South Africa. However, of greater concern to Pretoria was that a hostile regime in Mozambique could close its borders with Rhodesia. Under such circumstances, the white minority government in Rhodesia would be put under even greater strain due to the increased isolation that would result, and

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<sup>19</sup> Barber and Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security*, p.176.

South Africa would be drawn even further into Rhodesian affairs through increased demands for economic and military support. Also, Vorster reasoned, a desperate Rhodesian regime so isolated might lash out unpredictably into other countries (such as Zambia, where two rival Zimbabwean nationalist movements, and SWAPO, could be found) with preemptive or retaliatory strikes against guerillas. If that happened, Pretoria feared events would spiral completely out of its control.

In contrast to the cautious diplomacy of *detente* related to Mozambique's independence, Vorster acted much differently in Angola. Despite the apparent chaos of three rival nationalist movements fighting the Portuguese and each other, jockeying for power positions and territory before the 11 November 1975 date set for official independence, Vorster sent South African troops into the fray in October. SADF troops were quick to join up with the *Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA) and *Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola* (FNLA) armies (both of which had been receiving South African aid, as they were perceived to be least hostile to the South African regime) and to engage the Soviet-backed *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA). While the situation was complicated, Vorster's motives for the intervention were simple: to ensure a non-hostile, co-operative Angola (either through a compliant MPLA government, or a puppet government consisting of UNITA and the FNLA), and to affirm Pretoria's dominance in southern Africa, thereby ensuring some security for South Africa's white minority.

In their initial push, the combined SADF, UNITA, and FNLA troops met with success against MPLA forces. But as the offensive neared Luanda, the capital, it lost momentum because promised US support never materialised. Additionally, the MPLA's troops had been bolstered by nearly 7,000 Cuban troops and massive amounts of Soviet

supplies.<sup>20</sup> Overextended, bogged down, and in danger of having his forces engaged in a costly occupation, if not in an escalating conflict as more Cuban troops began to arrive on the scene, Vorster withdrew all troops by early March 1976. It was a major blow to South African policy makers because none of their objectives had been achieved. In fact, Pretoria perceived South Africa's position to be much worse: not only had it been humiliated militarily, but the MPLA's legitimacy as Angola's government was secure with forty-one out of forty-six African states granting it exclusive recognition; the MPLA had obtained Angola's membership in the OAU, the UN, as well as joined others as a 'Frontline State' against apartheid; and a significant Cuban military presence was now in southern Africa. To make matters worse, nearly all now viewed South Africa not only as a racist state, but because of its Angolan intervention, also as an aggressor against African aspirations for self-determination.

Thus, at the beginning of 1977 Pretoria was languishing for an Africa policy. The white controlled bloc had disintegrated after the departure of the Portuguese, South Africa's attempt to impose its will militarily in Angola had failed, and the installation of Marxist governments in Mozambique and Angola proved to make regional co-operation ideologically impossible, even when *detente* was encouraged. In a conscious move, Vorster pushed security concerns to the forefront of South African foreign policy, speaking of a 'Masada Spirit' where South Africa would have to stand alone to weather a 'total political

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<sup>20</sup> R. Hallett, 'The South African Intervention in Angola, 1975-1976', in *African Affairs*, 77, 308 (July 1978): pp.355-356.

onslaught'.<sup>21</sup>

The preeminence of security issues became clear when the South African government presented its *1977 White Paper on Defence*. In the paper, the government claimed: 'It is essential that a Total National Strategy (TNS) be formulated at the highest level. The defence of the Republic of South Africa is not solely the responsibility of the Department of Defence. On the contrary, it is the responsibility of every population group.' It went on to conclude: 'It (the TNS) demands interdependent and co-ordinated action in all fields -- military, psychological economic, political, sociological, technological, diplomatic, ideological, cultural, etcetera...'.<sup>22</sup>

When Vorster resigned and P.W. Botha became Prime Minister on 28 September 1978 -- significantly from the position of Defence Minister -- South African foreign policy towards Africa became firmly tied to carrying out the (TNS). Botha reinforced fears of a communist plot for Africa, one in which communists wished to dominate the sea lanes, control mineral supplies, and overthrow minority rule. To counter 'the full onslaught of Marxism', Botha stressed that South Africans must have a siege mentality, proposing that the country could best defend itself by establishing a perimeter in southern Africa.<sup>23</sup> As a part of the TNS, therefore, he proposed a 'Constellation of Southern African States' (CONSAS) using 'a common approach in the security field, the economic field, and even in

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<sup>21</sup> *South African House of Assembly Debates* (2 February 1978), cols. 325 and 338.

<sup>22</sup> Department of Defence, *White Paper on Defence* (Pretoria: WPF-1977, 1977), p.4.

<sup>23</sup> *South African House of Assembly Debates* (31 January 1978), cols. 103-104.

the political field.<sup>24</sup> The plan was to include between seven and ten states, including Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Rhodesia, Namibia, South Africa, and the three 'independent' homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda. It was hoped that Zambia would join, and possibly even Mozambique.

Yet, regardless of what merits Botha preached about the CONSAS, no country except Malawi, the only majority-governed African country ever to establish diplomatic relations with South Africa during the apartheid era, was willing to formalise its relationship with Pretoria. For other African countries, especially the Frontline States, the very fact that South Africa insisted that the CONSAS include the non-recognised Bantustans, the minority regime in Rhodesia, and South African-controlled Namibia as full and equal partners was insulting. None were willing to become involved in such an association. Just like Vorster before him, Botha was to learn that the political and ideological divide between South Africa and most of Africa was very great indeed.

Assessing the state of affairs in Africa in 1980, it is not surprising that Botha's CONSAS initiative faded. First, the year opened with the countries of southern Africa forming a 'counter constellation' known as the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). Consisting of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, SADCC's goals were simple: to reduce the Frontline States' dependence on South Africa, to increase South Africa's international isolation, and to bring an end to apartheid. Second, April 1980 witnessed the passing of white minority rule in Rhodesia to majority rule. As an early indication of how Robert

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<sup>24</sup> Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making*, p.41.

Mugabe's Republic of Zimbabwe would view the white regime in South Africa, representatives of the South African government were excluded from the independence ceremony; in their place were delegates from the Southwest African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO), the African National Congress (ANC), and the Pan African Congress (PAC).<sup>25</sup>

Finally, a 'contact group' of the five Western powers and the UN was exerting unprecedented pressure concerning South Africa's hold on Namibia, threatening widespread economic sanctions against the Republic unless some progress was made towards self-determination.

Accordingly, at the close of 1980, Botha was forced to amend his grandiose constellation design, having 'formalised' relationships no further away than the 'independent' homelands. In so doing, South Africa's perimeter against the 'total onslaught' was not at the Zambezi, but at the Limpopo and Orange Rivers, South Africa's very borders. However, though establishing a distant perimeter as a part of the Total National Strategy had failed, there was one area in which Botha claimed success: South Africans had developed a 'go-it-alone' mentality, embodied partly in the fact that the country was nearly self-sufficient militarily. As South Africa's neighbours were soon to find out, this was to have implications for them.

Having failed in enticing African states to join its Constellation of Southern African States, by 1980 the South African regime became committed to using its military superiority and economic strength to put the Frontline States on a defensive footing. While diplomacy was to continue to play an important role, it was mainly to be coercive diplomacy (i.e., with

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<sup>25</sup>

J. Meintjes, *General Louis Botha: A Biography* (London: Cassell, 1970), p.279.

the threat of the use of force behind it).<sup>26</sup> As Botha stated: 'The gun and the maize train will speak louder than a hundred speeches at the United Nations.'<sup>27</sup>

To these ends, in June 1980 the SADF initiated Operation Skeptic, penetrating more than 120 kilometres into Angola, killing more than 360 SWAPO insurgents, and eliminating a major SWAPO base. Soon after, Operation Smokeshell was undertaken involving three squadrons of Mirage IIIs and Buccaneer bombers -- the largest operation of the SADF in Angola yet, and the largest mobilisation of South African forces since World War Two.<sup>28</sup> And in early 1981, following a speech in which President Mugabe of Zimbabwe expressed strong anti-apartheid sentiments and made a call for sanctions against South Africa, Pretoria threw Zimbabwe's rail system into disarray by recalling 25 locomotives and 150 railway technicians; Pretoria also threatened not to renew a preferential trade agreement, which promised to wreak untold economic harm on Zimbabwe.<sup>29</sup> These acts signalled that Botha had adopted and launched South Africa's unofficial foreign policy campaign of destabilisation.

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<sup>26</sup> Tim Zimmerman describes coercive diplomacy as an attempt 'to undermine the opponent's will'. It involves an escalation of pressure 'from verbal threats to use of force' in order to 'induce the opponent to behave in a specific way'. See: T. Zimmerman, 'The American Bombing of Libya: A Success for Coercive Diplomacy', in *Survival*, 29, 3, (London: IISS, May-June 1987), p.195.

<sup>27</sup> S. Jenkins, 'Destabilisation in Southern Africa', in *The Economist*, 16 July 1983, p.15.

<sup>28</sup> C. Coker, *United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986), p.227.

<sup>29</sup> P. Johnson and D. Martin (eds.), *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986), p.94.

The rational behind destabilisation was that, first, though South Africa's neighbours might not be friendly to the Republic, at the very least they would be unable to act against it due to the internal problems that the use of South African force caused. Second, acts of sabotage and economic disruption -- if not outright military invasions -- would ensure the economic vulnerability of states, maintaining or increasing dependence on outside aid or South African assistance. Third, destabilisation eliminated the need for the removal of unfriendly Frontline State governments because destabilising acts impeded their success, therefore making them relatively benign to South Africa. Finally, destabilisation held countries accountable, in Botha's eyes, for aiding or abetting the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups by making countries weigh the costs versus the benefits of helping them, thus encouraging cracks in the solidarity of the anti-apartheid movement.<sup>30</sup>

As a part of destabilisation, Botha ordered small, frequent raids into Mozambique and Lesotho, continued covert support for rebel armies such as the Lesotho Liberation Army, the *Resistencia Nacional Mocambique* (RENAMO) and UNITA, and encouraged dissidents in the Matabeleland Province of Zimbabwe. But by far South Africa's most obvious efforts at destabilisation occurred in Angola. Eight known large-scale South African operations had occurred in Angola by the end of 1982, inflicting an estimated US\$7 billion worth of damage and resulting in an untold loss of life. The war had also created an internal refugee problem that was the second-worst in Africa, behind Somalia's.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to Angola, South Africa's destabilisation activities in Mozambique were not ones of pitched battles and large military operations involving South African troops, but

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<sup>30</sup> Coker, *United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics*, p.227.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

rather, it was a 'hidden war' involving support for its proxy army, RENAMO. South African foreign policy makers placed a high level of importance in supporting RENAMO because in sustaining RENAMO's war against the FRELIMO government, South Africa could influence the affairs of several countries.

One area highlighting how South Africa influenced other countries through its support of RENAMO is through the analysis of regional rail traffic. Whereas before RENAMO began its insurgency 54 percent of Zimbabwe's rail traffic passed through the Mozambican ports of Beira and Maputo, by the end of 1983, after RENAMO had undertaken widespread sabotage of the railways, Zimbabwe's rail traffic through Mozambique was reduced to less than 10 percent, the rest having been redirected to South African routes. Similarly, despite having two alternatives to South Africa, 40 percent of Zambia's exports and 70 percent of its imports flowed on South African routes by late 1983; this was a factor of one rail-line, the Benguela into Angola, being closed because of UNITA activity, and the other rail-line, the Tazara into Tanzania, possessing limited capacity.<sup>32</sup> For its part, Swaziland had no alternatives when its outlet to Maputo was disrupted; as a result, when RENAMO activity increased all of Swaziland's rail traffic had to be redirected through South Africa. In Malawi's case, its *only* rail link was to Mozambique; when RENAMO actions closed this, it not only necessitated re-routing to South Africa, but required the use of slow road transport. In sum, the decreased rail traffic to Mozambique precipitated by RENAMO's campaigns increased countries' dependency on South Africa. Additionally, decreased rail

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<sup>32</sup> Barber and Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security, 19945-1988*, p.273. Also, see Gavin Maasdorp, 'Squaring up to Economic Dominance: Regional Patterns', in *South Africa and Its Neighbours* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1985), p.106.

traffic served the dual purpose of putting pressure on the Marxist FRELIMO government by denying it badly needed revenue.

Despite the West's view and fear that destabilisation was a strategy without an end-game goal, seemingly dependent on varying levels of indefinite conflict, arguably, at least from Botha's perspective, it was a logical foreign policy endeavour with an achievable end.<sup>33</sup> As Chris Coker noted, divide and rule had been the guiding principle in the white regime's subjugation of South Africa's black population; Botha sought to do the same through destabilisation by capitalising on the Frontline States' different histories, economic circumstances, degrees of dependence on South Africa, and political preferences, thereby preventing them from presenting a unified front against South Africa.<sup>34</sup> In so doing, he was able to avoid initiatives that had so often met with failure (e.g., the 'outward movement' and CONSAS), instead enabling him to try to put together, piece by piece, a puzzle of coerced security concessions from individual African states.

In this light, Botha must have felt vindicated for pursuing the unofficial policy of destabilisation when, toward the end of 1983, Lesotho gave in to South African demands and

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<sup>33</sup> Deon Geldenhuys makes valid points in regard to this issue when he points out that instability and deprivation on South Africa's borders could not provide a buffer of security for the white regime, but rather a source of insecurity -- for example, through the loss of power from the Cahora Bassa Hydroelectric Dam in Mozambique and the inability to ship exports to Maputo. He goes on to argue that destabilisation, then, was a temporary necessity for achieving 'a fundamental shift or reorientation in the target state's policy *vis-a-vis* the destabiliser' and not an end in itself (Source: D. Geldenhuys, *Destabili(s)ation Controversy in Southern Africa*, Position Paper 18, vol.5 (Johannesburg: South Africa Forum, 1982)).

<sup>34</sup> Coker, *United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics*, p.235.

began to evacuate ANC members. Soon after, in the spring of 1984, South Africa and Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord, an agreement that bound Mozambique to preventing the ANC from launching attacks against South Africa in return for the cessation of South African support to RENAMO. Then, two weeks after the Nkomati Accord, it was disclosed that a similar secret accord had been reached with Swaziland. Finally, the Lusaka Agreement was announced in which South Africa would end its occupation of southern Angola so that a joint monitoring commission could be established in the Namibian border town of Oshikango.

Having surmised that destabilisation had provided South Africa with some degree of 'breathing room' on its borders, Botha enacted internal reforms with the hope of alleviating international pressure, especially by the SADCC countries, stemming from South Africa's apartheid policies. His major 'reform' -- a referendum where white voters endorsed in a two-to-one vote to create a tricameral parliament that included the coloured and Indian minorities, but not the black majority -- had just the opposite effect. Moreover, it highlighted the extent to which apartheid influenced South Africa's international affairs.

In September 1984, the townships were already on the verge of rioting because of unaffordable rent increases and a drop in black living standards relative to whites. When black political aspirations were dashed with the emergence of the tricameral legislature that excluded them, the frustrated majority erupted in protest. So violent and sudden was the unrest that the SADF were deployed to restore order, but this only served to fan the flames of unrest, in no small part because of the troops' provocative and harsh methods. Desperate to end the spiralling violence and to reassure whites, Botha called a State of Emergency in mid-July. As a result, international concern was aroused, causing a drop in business

confidence that led to a dramatic fall in the value of the rand, and in an unprecedented state of affairs, for numerous Western governments to become vocally supportive of economic sanctions.

Under such international pressure, Pretoria desired to present a return to normalcy as quickly as possible. So, on 7 March 1986, Botha called an end to the State of Emergency for most of the country. Ironically, rather than show the international community the stability of South Africa's internal situation, it further accentuated its instability. During the State of Emergency the government had granted almost unlimited powers of search, arrest, detention, interrogation, and censorship; security and police forces had accordingly quelled most instances of mass violence. When the Emergency was lifted, violence recommenced immediately. This confirmed to observers the true feelings of South Africa's majority, and the means the white minority would have to use to maintain apartheid. Voicing what many now thought about South Africa and the white regime's policies, international or otherwise, Kaunda of Zambia stated that the problem was 'not Mozambique, it is not Zambia, it is not Angola, or even SWAPO. The problem is the philosophy of apartheid'.<sup>35</sup> In a dramatic move, the more radical Frontline States, the European Community, and the United States adopted 'creeping' sanctions in which each new package threatened to be less symbolic and more substantial.

With seemingly little chance of gaining anything from SADCC countries or the larger international community in terms of acceptance of the white regime and its apartheid policies, Botha's resolve to give priority to security considerations became even more

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*The Times* (London), 16 March 1984.

intractable. Externally, he ordered a series of military strikes against the ANC in Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Significantly, the strikes coincided with a visit by a Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG), sent to evaluate what incentives could be offered to South Africa to encourage reform, resulting in the EPG's abrupt cancellation. Soon afterwards, just before the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising, Botha initiated another countrywide State of Emergency on 12 June 1986. Western governments were compelled to act, ultimately imposing a diverse range of comprehensive public and private sanctions on the Republic.

Despite the economic hardships sanctions imposed, Botha continued to match security measures within South Africa with actions across its borders into Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Mozambique. However, from late 1987, South African foreign policy makers were again compelled to direct much of their focus to the conflict in Angola. In September and October the Angolans, with Cuban support, launched a massive offensive against UNITA for control of Cuando-Cubango province. Botha felt obligated to commit South African troops (explicitly admitting it on this occasion) because, he warned, if the province fell into the MPLA's hands then the 'SWAPO and ANC terrorists' would have greater freedom of movement into Namibia. Trying to thwart criticism within South Africa of its growing involvement in another Angolan war, and as an appeal to conservatives in the West, General Magnus Malan added that the intervention was necessary to halt a Cuban-Russian offensive threatening to defeat UNITA. If that happened, he maintained, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia 'would then be overwhelmed by Russian-Cuban aggression...'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *The Citizen* (South Africa), 13 November 1987.

Intense fighting in Cuando-Cubango province raged into the early months of 1988, with the bulk of it centred around the key town of Cuito Cuanavale. Despite numerous attempts to take the town, South African troops were unable to do so, and in the process, sustained unprecedented losses. Faced with an increasingly dominant Cuban air force and garrison in Angola, and economic and political disquiet at home, Pretoria had found the limits to its ability to project power. In a dramatic move to find some resolution to the costly military stalemate in Angola, Pretoria was thus compelled to accept a framework of negotiations established by Chester Crocker, the American Under-Secretary of African Affairs, regarding Namibia and Angola. In December 1988, an agreement was signed enabling for the implementation of the United Nations' Namibian Independence Agreement, which linked the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. As an added bonus for the Pretoria regime, in return for its agreement to end support for UNITA, the MPLA agreed to close ANC military bases in central and northern Angola.<sup>37</sup>

In the wake of the Angolan/Namibian agreement, a relatively positive climate emerged in South African international affairs, at least in comparison to what much of the 1980s had been like. Encouraged by the international accolades that followed the agreement's announcement, Botha embarked in 1988 on a series of visits to Malawi, Zaire, and Mozambique -- the Mozambican visit resulting in agreements between the two countries covering security, labour, transport, power, forestry, and health. Additionally, constructive dealings with the Soviet Union during the Angola/Namibia negotiations virtually ended the legitimacy of the claim that Africa was in danger of a Moscow-orchestrated 'total onslaught'

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<sup>37</sup> S.J. Baynham and G. Mills, 'Angola's Land Battle: A Post Mortem', *Front File*, 9 (December 1987).

bent on founding communist states through black revolution in Africa. Slowly, South African policy makers were acquiring confidence that much more could be gained from diplomacy than through militancy.

Change in South African international and domestic affairs gained momentum when, in February 1989, Botha suffered a stroke and was forced to step down. Subsequently, political power passed to F.W. De Klerk. Dramatically, De Klerk poised South Africa and South Africans for a bold course that was to break free from apartheid. After more than forty years of seeking security through violence and coercion, yet failing to find it, the white minority's place in Africa was not to be forced or enforced; from 1990 onwards, officials claimed, the South African government was to serve the hopes and needs of all South Africans through negotiation and compromise. In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, it was the commencement of a new struggle -- one which would see South African foreign policy makers alternately groping, stumbling, and striving to overcome enduring legacies of the past.

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## PERIOD ONE: OBsolescence

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*'The world changes faster than the people in it.'*

*So said John Gardner, and his words rang true at the dawn of the 1990s. Though the Berlin Wall had fallen in November 1989, there was a noticeable gap between the event and when officials in Washington and Pretoria responded. By January 1990, however, policy makers were beginning to acknowledge that the collapse of 'The Wall', and what its collapse meant in terms of the viability of international communism, might just be irreversible.*

*In terms of US foreign policy towards Africa, the retreat of communism meant that the magnetic north of US foreign policy for nearly half a century -- containment of Soviet influence -- was no longer applicable on the continent. In the absence of a perceived hostile Soviet presence, key US foreign policy makers could find only marginal reasons for American involvement with Africa. As a result, from January 1990, a deliberate attempt was made to downgrade the continent's profile and prominence in US foreign policy. Yet, before downgrading could be undertaken for the continent as a whole, a resolution had to be found for the very volatile, and high profile, issue of apartheid. To these ends, what attention US foreign policy makers did give to Africa was mostly directed at South Africa, and even then, it was done as carefully and as quietly as possible.*

*With Soviet communism in shambles at the start of 1990, and Moscow's efficacy limited, the fear of a race war (as communist 'class struggle' was equated with by the white minority in South Africa) was subsiding for the South African government. In part, this led President F.W. De Klerk, on 2 February 1990, to unban opposition parties and to free Nelson Mandela, the personification of the anti-apartheid struggle. Almost immediately, the government was rewarded with an easing of its international isolation. The positive climate further inclined the government to swear-off the violent and coercive policies of the past, and instead to advocate vigorously diplomacy, dialogue, and good-neighbourliness. Yet at the same time, the African National Congress, the party at the head of the anti-apartheid struggle, continued to press for the government's isolation abroad coupled with sanctions, at least until such a time when democratic elections could be guaranteed. Consequently, in the early 1990s, South African foreign policy towards Africa took on a degree of duality: at once serving a government in power while being influenced by the pursuits of what many considered to be the next government-in-waiting.*

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## Chapter Three: Africa Descendant

At the beginning of 1990, United States foreign policy makers had every reason to be euphoric. The Berlin Wall was being torn down, the Iron Curtain continued to fall as communist regimes in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania were overthrown or cast out in elections, and politicians within the Soviet Union were pushing ahead with *perestroika* and *glasnost*. After nearly a half century, an end to the Cold War and America's global anti-communist crusade was within reach. Seemingly overnight, the ideals US foreign policy makers had advocated for so long were apparently triumphing. By the same token, that which had been pursued for so long -- containment of Soviet influence -- was no longer applicable.

Perhaps more so than anywhere else, the sudden foreign policy obsolescence of containment posed distinct difficulties for advocates of continued US involvement with Africa. Clearly, support for the blind bolstering of regimes and the arming of guerillas of every colour and creed, as long as they claimed to be anti-communist, was no longer desired. In fact, after American mediators had worked in bi-partisan fashion with their Soviet counterparts to broker the Angolan/Namibian settlement in July 1988, it could hardly be justified. The amicability US and Soviet foreign policy makers had shown in the settlement process, combined with the USSR's implosion, all but assured American foreign policy makers that there was no 'Soviet Threat' to contend with in Africa.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, when

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<sup>1</sup> For a 'unique' article, see 'USA/USSR: The New Partition of Africa', in *Africa Confidential* (3 March 1989). With definite conspiratorial undertones, the article claims that there was a deal struck between US and Soviet foreign policy makers. The assertion is that in return for Washington's guarantees not to intervene in eastern Europe -- thereby enabling Moscow to proceed with

compared to US interests in Europe or the Middle East (e.g., NATO and oil), Africa hardly registered. Furthermore, President George Bush was more than capable in the field of international affairs,<sup>2</sup> aware of all of the above, and convinced that sustained American involvement with the continent could not be rationalised. Indeed, Bush insisted that US foreign policy towards Africa had to become 'a low-key, low-profile affair with little room for ideology or flamboyant rhetoric', and that whenever possible 'conciliation, compromise and behind-the-scenes negotiation rather than by noisy confrontation' had to be pursued.<sup>3</sup>

One country, though, South Africa, continued to demand US foreign policy makers' attention, and to generate fierce emotions. As the vocal anti-apartheid lobby was quick to point out, though there were stirrings of potential change within South Africa at the beginning of 1990, apartheid and widespread civil unrest were still a reality. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* had echoed these sentiments, commenting that President F.W. De Klerk,<sup>4</sup> like his predecessor P.W. Botha, might only be trying to put a kinder and gentler face on apartheid's old ways. The article observed: 'The sun was just beginning to rise on F.W.

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reform in the region at a pace acceptable to its politicians and military --  
Moscow renounced hegemonic aspirations in Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Bush's varied political career included: Vice President, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a former representative to China (before the United States and China had established full diplomatic relations with one another), a former Congressman, and one-time chairman of the Republican Party.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in D. Mervin, *George Bush and the Guardianship Presidency* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p.172. For a perspective on Bush's influences and inclinations in regard to US foreign policy in general, see Chapter Four, 'A Guardian's Agenda', and Chapter Seven, 'Guardianship and Foreign Policy.'

<sup>4</sup> F.W. De Klerk, originally the national chairperson of South Africa's ruling National Party, was elected President of the Republic in September 1989.

De Klerk's "New South Africa" when the casualty figures from fresh police clashes with anti-apartheid protesters started escalating... Eleven dead in Mitchell's Plain, four dead in Lavender Hill, two dead in Khayelitsha. In all, church groups said 25 people died and more than 100 were injured in the black townships around Cape Town...<sup>5</sup>

In spite of the attention South Africa continued to generate, Bush, and therefore the Bush administration, was committed to finding ways to downgrade it as a necessary prerequisite for doing the same with Africa as a whole. In an effort to match personnel with strategies and objectives, Bush replaced Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Chester Crocker with Herman Cohen. This was a significant move because Crocker had held the post for eight years, the longest-ever appointment since the creation of the Africa bureau in 1958. In the position, Crocker had been dynamic, vocal, and assertive, playing a pivotal role in the brokering of the Angola/Namibia Accords, and almost single-handedly raising awareness of Africa to levels previously unknown in US foreign policy making circles. By contrast, Cohen was a Foreign Service professional prone to adopt low-key approaches -- approaches, it was hoped, that would be conducive for unanimity and accord.

Acting on the White House's wishes, one of Cohen's first undertakings was to try and convince Congress that 'a democratic solution (in South Africa) may be achievable' if the US adopted a stance of 'dialogue, negotiation, and compromise'.<sup>6</sup> Cohen went to great lengths to point out that:

\* on 15 October 1989, De Klerk had released Walter Sisulu and seven other political prisoners. Then, following their return to Soweto township, the

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<sup>5</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 1989, p.8.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in 'State Nominee Stresses Peace in Africa', *Washington Post*, 4 May 1989, p.A21.

South African government had allowed an ANC rally -- the first in twenty-five years;

- \* De Klerk had also moved to dismantle some of the legal aspects of apartheid, including scrapping on 16 November 1989 the Separate Amenities Act, which segregated public facilities, and on 24 November 1989 the Group Areas Act, one of the cornerstones of apartheid;
- \* and finally, it was rumoured that De Klerk had held a secret meeting with Nelson Mandela at De Klerk's official residence in Cape Town -- purportedly to discuss the possible release of Mandela, and prospects for political power-sharing in the future.<sup>7</sup>

In light of these developments, Cohen asked for those who wanted tougher measures against South Africa to be patient -- at least until February 1990, when the next session of South Africa's parliament would begin and De Klerk might declare his hand. As he had claimed before, indications were that 'a (South Africa) negotiation scenario may be just beyond the horizon'.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, there were many who did not share Cohen's pleas for patience. For example, Senator Edward Kennedy had introduced another more comprehensive sanctions bill, arguing that a 'grace period' suggested by Cohen was inadvisable when there was 'no question' that trade and financial sanctions passed by Congress in 1986 had worked. If anything, Kennedy had stressed, more sanctions would hasten change.<sup>9</sup> The anti-apartheid lobby, too, had refused to lessen their calls for action, stating that the US should impose

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<sup>7</sup> *Cape Times*, 3 February 1990.

<sup>8</sup> United States Senate, 'Statement of Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (Accompanied by Robert Perito, Director for Southern African Affairs, Department of State, and John Byerly, Assistant Legal Adviser for African Affairs, Department of State), Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, 101st Congress, 1st Session', in *US Policy Toward South Africa* (3 October 1989): p.14.

<sup>9</sup> *Washington Post*, 4 October 1989.

tougher conditions. As some lobbyists noted, South African debt totalling US\$8 billion was due for repayment in mid-1990. With the South African government needing to reschedule the debt or most likely default, the US had a unique opportunity to exert tremendous pressure for change.<sup>10</sup>

The refusal of key individuals like Kennedy and anti-apartheid lobbyists to accept the Bush administration's proposed agenda of patience bore a number of political pitfalls. As Reagan's Vice President, Bush knew better than most the dangers of appearing out-of-step, if not against, Congressional demands with regard to South Africa. Herman Nickel, Reagan's appointed Ambassador to South Africa from 1982 to 1986, painted a clear picture of the perils when he said: 'Reagan never succeeded in communicating his sympathy with the victims of apartheid, so the Congress doubted whether his heart was in the right place on the issue of racial justice generally and South Africa in particular.'<sup>11</sup> Consequently, when Reagan vetoed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, the Congress had quickly and resoundingly overrode it. Even more astounding, large numbers of Republicans had abandoned a popular President of their own party during an election year in order to do it.<sup>12</sup> And even then, the political fallout had not stopped at Capitol Hill. In addition to alienating the anti-apartheid lobbies, Reagan had also alienated himself from many grassroots African-American and civil rights organisations. In fact, events surrounding Reagan's handling of South Africa gained such a negative air that even the normally tolerant Bishop Desmond

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<sup>10</sup> *Washington Post*, 2 June 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in 'Bush Meets Tutu and Vows to Press Pretoria', *New York Times*, 19 May 1989, p.A8.

<sup>12</sup> See Paul Simon, 'The Senate's New African Agenda', *Africa Report*, 32, 3 (May-June 1987), p.41.

Tutu voiced the opinion that Reagan was 'a racist, pure and simple'.<sup>13</sup>

Good students of the recent past, officials in the Bush administration thus set a course to avoid the mistakes Reagan had made in handling South African-related issues, even as they looked to downgrade them. Quite skilfully, administration officials first set about quieting questions relating to Bush's anti-apartheid beliefs by noting that he had met key anti-apartheid activists early in his tenure as president. These guests had included the Afrikaner cleric Beyers Naude, Albertina 'Mama' Sisulu (the co-president of South Africa's United Democratic Front and wife of Walter Sisulu, the prominent ANC leader who had been imprisoned with Mandela for a quarter of a century), and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Tutu, it was highlighted, had said of Bush following one meeting that, in contrast to his predecessor, 'the new man in the White House was a catalyst for change and a positive influence'.<sup>14</sup>

Next, administration officials tried to get Congress on-side. Cohen told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the administration would consider additional punitive measures -- as certain quarters of Congress were demanding -- if the South African government did not take further legislative action to abolish apartheid before June 1990.<sup>15</sup> This made an impression on Congressional leaders because firstly, it set a specific deadline for action, and secondly, it assured them that the administration was not trying to go over or around their authority as the Reagan administration had tried to do.

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in 'Bush Meets Tutu and Vows to Press Pretoria', *New York Times*, 19 May 1989, p.A8.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in 'Bush Meets Tutu and Vows to Press Pretoria', *Ibid.*, p.A8.

<sup>15</sup> *Washington Post*, 4 October 1989.

Finally, in order to lessen the pressure from the anti-apartheid lobby to precipitate a major financial crisis in South Africa by preventing the extension of the grace periods on repayment of South African loans, administration officials supported a quiet public relations offensive publicising the broader ramifications. For example, figures were made public that a South African default would directly affect US government revenues at the federal, state, and local levels because it was these levels of government which had made many of the loans. In a default situation, these government bodies would most likely be forced to sell the outstanding principal on the secondary market, where they would find buyers only if they were willing to take a loss of at least 25 percent or more.<sup>16</sup> On Capitol Hill, testimony was given to legislators on the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on International Development, Finance, Trade and Monetary Policy. There, John Simone, Executive Vice-President of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, warned that a South African default would force US banks to write-off some US\$3 billion in debt relief annually. If that happened, Simone cautioned, other debtors in the Third World might be forced to default which, in turn, would severely damage the US's credit standing.<sup>17</sup>

Soon after its initiation, the Bush administration's quiet offensive appeared to be nurturing an environment where the attention given to South African issues could be toned

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<sup>16</sup> See Paul Rich, 'Changing Relations with the United States', in *From Pariah to Participant: South Africa's Evolving Foreign Relations, 1990-1994*, ed. Greg Mills (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1994), p.101.

<sup>17</sup> United States House of Representatives, 'Joint Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Development, Finance, Trade, and Monetary Policy of the Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs and the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 101-79', in *Recent Developments in South Africa and HR 3458* (21-22 February 1990), p.107.

down, thereby bringing them in-line with Bush's overall goal of downgrading Africa in US foreign policy. For example, members of the anti-apartheid lobby -- not to mention the House Subcommittee on Africa and the Congressional Black Caucus, two of the lobbyists' most sympathetic fora -- were quieted because they understood that if a US financial crisis was precipitated through the pursuance of their anti-apartheid agenda, then their political viability would be severely compromised in the future. However, before events in Washington could coalesce fully, on 2 February 1990, F.W. De Klerk gave his historic speech before the opening of the South African parliament; soon, De Klerk said, Nelson Mandela and many others would be freed, and political parties such as the African National Congress would be unbanned. While it would be wrong to say US foreign policy makers were not pleased to hear the news, it did cause an eruption of debate in the US as to whether De Klerk was sincere or not, and correspondingly, whether more US sanctions were necessary, if present ones were sufficient, or if some should be partially lifted.

Stuck between still wanting to downgrade South Africa and the realisation that it was all but impossible to do so, administration officials wavered. For example, while praising De Klerk as a man 'who is making dramatic changes', Bush told a press conference on 12 February 1990 that he would not ask Congress to lift sanctions until South Africa had met certain conditions. Then, only 16 days later, on 28 February 1990, Bush met with Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Buthelezi emerged from the meeting to inform reporters that he had asked for the lifting of sanctions on the premise that sanctions 'maximises black misery', to which Bush had responded that he would seek to drop them as soon as possible.

In an attempt to force the administration to take a firmer stand on the course of US foreign policy regarding South Africa, on 1 March 1990 a delegation of seven Democratic

and two Republican congressmen, under the leadership of House Majority Whip William Gray, called in on Nelson Mandela in Lusaka, Zambia. During the meeting, Mandela first thanked the US Congress for its support of the anti-apartheid struggle over the years, but he then urged the legislators to resist all calls to ease sanctions. Mandela said: 'You must remember that the demand in our country is for a non-racial society. We are very far from that and it is too early for anybody to expect us to call for the lifting of sanctions.'<sup>18</sup>

Yet, the attention the Congressional visit to Lusaka received, and whatever pressure that resulted on the Bush administration to maintain or increase sanctions, was balanced by the fact that on 21 March 1990 South Africa handed formal independence to Namibia. Representing Bush at the ceremony which saw the lowering of the South African flag so the new Namibian one could be raised were Secretary of State James Baker, and his African assistant, Herman Cohen -- both of whom nodded approvingly when De Klerk declared himself 'an advocate for peace' and pronounced the 'season of violence' over in southern Africa.

Over the next several months, skirmishes in Washington between those favouring the partial lifting of sanctions and the maintenance of existing ones produced a continuation of the status quo. However, from late June 1990, the latter group seemed to gain the upper hand when Mandela arrived in the United States for a ten-day tour. Whether it was in meetings with the mayor of New York or Senator Edward Kennedy in Boston, in front of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid, or at press conferences, Mandela was adamant about calling for vigilance in keeping sanctions going. In a 35-minute speech before a joint session of Congress -- interrupted nineteen times by applause and three standing ovations -- Mandela hammered this message home by insisting: 'We still have a struggle on

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Quoted in the *New York Times*, 21 March 1990.

our hands. Our common and noble efforts to abolish a system of white minority domination must continue. We are encouraged and strengthened by the fact of the agreement between ourselves, this Congress, as well as President Bush and his administration, that sanctions should remain in place... for the purpose for which they were imposed has not yet been achieved.<sup>19</sup>

In the wake of Mandela's visit, there was a definite change in the nature of the anti-apartheid debate in Washington. As Mandela had hoped, his visit recharged Congressional interest in, and support for, his political agenda of isolation, of which sanctions were key.<sup>20</sup> Despite the fact that the White House exercised prudence in not pushing its preferences during and after the Mandela visit, most in Congress knew that US foreign policy makers were being instructed to try and ease US sanctions.<sup>21</sup> A rumour supporting this suspicion was circulating that Bush had had his ambassador in South Africa, William Swing, convey to South African government officials that the White House was closely following the

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in 'A Transcript of Mandela's Speech Before the Joint Session of Congress', *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, 26 June 1990.

<sup>20</sup> As an interesting aside, the apparent Congressional support for Mandela and the ANC was not shared by a significant proportion of the American public, as reflected in a NBC/Wall Street Journal survey. The survey, conducted shortly after Mandela's visit, showed that only 53 percent of those polled favoured the continuation of sanctions, or for harsher measures. By contrast, 31 percent favoured a decrease in sanctions or their removal, and 16 percent were not sure. Moreover, 54 percent of those surveyed were against giving the ANC any aid because of its failure to reject armed conflict (Source: United States Information Agency, *Wireless File*, 17 August 1990).

<sup>21</sup> While not of an extreme opinion as Margaret Thatcher's in the British government (who had lifted the ban on foreign investment in, and discouragement of travel to, South Africa shortly after the release of Mandela, claiming such moves were the best way to encourage progress in South Africa), the Bush administration did fear that without some encouragement members of the South African government might stop their reforms, feeling they had nothing to gain and everything to lose.

guidelines of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 under which sanctions could be lifted. While undoubtedly the message was meant to be a carrot to keep South African government officials moving forward,<sup>22</sup> Mandela's visit had convinced many in Congress that the South African government best understood pressure and would only proceed with change if subjected to it. The only way this could be done, these Congresspersons believed, was to support Mandela and the ANC.

As a result, though the White House and Congress had the same end-game goal for South Africa's internal situation (i.e., to end apartheid), there was a definite divide on how best to achieve it. Fortunately for administration officials, the divide had not become overtly antagonistic, which would have helped little in allowing them to downgrade South Africa, and subsequently Africa, in the overall US foreign policy picture. Nonetheless, administration officials were not taking it for granted that the divide might yet erupt into a public row.

To a degree, concern of public confrontation stemmed from the US political system itself. In very simple terms, the US political system, as set out by its constitution, is centred around separation-of-powers and checks-and-balances between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. For example, the president can negotiate a treaty with another country, but it does not become legally binding until two-thirds of the Senate (the upper house of the legislature) votes to approve it. Conversely, a legislative act can be approved by both houses of Congress, but it does not become law unless the President signs it, or unless two-thirds of both houses vote to override a Presidential veto. The nature of the political system is such

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<sup>22</sup> See P. Rich, 'Changing Relations with the United States,' in *From Pariah to Participant: South Africa's Evolving Foreign Relations, 1990-1994*, ed. Greg Mills (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1994), p.102.

that confrontation and compromise -- or in extreme cases, confrontation and concession -- are the norm.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, there are often struggles between the White House and Congress as each seeks to leverage the other in order to implement or influence a certain agenda.<sup>24</sup>

In regard to South Africa, Congress had clearly set a tone and course of US foreign policy in 1986. By vigorously asserting its constitutional powers in order to override quickly and resoundingly Reagan's veto of the 1986 Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, the Congress had severely limited the range and scope of executive action towards South Africa.<sup>25</sup> On one hand this was because of the strict conditions set out in the act, but on the other, because of the political liability that came to be associated with not appearing to follow the conditions faithfully (e.g., Reagan being accused of being too unsympathetic to the needs of most South Africans, or too sympathetic to the wishes of an oppressive minority, and even being labelled a racist). In late 1990, the Bush administration was fearful that certain sections of Congress might actively seek to undermine their South African/African agenda, as they had Reagan's.

With this in mind, in September 1990 Bush allowed a new dynamic to be introduced into the political landscape by agreeing to host President De Klerk. Significantly, De Klerk's

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<sup>23</sup> This is in contrast to, say, a parliamentary system where consensus is supposed to predominate. For example, should a parliamentary government ever reach deadlock on an issue, it is not unreasonable to think that the government might be dissolved so that a new can be formed. In the American system, a deadlock in the government could, technically, last indefinitely until a compromise is reached, or until one side bows to pressure.

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion, see Edwin Corwin, *The President: Office and Powers* (New York: New York University Press, 1940).

<sup>25</sup> See P. Simon, 'The Senate's New African Agenda', in *Africa Report* 32, 3 (May-June 1987): p.41.

visit was only a short time before the White House was to submit a report to Congress, as required by the CAAA, on progress made in ending apartheid. In many ways Bush's willingness to allow the visit, and De Klerk's willingness to undertake it, had similar objectives: to convince US policy makers that the South African government could be trusted to continue the reforms underway in South Africa, and to gain support for each leader's preferred political agendas. Bush and De Klerk's hope was, of course, that demonstrations of good-faith would engender support for their respective political goals. To these ends, though each adopted different personas in relating South African issues to people -- Bush conscious to appear optimistic yet cautious, De Klerk bold and confident -- they returned again and again to a common theme of 'irreversible change' in South Africa.

The subtleness with which Bush attempted to guide US foreign policy regarding South Africa was best captured when, with De Klerk at his side following a private meeting in the Oval Office, Bush said: 'Our goal must be to support the process of change. And of course, I will consult fully with the Congress on these issues... in spite of the dramatic progress.'<sup>26</sup> Such statements served many purposes for Bush. Firstly, his words did not grab any front-page newspaper headlines, even during De Klerk's visit, thereby keeping South African issues as subdued as possible. As has been noted, Bush 'the pragmatist' viewed Africa as only marginally important when compared to American interests in other parts of the world. In fact, this view had gotten stronger as Bush's tenure in office progressed; most notably because by September 1990 events in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe had crystallised enough that they were raising questions as to the future of the NATO alliance,

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Les De Villier, *In Sight of Surrender: The US Sanctions Campaign Against South Africa, 1946-1993* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), p.178.

for example. And more immediately, an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (undertaken only a month prior to the De Klerk visit, in August 1990) posed a threat to oil-dependent America's supply.

Secondly, Bush's relatively benign statements gave him some political gains with few losses. Political opponents were hard pressed to use his statements as rhetorical cannon fodder against him -- for example, using them to make him appear too sympathetic with the minority South African government. Nevertheless, the statements could easily be recalled by, say, White House staff to show that Bush 'the leader' was not turning a blind-eye to events in South Africa. This was doubly useful because, like most first-term presidents, Bush had his eyes on re-election. Well aware of how Reagan had alienated African-Americans and influential anti-apartheid organisations, Bush was not about to appear completely oblivious to the plight of South Africa's majority for fear of the repercussions it would have via the ballot box.

Finally, as has been noted, Bush thought the best way to pursue his South Africa/African downgrading agenda was through 'conciliation, compromise, and behind-the-scenes negotiation' and not 'noisy confrontation'.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to the head-on collisions between the Reagan administration and Congress over the CAAA, Bush hoped this low-profile approach would be unthreatening to Congress, making it feel there was no power showdown with the White House, or that he was trying to circumvent the intent or letter of the CAAA legislation. Whereas this strategy did open Bush up to criticism that he was taking a weak lead, even this was perversely advantageous: a weak lead tended to result in quiet frustration and not in sustained, public debate.

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<sup>27</sup> See D. Mervin, *George Bush and the Guardianship Presidency* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p.172.

By default, then, it was up to De Klerk to underscore the theme of his visit and that which figured prominently in Bush's South African considerations: the theme of 'irreversible change'. This De Klerk did with zeal from the moment of his arrival in Washington on 23 September 1990. Recalling the words and deeds of Presidents Washington and Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr., De Klerk said these American heroes were emblematic of his own struggle to achieve equality in South Africa. Then, using shades of Mandela's very words while in the United States -- those spoken during Mandela's impassioned speech to the Congress, where he had insisted that sanctions should stay in place until 'irreversible reforms' were made -- De Klerk stated that 'an irreversible process regarding constitutional negotiation and the elimination of discrimination has started'. Subsequently, after a meeting with Bush, De Klerk stepped from the Oval Office and in front of cameras to proclaim: 'We believe the process of change in South Africa is irreversible.' Finally, at an appearance at the National Press Club, De Klerk used the word 'irreversible' five times in a short statement, then repeated it several more times during the question-and-answer session that followed.<sup>28</sup>

For the most part, Bush's own stressing of the irreversible change theme did not come until a few days after De Klerk's departure. And even then his statements were not public, *per se*, but made in a CAAA report to Congress. The report claimed: 'Progress in South Africa toward negotiations and the establishment of a non-racial and democratic society has been dramatic and irreversible.' Accordingly, the report concluded: '(Further sanctions) were not appropriate at this time and would be counter-productive in view of the positive

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<sup>28</sup> See Les De Villier, *In Sight of Surrender: The US Sanctions Campaign Against South Africa, 1946-1993* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), p.178.

steps being taken within South Africa to bring about change through peaceful means.<sup>29</sup>

Noticeably absent, however, was any reference to whether the White House thought it appropriate for some or all sanctions to be repealed.

This omission can be understood, in part, because of the short time that had elapsed between De Klerk's departure and the submission of the CAAA report. White House staff were unsure if others had been swayed by De Klerk's appeals. But of equal importance was what was happening in the larger US foreign policy picture. Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August, Bush had been bolstering the US military presence in the Gulf. Many of the US troops being committed were black; blacks in America generally favoured the continuation of sanctions against South Africa, and in some cases, wanted an increase in them. Additionally, in Congress, Bush's military orders in regard to the Middle East were fostering debate as to whether it was a constructive use of presidential authority, whether the Congress was being kept informed of his intentions, or if the proper amount of Congressional approval was being sought or obtained. Because of these realities, the last thing the White House wanted was to incur more controversy, which any reference to the easing or removal of sanctions would have likely done.

Regardless of the politics in Washington, the South African government did continue to work to ensure the removal of sanctions against it. By the end of December 1990, the state of emergency in South Africa had been lifted and more than 100 discriminatory laws and regulations had been repealed. Then, with the opening of Parliament on 1 February 1991, De Klerk announced that the Group Areas Act and the Land Acts were to be stricken from the books, and in a surprise move, stated that the Population Registration Act would be

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<sup>29</sup> L. De Villier, *In Sight of Surrender: The US Sanctions Campaign Against South Africa, 1946-1993* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), p.179.

scrapped too. Prior to De Klerk's speech, indications had been that the Population Registration Act would be impossible to repeal because it was one of the constitutional pillars necessary for the government to continue functioning. However, De Klerk explained, the government had found a way around this technicality by adopting transitional measures for adopting a new constitution.

Within hours of De Klerk's speech, the US State Department issued a statement that said: 'We welcome President De Klerk's historic announcement that his government will introduce legislation to repeal the Group Areas Act, the Land Acts, and the Population Registration Act. Once enacted, these dramatic and far-reaching measures will abolish the remaining legislative pillars of apartheid. They are the latest evidence that an irreversible process of change is under way, and that substantial progress continues to be made toward dismantling the system of apartheid and establishing a non-racial democracy in South Africa.' The US Ambassador to South Africa, William Swing, added to the statement by saying: 'There is, I believe, widespread recognition that South Africa's move away from apartheid to a new political reality is, as President Bush has stated, irreversible.' Yet, as the Bush administration's South African/African strategy demanded, Swing was obligated to attempt to appease any critics, too. This he did by balancing what the South African government heard to be heartening words with the reminder that the Bush administration would only consider the removal of sanctions if and when the conditions set out in the CAAA of 1986 were met.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> L. De Villier, *In Sight of Surrender: The US Sanctions Campaign Against South Africa, 1946-1993*, p.180.

The statements made by the State Department and Ambassador Swing, even in the wake of tangible steps toward reform in South Africa, were not surprising. With the US foreign policy establishment as a whole focussed on mobilising and maintaining support for the bombing campaign and ground offensive against Iraq, a status quo policy regarding South Africa was almost a foregone conclusion. Nonetheless, these carefully-worded statements were significant, not because of content, but because they hinted that the removal of American sanctions was within reach. However, they also suggested that De Klerk's dramatic acts of freeing Nelson Mandela and dismantling the legal pillars of apartheid, for example, were not in themselves enough to cause a marked change in the United States' stance towards South Africa. Instead, De Klerk's reforms would have to be coupled with other catalysts. As it was soon to be seen, the necessary catalysts were to come from attempting to answer what appeared to be a deceptively simple question combined with a change in Bush's domestic political standing and views.

As for the apparently simple question, in South Africa a row had developed between the South African government and the ANC regarding 'What constitutes a political prisoner?' While willing to undertake a phased release of several categories of political prisoners, as well as accepting the return of more than 20,000 political exiles, the government initially refused to release persons jailed for violent crimes. Its justification for this was succinctly reported in an article in *The Star* that stated: 'A political prisoner is a person who is imprisoned for his political beliefs or legitimate political actions. It does not include people who rape for liberation or murder for freedom...'<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *The Star*, 23 June 1991.

While technically unable to contest such a point, the ANC leadership accused the government of using the argument as a convenient way of detaining individuals involved in the armed struggle -- an armed struggle, Mandela reminded all, necessitated by the white government's own acts of violence. By refusing to release prisoners indicated by the ANC leadership, Mandela said, the government was violating the spirit and the letter of an August 1990 agreement granting amnesty to all anti-apartheid activists. If De Klerk was reneging on the agreement regarding political amnesty, Mandela asked, did this not call in to question his sincerity in present negotiations, or of his commitment to honour any future agreements? At one point tempers flared so badly that Mandela threatened to walk out of constitutional talks with De Klerk.<sup>32</sup>

In Washington, the decision was made to have US foreign policy makers look in to the row for several reasons. First, following the military success of Operation Desert Storm in liberating Kuwait and defeating Iraq's army in February 1991, Bush had the highest domestic approval ratings ever recorded; as a result, the Bush administration was emboldened to be more assertive in pursuing his South African/African agenda. Furthermore, administration officials were concerned that if they did not exercise initiative immediately, then the pro-sanctions lobby could conceivably rally around the political prisoner issue and possibly heighten the visibility of South Africa in the public eye. This, of course, went against Bush's hope to downgrade South Africa, and subsequently Africa,

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<sup>32</sup> See 'Dispute on Pretoria's Stance on Prisoners Persists', *New York Times*, 13 July 1991, p.A3. The article did note that one organisation, the South African-based Human Rights Commission, estimated that some 800 prisoners were being held in South African prisons for politically-motivated violent offenses. If one accepts the Human Rights Commission's definitions and figures, then the government was, indeed, contravening its August 1990 agreement with the ANC granting amnesty to all activists.

in US foreign policy. Another concern for administration officials was that if they did nothing then their political opponents might use their inaction as political ammunition against them, accusing the White House of being callous to the needs of South Africa's majority and jailed anti-apartheid activists; in turn, this might affect his high approval ratings. But lastly, and most important, administration officials saw an opportunity in the row to set, once and for all, an agenda closer to what Bush envisioned.

To these ends, in early March 1991, the White House ordered the State Department to conduct a fact-finding mission regarding the release of political prisoners in South Africa. As part of the order, officials were to use the administration's narrow definition of what constituted a political prisoner -- in essence an acceptance of the South African government's definition. In July 1991, the investigation was concluded and a report was handed to the White House. Its conclusion: the South African government no longer held 'prisoners or detainees' in terms of the CAAA, and therefore, South Africa had complied with all conditions of the 1986 anti-apartheid legislation.

With this finding in hand, the administration moved quickly. At the beginning of July 1991, White House staff announced the president's intention to end US sanctions against South Africa. Before acting, though, the White House sought to alleviate some of the criticism Bush was sure to receive. Steps taken included having Bush speak personally to Nelson Mandela on the telephone in order to clarify the his administration's position, and White House staff release a seven-page 'fact sheet'. The fact sheet went to great lengths to explain how, under Section 311 of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, the President of the United States was authorised to suspend or modify any of the CAAA's sanctions measures. In order for this to happen, the document illustrated, the South African

government had to fulfill the first, and three out of four, of the following conditions:

- 1) the release of Nelson Mandela, as well as all other persons persecuted for their political beliefs or detained unduly without trial;
- 2) the repeal of the state of emergency, and the release of all detainees held in conjunction with the state of emergency;
- 3) the unbanning of all democratic political parties, permitting South Africans of all races to express political opinions and otherwise participate in the political process;
- 4) the repeal of the Group Areas Act and Population Registration Act, without instituting other measures to serve similar purposes;
- 5) and agree to enter into good faith negotiations with truly representative members of the black majority without preconditions.<sup>33</sup>

Bush, the fact sheet stressed, had waited until South Africa had fulfilled *all* conditions of the conditions above.

On 10 July 1991, then, Bush signed an executive order officially ending the US federal trade embargo against South Africa. With a stroke of the pen, trade bans on textiles, steel, iron, agricultural products, and computers were gone, banks could once again extend loans to the South African government, American investors were free to conduct business in the country, and South African planes were given landing rights on American soil. After signing the order, Bush stated: ‘Since coming to office in 1989, President De Klerk has repealed the legislative pillars of apartheid and opened up the political arena to prepare the way for constitutional negotiations, and as I’ve said on several occasions, I really firmly believe that this progress is irreversible.’<sup>34</sup>

While Japan and many European nations followed Bush’s lead, as expected, not

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<sup>33</sup> *Business Day* (South Africa), 2 May 1991.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in ‘Excerpts from Bush’s Remarks on Sanctions: “This Progress is Irreversible”’, *New York Times*, 11 July 1991, p.A6.

everyone in the US reacted warmly to the repeal of sanctions. A headline in the *New York Times* proclaimed: 'De Klerk's Victory -- Without Resolving the Issue of Power Pretoria Regains World Acceptance.'<sup>35</sup> Some members of Congress -- particularly those on the House Sub-committee on Africa and the Congressional Black Caucus -- reacted with anger and dismay. One member of the House Sub-Committee on Africa believed that the South African government would be free to be intransigent with no federal sanctions in place, observing: 'If you lift them (sanctions) too soon, you lock in apartheid.'<sup>36</sup> Many agreed, as some thirty American states, more than 100 cities, and dozens of counties opted to keep their sanctions firmly in place. Additionally, around 100 universities continued to withhold investments from American corporations with South African ties, and nearly 160 pension funds refused to allow the money held in them (totalling hundreds of billions of dollars in potential investment) to be invested in South Africa. Most were waiting for word from Mandela himself, not Washington, as to when they should drop their punitive measures.

Expecting such domestic criticism, administration officials had cleverly kept a political card at hand. Before there could be an up swell of discontent, the White House had officials in the State Department announce that US assistance to black South Africans was to double, stressing how the funds would affect change and play a role in a post-apartheid South Africa. For example, by increasing US aid from US\$40 million to US\$80 million, it was asserted, the South African government could focus fully on pushing ahead with reforms, avoiding having to spend as much time as it otherwise would have had to attempting to meet South Africans' basic needs. Additionally, officials pointed out, a portion of the

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<sup>35</sup> *New York Times*, 11 July 1991.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in 'Support for Pretoria Sanctions Weak', *New York Times*, 18 June 1991, p.A3.

money would enable black South African students to attend US universities, thereby encouraging the emergence of a trained black elite capable of running the economy and administration of the emerging 'New South Africa'.<sup>37</sup>

In the end, the administration's strategy paid off. In balancing the debatable good of removing sanctions with the uncontroversial intentions associated with helping South Africa's majority through increased aid, many were not completely satisfied, yet all sides were somewhat appeased. Just as administration officials had hoped, this encouraged the initial clamour associated with the dropping of sanctions to subside relatively quickly, and in turn, for public attention to likewise diminish in regard to South Africa. As a result, a final chapter from the Cold War era was brought to a close. What was left was an equivocal US foreign policy towards Africa.

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<sup>37</sup> *Business Day* (South Africa), 19 December 1990.

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## Chapter Four: Transitions to Duality

Though Pretoria was far removed from Berlin and eastern Europe, events there made a marked impression in South Africa. In President F.W. De Klerk's calculations, the fall of 'The Wall' freed him to move South Africa down the path of unprecedented change. 'It was as if God had taken a hand -- a new turn in world history,' De Klerk was quoted as saying. 'We have to seize the opportunity. The risk that the ANC was being used as a Trojan horse by a (communist) superpower has drastically diminished.'<sup>1</sup>

De Klerk's comment is understandable when one comprehends to what degree communism terrified most of the white minority. In South Africa, where race and class were synonymous, communist class warfare was equated with race warfare. There was no way whites, representing only 12 percent of the population, could win such a battle. When the Berlin Wall fell, the apartheid regime knew that African socialist movements had lost their ideological mentor. In fact, Joe Slovo, then chairman of the South African Communist Party, cemented this sentiment when he published a paper in January 1990 entitled 'Has Socialism Failed?' Though he concluded that it had not, stressing his 'complete faith that socialism represents the most rational, just and democratic way for human beings to relate to one another', he made it clear that this utopia remained a distant goal; for his lifetime, and even that of his children, what was needed were free elections and multi-party democracy.<sup>2</sup> As a logical deduction from Slovo's confession, government officials were convinced that the

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<sup>1</sup> W. De Klerk, *F.W. De Klerk: The Man in His Time* (Johannesburg: J.Ball: Thorold's Africana Books, Distributor, 1991), p.547.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Slovo, 'Has Socialism Failed?' (London: South African Communist Party in London, January 1990).

African National Congress (ANC) -- the leading anti-apartheid, but avowed socialist, movement -- must be weakened. Without Soviet support, government officials reasoned the African National Congress, regardless of its ideology, could not wage a war against Pretoria as the Angolan FPLA and the Mozambican FRELIMO movements had done in ousting the Portuguese. Even the ANC secretary general, Alfred Nzo, acknowledged this candidly in January 1990 when he said: 'We must admit that we do not have the capacity within our country to intensify the armed struggle in any meaningful way.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus, it was the fall of the Berlin Wall, marking the demise of communism, which gave De Klerk what he most required to be able to act: a sense that he and the government could operate from a position of strength, and that it could control the pace and course of reform. Accordingly, in a speech before the opening session of Parliament on 2 February 1990 -- nearly 30 years on to the day that British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan had delivered his 'wind of change' speech to the same Parliament -- De Klerk announced that the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party would be unbanned and legalised, and all political prisoners would be freed, including the person who had come to embody the anti-apartheid struggle, Nelson Mandela.

It would be easy to think that the fall of the Berlin Wall was the event that inspired the South African government to reform. In fact, it was the fall of the Berlin Wall in conjunction with South Africa's situation, both internal and external, which manifested in De Klerk's radical departure. In the townships, as a part of the non-compliance campaign, most residents had ceased paying rent and service charges, hundreds of thousands of children

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<sup>3</sup> P. Nel, 'The ANC and Communism', in *The ANC and its Leaders*, eds. Willie Esterhuyse and Philip Nel (Cape Town: 1990), pp.42-66.

were not attending school, and government employees, such as police and councilors, were being assassinated with regularity. Moreover, the South African economy was stagnant, and this was most unsettling to the government. For while it was true that it was unable to govern in the townships, at least it was able to contain the unrest to them, keeping it distant from 'white South Africa'. When it came to economics, though, South Africa's predicament managed to creep in to nearly everyone's consciousness, irrespective of geographical location or social standing. As one government official put it: 'What was crucial in (the government's) calculation was not the threat of sanctions, but the government's belief that the economy would beat them.'<sup>4</sup>

The plight of the South African economy was a result of many factors, and as the quote suggests, not all of them fully attributable to international sanctions. For example, growth had been minimal since the 1970s, declining by 1 percent in 1985 -- a year before widespread sanctions had taken effect -- and from 1980 to 1985 it had averaged only 1.2 percent per year. Additionally, South African exporters had proved up to the task of circumventing trade sanctions, albeit at a cost. Exemplifying South African exporters' resourcefulness was the large Premier Group; when the Premier Group did business in Africa, it posed as a British company: its people had London addresses on their business cards, and faxes from Johannesburg came via an office in London.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, after dipping initially while exporters looked for new markets -- and clandestine ways to penetrate existing

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in A. Heribert and K. Moodley, *The Opening of the Apartheid Mind: Options for the New South Africa* (London: University of California Press, 1993), p.45.

<sup>5</sup> S. Mallaby, *After Apartheid: The Future of South Africa* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1993), p.205.

ones closed by sanctions -- export volumes had risen by 26 percent from 1985 to 1989.

Similarly, disinvestment also appeared to have had little direct affect on economic growth.

Many disinvesting companies had simply sold their assets cheaply to local white businessmen, but maintained links through franchising, licensing, and technology agreements that permitted businesses and industries to keep operating. Many were forced to come to the conclusion, then, that sanctions had not depressed economic growth, nor had economic shocks, severe droughts, or fluctuations in the gold price, all of which had happened in the 1980s. Growth had been stifled by apartheid itself: by the uncontrolled spending of homeland governments, by the huge triplicated bureaucracies introduced under the tricameral constitution, and by the rising costs of internal unrest (man-days lost to strikes, most of them political, had risen nearly 1,000 percent between 1983 and 1986, and the government had lost hundreds of millions of rands a year in township rent and service payment boycotts).

Sanctions exacerbated the situation, but they were not its primary cause.<sup>6</sup> However, if politically-inspired sanctions had only limited effect before 1990, by the start of the 1990s the same could not be said of the restrictions imposed by the financial markets.

By January 1990, South Africa had lost well over R30 billion in capital outflows (or US\$2 billion at the prevailing exchange rate), both in debt repayments necessitated by a foreign loan moratorium and in illegal capital flight. Adding to the strain on government coffers was the government's continued funding of costly 'strategic industries', such as

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<sup>6</sup> Figures and statements draw heavily from M. Lipton, *The Challenge of Sanctions* (London School of Economics: Centre for the Study of South African Economy and International Finance, 1990), and R. Price, *The Apartheid State in Crisis: Political Transformation in South Africa, 1975-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

sophisticated arms and oil-from-coal industries. The cost of only one of these projects, the Mossgas oil-from-gas plant, was R11 billion -- equivalent to ten years' worth of new housing construction under the 1990 national budget.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently, in early 1990, foreign reserves were at perilous levels. This put the minority government in an impossible situation. South Africa, which needed import capital to grow, was forced to export it to repay old debts. To make repayments in foreign currency, it needed a trade surplus, which meant boosting exports and depressing imports. Yet suppressing imports in an import-dependent economy meant choking off growth. And without growth, it was impossible either to 'buy off' the township revolt or to keep white constituents' standard of living at a level to which they were accustomed. From cabinet ministers to industrialists, nearly all realised that South Africa could not sustain a siege economy. Henri de Villiers, of Standard Bank Investment Corporation, investment arm of one of the country's leading banks, spoke for many in the business community when he said: 'In this day and age, there is no such thing as economic self-sufficiency, and we delude ourselves if we think we are different. South Africa needs the world. It needs markets, it needs skills, it needs technology, and above all it needs capital.'<sup>8</sup> Apartheid, by inference, was hindering South Africa's ability to attain these necessities.

The state of the economy did much to encourage conventional wisdom to evolve. In the early 1980s, most whites had believed that economic recovery could solve South Africa's

<sup>7</sup> J. Garner and J. Leap, *South Africa's Borrowings on International Capital Markets: Recent Developments in Historical Perspective*, Research Paper, No.5 (London: Centre for the Study of South African Economy and International Finance, London School of Economics, 1991), p.1.

<sup>8</sup> R. Price, *The Apartheid State in Crisis: Political Transformation in South Africa, 1975-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.274.

political crisis. By the start of the 1990s, the reverse was true: political reconciliation was now viewed as the essential first step in dealing with the economic crisis.<sup>9</sup> The former Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, Kent Durr, explained the connection between political reform and economics when he said:

If we want to grow this economy we have to play our comparative advantages and have an export-led economy. If you want to export you have to ask yourself, what are your comparative advantages? We have said we want to benefit from our raw materials and export them. But you cannot have rising exports into contracting markets. So the constitutional challenge and the economic challenge run absolutely parallel.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, economic imperatives alone were not enough to compel the government to pursue meaningful reform. Even with all the changes occurring in the world *circa* 1990, the South African state was not about to crumble. If De Klerk had wanted, he could have allowed South Africa to get slowly poorer for years, choosing to preserve minority political power as much as possible for as long as possible. However, when economic realities were coupled with international isolation, the impact on the national psyche was tremendous.

By 1990, most white South Africans were tired of their country's dubious distinction as a racist pariah state, desiring and cherishing links with the rest of the world. Yet, because of sanctions, they were shut out of international cricket and rugby; their academics were shunned; and their planes could not land in the United States or overfly the continent of Africa. To paraphrase one article: sanctions did not bring South Africans to their knees, but it did help bring them to their senses because nobody likes to be the object of seemingly

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<sup>9</sup> Garner and Leap, *South Africa's Borrowing on International Capital Markets: Recent Developments in Historical Perspective*, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> 'Breakout', *Leadership* (9 September 1990): pp.31-36.

universal moral disgust.<sup>11</sup> As South African government officials knew, reform promised to give the country a new lease in the wider world, and what is more, the wider world was giving signals that the government might find some support for terms it considered essential before reform could proceed. Prior to his 2 February 1990 speech, De Klerk had travelled extensively through the West in search of a way for South Africa to break free from its malaise. Again and again he heard the same thing: unban the ANC, release political prisoners, and start talks. But in addition to these demands, De Klerk received guarantees that Western leaders would insist on negotiated change in South Africa, not just a handover to the ANC. Moreover, from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Western leaders indicated they would back him in demanding protection for minorities, so long as these were consistent with democracy. Such Western assurances meant much to De Klerk, because like so many other Afrikaners, there was a fear that if the 'white tribe' did not hold sole power, then blacks in power would do what the British had done 'and make them a subject minority in the land of their birth'.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps better than any of his predecessors, De Klerk understood the vicious trap apartheid had laid for South Africa -- a trap which was economic as much as social, and political as much as psychological. To this was an understanding of how South Africa's international relations were tied to its domestic practises, and what could be gained at home and abroad if the minority government acted differently. Events at the start of 1990 (e.g., the

<sup>11</sup> D. Black and A. Klotz, 'International Legislation and Domestic Political Change: Implications for South African Foreign Relations', in *Southern African Perspectives*, no.42 (Bellville: Centre for Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape, 1995): p.10.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in F. Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), p.46.

fall of ‘The Wall’) had culminated in the anti-apartheid movement being unable to escalate ‘the struggle’; at the same time, the South African government was incapable of breaking the country’s decline. By publically committing South Africa to moving with the forces at work in the international system, rather than standing against them, De Klerk calculated that former areas of strength, as well as former areas of vulnerability, could be turned to advantage. At least initially, it was a calculation that proved true, partially aided and abetted by ANC miscalculations.

Whereas before De Klerk’s dramatic, public speech effectively proclaiming the official end of apartheid the ANC had become the leader of the South African liberation movement while in exile, mounting an effective international campaign to isolate the South African state, ANC actions in southern Africa had been limited by coerced concessions the apartheid regime had forced states to make.<sup>13</sup> In the hopes of rectifying the situation where the ANC had extensive, established international relations abroad, but limited means to achieve what its leadership wanted within southern Africa, Mandela toured the region a month after his release. In Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Angola public statements and photo opportunities affirmed that these states, and other Frontline States, were supportive of the anti-apartheid movement. Unfortunately for the ANC, much of this support was only

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<sup>13</sup> For example, see Chapter Two, ‘Security, The Gun, and the Maize Train’, pages 51-52. Because of the South African government’s unofficial policy of destabilisation, toward the end of 1983, Lesotho gave in to South African demands and began to evacuate ANC members from the mountain kingdom. Soon after, in the spring of 1984, South Africa and Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord, an agreement which bound Mozambique to preventing the ANC from launching attacks against South Africa in return for the cessation of South African support to RENAMO. Then, two weeks after the Nkomati Accord, it was disclosed that a similar secret accord had been reached with Swaziland.

theoretical at best. In reality, the Frontline States were overwhelmed with trying to resolve their own problems. Moreover, no amount of words could change the fact that all were dependent on those who currently held power in Pretoria (see footnote #14, below).<sup>14</sup>

In the duel for international policies and standing beyond southern Africa, here too it appeared that the ANC was at a disadvantage. As a harbinger of what the post-Cold War world held in store, South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha visited Budapest, Hungary early in 1990. Caught off-guard by the visit, the ANC leadership 'unequivocally condemned' it; only ten days earlier, Hungarian diplomats had assured the ANC that there were to be no such contacts, especially since Hungary was a member of the UN's Special Committee on Apartheid.<sup>15</sup> This said, Hungary's actions were not exceptional, and indeed minor, when compared to the actions of its east European neighbours.

As communist governments in eastern Europe collapsed, so too did support for the ANC's military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK). Supplies of weapons, ammunition, and explosives evaporated, and in turn the MK was forced to close many of its bases. Soon

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<sup>14</sup> Circa 1990, Botswana was dependent upon South Africa for 90 percent of its transportation requirements, 40 percent of its electricity, and all of its oil; 40 percent of Malawi's imports were South African or came from there; Zaire shipped more than two-fifths of its mineral exports through the Republic; some two-thirds of Zambia's imports and a third of its exports were routed through South Africa; Lesotho was completely dependent on South Africa for transport, marketing and electricity, and remittances from Basotho miners in South Africa accounted for half of its GNP; South Africa was Zimbabwe's major trading partner; and 90 percent of Swaziland's imports and 20 percent of its exports were shipped via South Africa (Source: S. Baynham, 'Through the Looking Glass: Britain, South Africa and Sub-Continent', in *From Pariah to Participant: South Africa's Evolving Foreign Relations, 1990-1994*, ed. Greg Mills (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1994), 113-114).

<sup>15</sup> ANC *Newsbriefing*, 1, 1990, p.2.

thereafter, countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, once staunch supporters of anti-apartheid diplomacy, showed eagerness to expand diplomatic and trade links with South Africa.<sup>16</sup> But the biggest blow came following a meeting between the Soviet Foreign Minister, Edward Shevardnadze, and De Klerk at the Namibian independence day celebrations in Windhoek. This meeting ultimately resulted in Neil van Heerden, Director-General of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs, visiting Moscow in July 1990. The visit was an unexpected rapprochement effectively signalling to the ANC leadership that its principal ally -- an ally who had used to control many of the ANC's other allies in eastern Europe, and whose lead many eastern European governments had followed -- 'had abandoned it for the other side'.<sup>17</sup>

Dismayed with the way events were playing out in regard to the (former) Soviet block, the ANC fell back on the centre-piece of their foreign policy, the Harare Declaration. The Declaration, carefully crafted by the ANC in August 1989 and endorsed by the OAU's *ad hoc* Committee on Southern Africa, the Frontline States, the UN, and the Non-Aligned Movement, laid out the terms under which the international community could remove economic sanctions: first the abolition of apartheid followed by the adoption of a new, non-racial constitution (Article 21.6). Moreover, the Declaration maintained that it was 'the people of South Africa' who were to determine the role of the international community (Article 21.4). As the widely-accepted representative of South Africa's majority, this, of course, should have meant that the ANC was to be the primary actor in every way. In sum,

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<sup>16</sup> *Financial Times* (London), 4 January 1990.

<sup>17</sup> V. Shubin, 'Reflections on Relations between the Soviet Union/Russian Federation and South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s', in *Southern African Perspectives*, no.42 (Bellville: Centre for Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape, 1995): p.10.

by falling back on the Harare Declaration, the ANC leadership hoped its international status and leverage in regard to South African reform would be ensured. In actuality, it accentuated how outdated the ANC's strategy and reasoning were.

Following the release of Mandela and the unbanning of political organisations, governments had begun to modify the Harare Declaration, taking the view that 'the irreversibility of change' should be the major criterion in assessing (and establishing) relations with South Africa. More significant still, debate within the international community had shifted from whether sanctions needed to be intensified to force change, to which sanctions might be eased to reward and encourage it. To these ends, even before De Klerk's European visit in May 1990, many governments had already engaged Pretoria directly to explore the expansion of economic links, ostensibly in order to further reform. It was no surprise, then, except to Mandela, that when he attended a special session of the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa in Abuja, Nigeria in June 1990, he was 'shocked and amazed at the suggestion that sanctions should be eased' -- particularly by Britain, which had already relaxed its adherence to the voluntary EC ban on new investment.<sup>18</sup> Still, ANC foreign policy makers clung to the original conditions of the Harare Declaration.

By contrast, South African government officials were quick to highlight the lengths to which they were going to step away from the past, but to be in-step with the times. Eager to take advantage of the new diplomatic environment, South African foreign policy makers unveiled South Africa's 'New Diplomacy' towards Africa. Neil van Heerden outlined the central tenets of the government's New Diplomacy as this:

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<sup>18</sup> *ANC Newsbriefing*, 21, 27 May 1990, p.9.

South Africa is part of Africa, in and through which our future lies. African problems must be resolved by Africans. South Africa's international isolation is contrary to African interests. The use or support of violence for the promotion of political objectives is unacceptable. Joint interests and responsibility in respect of the economic, sociological and ecological welfare... (of) Africa ought to be the basis of co-operation and good neighbourliness. South Africa is economically powerful and has the infrastructure and capabilities to be the cornerstone of regional development. Southern African states are interdependent and their future peace and stability are indivisible. The South African government is irrevocably committed to the removal of apartheid and participation of all South Africans in the governmental process, up to the highest level. South Africa favours a regional conference for the promotion of joint interests...<sup>19</sup>

In short, the New Diplomacy was a clear swearing off of old South African practises like the crude Hobbesian tactics of destabilisation, a commitment to internal reform, and a pledge to embrace the use of more traditional (and less coercive) instruments of international affairs, such as diplomacy, trade, and economic co-operation. Nevertheless, although South African foreign policy makers wished to present the New Diplomacy as a change in substance, it was more a change in style. Just as in the past, government officials hoped that the initiative would lead to tacit acceptance of the minority regime and strengthen its hand against the ANC. They also envisioned it helping to maintain South Africa's status as regional hegemon, possibly making it more so through increased levels of commerce and trade.

When compared to the obsolete foreign policy of the past, the main difference in the New Diplomacy was in terms of context. Specifically, whites were no longer South African foreign policy makers' sole 'constituents'. Now, when foreign policy makers referred to 'the national interest', they were to make concerted efforts to include the aspirations of individuals and groups beyond the white establishment. Additionally, as has been

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<sup>19</sup> N. Van Heerden, 'South Africa and Africa: The New Diplomacy', in *ISSUP Bulletin*, 4/89 (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 1989), pp.1-11.

mentioned, the post-Cold War world was shifting, rewarding governments inclined to promote democratic and free-market principles. For South Africa, this meant that as long as the government appeared to maintain some progress toward internal reform, it would be able to reverse the isolation it had undergone. As a tangible sign of this, in the 24 months after his Parliamentary speech that set South Africa down the path of change, De Klerk visited over 25 states in Africa, Europe, and North America, in turn leading to a flurry of South African diplomatic and trading missions.<sup>20</sup>

Confronted with the realisation that the ANC's principal foreign policy objectives -- diplomatic isolation and the retention of punitive sanctions until a new government was in place -- were being undermined by Pretoria's exploitation of regional and global opportunities to the fullest as they opened, Mandela undertook a strenuous world tour of his own. On the first leg of his tour, he addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg, and met with France's Daniel Mitterand, Germany's Helmut Kohl, Italy's Giulio Andreotti, and even the Pope, among others. But Mandela's efforts to ensure South Africa's isolation and sanctions was to be a rearguard fight. Already, in December 1990, the EC had decided to lift the ban on new investment in South Africa, with the hope of repealing other sanctions if De Klerk's government continued to dismantle apartheid laws.

The second leg of Mandela's tour took him to North America. In Canada, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney chose the rhetoric of most of the West, vowing to 'maintain sanctions until there were signs of irreversible political change'.<sup>21</sup> While Mandela would

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<sup>20</sup> D. Venter, *South Africa and the African Comity of Nations: From Isolation to Integration*, Research Paper no.56 (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 1993), pp.39-41.

<sup>21</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 19 June 1990.

have preferred the Canadian leader to use stronger language against Pretoria, the visit did lead to closer bi-lateral relations between the Canadian Ministry of External Affairs and the ANC, and therefore, gave Mandela some reward for his efforts. In the United States, however, what was gained, if anything, was debatable.

Because of the activities of Trans-Africa and the 'Free South Africa' movement, Mandela as an individual had become very well-known in the US. Even so, most Americans knew little about the ANC. In a lengthy 'town meeting' broadcast nation-wide, Mandela defended the ANC's links with the South African Communist Party, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and its ties with the leaders of Cuba, Libya, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).<sup>22</sup> The statements did little to assuage the Cold War anti-communist beliefs still prevalent among many Americans. In fact, Mandela's statements caused such a stir that several members of Congress threatened to walk out during Mandela's address to them,<sup>23</sup> and syndicated newspaper columnists spoke of the ANC's radical politics<sup>24</sup> -- one article's title claiming: 'The Evidence Against Mandela Mounts.'<sup>25</sup> In regard to Mandela's interactions with US foreign policy makers, there were even fewer gains. President Bush, for example, pressed Mandela in private to have the ANC renounce violence, refused to give direct bi-lateral aid, and rejected the ANC's right to be consulted when US sanctions should

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<sup>22</sup> ABC News, *The Koppel Report: A Town Meeting with Nelson Mandela* (Transcript), 21 June 1990.

<sup>23</sup> 'Mandela Makes History in the US,' *The Times* (London), 27 June 1990.

<sup>24</sup> See: 'Fascination With (and Ignorance About) Nelson Mandela', in *Chicago Tribune*, 25 June 1990; 'Mr. Mandela's Friends', in *Wall Street Journal*, 19 June 1990; and 'Mandela Travels to Miami Amid Protests Over Castro', in *New York Times*, 29 June 1990.

<sup>25</sup> Mike Royko, 'The Evidence Against Mandela Mounts', in the *Milwaukee Journal*, 29 June 1990.

be removed -- as they duly were little over a year later.

On his return leg to Africa, Mandela stopped off in Ireland to thank its government for supporting the anti-apartheid cause. By itself, this might have been scored as a diplomatic victory for the ANC, but during the course of the visit, Mandela urged Britain to talk with the IRA and drew numerous parallels between the Irish experience and South Africa. Such comments created an uproar in Britain, raising serious questions as to how Margaret Thatcher would react during their upcoming meetings.

When Mandela and Thatcher did meet, it was surprisingly cordial. Few would have expected such a turn of events, particularly in light of Mandela's comments while in Ireland. Additionally, Mandela had refused to see Thatcher earlier in the year during a stop in the UK, primarily because of Thatcher's and his disagreement over sanctions against the South African government (Thatcher had been steadfast in her dislike of imposing sanctions, arguing that they only hurt the black majority and deterred the South African government from pursuing reform). Nevertheless, after talking with Mandela, Thatcher acknowledged that she no longer regarded the ANC as a 'typical terrorist organisation', but as an essential actor in South Africa's transition.<sup>26</sup> For his part, Mandela remarked that he believed Mrs. Thatcher was 'an enemy of apartheid', but admitted there were key issues on which they 'did not see eye to eye'.<sup>27</sup>

In the coming months, many in the international community would be hard pressed to see things eye to eye with the ANC. Before 'talks about talks' with the De Klerk government began in 1991, the ANC leadership formed an alliance with the South African

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<sup>26</sup> *ANC Newsbriefing*, 28, 15 July 1990, p.2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

Communist Party and proclaimed that they would *not* disavow socialist objectives. Also, even though they were receiving pressure from numerous fronts (including Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Zambia's President, Kenneth Kaunda),<sup>28</sup> ANC leaders refused to abandon altogether the military option and rhetoric associated with the armed struggle. This hurt the ANC. In a world where Western democratic and free-market principles within a shared culture of negotiation were becoming expected norms of behaviour, the ANC leadership appeared to be out of step with the changing international order. Ironically, a dramatic role-reversal was occurring: whereas before the fall of the Berlin Wall the ANC leadership had managed to isolate successive apartheid governments while simultaneously increasing the ANC's international prestige, now the South African government was doing much the same to the ANC.

Realising that their diplomatic hold would continue to slip if they clung uncompromisingly to old tenets, ANC policy makers decided that they had to act. Accordingly, at an ANC national conference in Durban in July 1991, it was announced that the organisation favoured a conditional 'phased withdrawal' of sanctions against the minority government. While not explicitly expressed, ANC members, observers, and certainly the white government interpreted the announcement as an indication that there was a fundamental reappraisal of ANC foreign policy in process. More than likely, it was assumed, ANC foreign policy makers had issued the statement as a stop-gap measure to buy them time, and to check the De Klerk government's momentum towards breaking South Africa's

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<sup>28</sup> See: *Southscan*, 5, 8, 2 March 1990, p.53; and *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 March 1990.

isolation.<sup>29</sup> These assumptions were confirmed when ANC policy makers issued a series of policy documents and statements disavowing many of the organisation's long-standing commitments to the Harare Declaration and 'liberation politics'.

Unlike many previous articulations, the ANC's new line of international thinking was not idealistic. If anything, ANC leaders were indicating that they had resigned themselves to accepting and working within the prevailing international order. While still containing some remnants of old-thinking -- advocating regional co-operation within a 'non-exploitive' framework, for example -- it converged with the overall philosophy of the government's New Diplomacy. In fact, the convergence was such that as events within South Africa progressed toward democratic elections, the foreign policies of the government and the ANC became, in essence, one: both desired South Africa's full membership in international organisations, both wished to establish and expand trading links in Africa and elsewhere, both wanted their country to practise good-neighbourliness, and both promised a co-ordinated multi-lateral approach to development, disarmament, and even human rights issues. The progress the two sides had made in coming to terms with each other was evident when, in a speech to the UN General Assembly in September 1993, Mandela stated that sanctions should be lifted 'to strengthen the forces of democratic change, and to help create the necessary conditions for

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<sup>29</sup> As a tangible sign of the momentum the government had, in March 1991 Foreign Minister Pik Botha told the South African Parliament that, since the beginning of 1991, South Africa had opened missions in Hungary, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Madagascar, and Morocco. These added to missions already established since 1990 in the Comores, Gabon, and the Central African Republic, and more significantly, the Frontline States of Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zaire. Botha also noted that serious talks were occurring to open additional missions in Singapore, Thailand, Bahrain, and South Korea, and embassies in Morocco and Russia.

stability and social progress'.<sup>30</sup> By the time of the April 1994 elections, the ANC's Department of International Affairs and the government's Department of Foreign Affairs were working in tandem -- to the point that much of Mandela's world travels were being paid directly from the DFA's budget.

Thus, following the swearing in of the Government of National Unity in May 1994, South African foreign policy makers were better poised than at any previous time in history to enact policies appropriate for the ideals De Klerk had expressed four years earlier, in his parliamentary speech that had hastened South Africa towards majority rule:

Hostile postures have to be replaced by co-operative ones; confrontation by contact; disengagement by engagement; slogans by deliberate debate. The season of violence is over; the time for reconstruction and reconciliation has arrived.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> 'Nations Act as Mandela Calls for End of Sanctions', *Commercial Appeal*, 23 September 1993.

<sup>31</sup> *The Times* (London), 9 July 1990.

## Obsolescence Summary

At the start of the 1990s, opinion of foreign policy obsolescence was very much a matter of perspective and opinion. The view from Washington was that with no overt Soviet threat in Africa, none of the traditional Cold War reasons, and only marginal existing ones, justified US involvement with the continent. Accordingly, the Bush administration set about trying to downgrade Africa so as to focus more effectively on regions where there were overt American interests. Yet, at the beginning of 1990, one significant vestige of the past remained: apartheid. Because the South African government had continued to maintain exclusive minority rule, strong emotions and strict constraints (e.g., in the form of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act) continued to influence US foreign policy towards the continent. Consequently, the Bush administration committed itself to a low-key, non-confrontational approach in regard to Africa generally, and South Africa specifically. Ultimately, this bought White House officials time until they were able to make a case as to the 'irreversibility of change' in South Africa, and therefore the inapplicability of the CAAA. Subsequently, the CAAA was revoked through an executive order. What was left was an ambiguous, and not at all undesired (at least by the Bush administration) US foreign policy towards Africa.

In South Africa, foreign policy obsolescence had very different effects on the government and the leading anti-apartheid movement, the African National Congress. Once government officials had been assured that much more was to be gained than lost in moving away from the policies of the past, and did so by dismantling some of the legislative pillars of apartheid, unbanning the ANC, and freeing political prisoners like Nelson Mandela, they were quite pleased to have the dilemma of needing new parameters and means for interacting with the world; after being isolated for so long, the demands of engagement were not a

burden, but an emancipation. By contrast, rather than innovating to meet changes in the international order, the ANC's leadership fell back on tenets that ran counter to current events -- tenets like calls for the South African government's unconditional isolation even as it was decreasing, or socialist principles even as socialism as an ideology was collapsing. This said, from the time Mandela was freed, it was pretty clear that it was the ANC which was negotiating itself into political power. Therefore, though it was the government which initially experienced the greatest number of breakthroughs abroad, nearly all viewed the ANC as the next government-in-waiting. In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, this meant that ANC views were not to be discounted, and at worst were considered only ineffective given the regional hegemony of the minority government. In this sense, South African foreign policy towards Africa from early 1990 possessed duality, reflecting the policy pursuits and preferences of both the government and the ANC to varying degrees right up until Nelson Mandela was sworn in as President on 10 May 1994.

Reflecting on the obsolescence period, it is quite obvious that South Africa figured prominently in US foreign policy makers' calculations in the early 1990s. Indeed, the Bush administration's African downgrading agenda hinged on a resolution of 'The South African Question' of how apartheid was to end and when democratic elections might be held. Likewise, the United States held a pronounced place in South African foreign policy makers' considerations, whether emanating from the government or the ANC. On one hand, government officials wanted the only remaining superpower to normalise its relations with the Republic so that others might follow; on the other hand, ANC officials wanted the US to continue to isolate the South African government through the maintenance of sanctions, also for the sake of setting an international example.

In sum, the Bush administration's focus on South Africa as a part of its African downgrading efforts, and the South African government's efforts to encourage re-engagement with the international community, were congruent: both wanted normalisation as quickly as possible for the sake of realising greater goals. At the same time, influential forces ran contrary to this congruence. The US Congress was able to impede the implementation of the Bush administration's agenda, most directly through the CAAA, but also by forcing the administration to make only the most measured political moves due to the volatility of South African issues. The ANC was able to impede the South African government's free pursuit of its agenda because there was a good chance the ANC would assume full government control; therefore, ANC priorities could not be disregarded. After the CAAA was revoked and South African elections were held, it would be natural to think that US and South African foreign policies might have become less complicated, and perhaps even compliment one another. In actuality, as US policy makers struggled to find their way in the post-Cold War order, and as South African policy makers turned to the task of internal reconciliation and reconstruction, US and South African relations -- and more broadly, the foreign policies of each towards Africa -- entered into a period of flux.

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## PERIOD TWO: FLUX

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*The dropping of US sanctions against South Africa and the first fully-democratic South African elections brought closure to the obsolescence period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa. Policy makers in both countries had navigated the dramatic foreign policy sea-changes left in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but a foreign policy vacuum with regard to Africa now existed.*

*In Washington, at least initially, the Bush administration was content to fill the vacuum with as little as possible. In fact, such an aim was viewed as the next logical step in the White House's African downgrading agenda: all resources African-related were to be re-evaluated, and where possible, re-allocated to places like eastern Europe. Ironically, when President Bush articulated, and vigorously advocated, a 'new world order vision' -- one where global American leadership was to help, in Bush's words, 'nations recognise the shared responsibility for freedom and justice', but primarily meant to be in the European context -- it was this same vision which forced the administration to recommit American resources to Africa. Indeed, when famine brought on by civil war struck Somalia and started to get world press coverage, Bush was obligated to commit US resources lest he appear too hypocritical; circumstances forced him to prove that the US was just as willing to rally multi-lateral support for a region where there were no overt American interests as for a region where there were.*

*Somalia proved to be a historical point on which the pendulum of US foreign policy towards Africa swung, and swung in extremes. Towards the end of 1991, US involvement with Africa was in decline; by January 1992, over 28,000 US troops were committed to Somalia. By April 1994, all American troops were out of the Horn of Africa (following the deaths of eighteen American soldiers in a Mogadishu fire-fight), and American isolationism generally, but in regard to Africa particularly, was on the rise -- so much so, that even when faced with genocide in Rwanda in 1994, US policy makers showed extreme reluctance to intercede. Then, in 1995, even as foreign policy personnel and aid related to Africa was being cut, White House officials began to call for heightened US engagement with the continent, claiming it was a major emerging market, and therefore, a continent crucial to the American national interest.*

*After Nelson Mandela was sworn in as President, South African foreign policy towards Africa, like the United States', was fluid. In the first few months there was a crush of well-wishers inviting South Africa to once again take its place amongst the community of nations, which South African officials did with zest. But with the tidings of good will and international acceptance came a host of expectations, ranging from the country being an engine-of-growth for Africa, to serving as a bridge between the developed North and the South. These expectations were further heightened when South African policy makers pulled off several foreign policy coups early on -- like negotiating the return of democratic*

*governance to the southern African kingdom of Lesotho, and rallying support for nuclear non-proliferation. However, it did not take long for the immensity of South Africa's domestic challenges to make their presence felt. Economic malaise, population growth, reconciliation, the need to restructure the government, military, and police -- all demanded the government's attention. Not surprising, then, South African foreign policy came to reflect domestic imperatives, but the reflection was multi-faceted, and often contradictory.*

*In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, two contradictions most apparent were that policy makers were expected first, to 'pay back' governments which had helped in the anti-apartheid struggle (even though the budget constraints all but precluded this), and second, to give a moral underpinning to South African international relations (even though arms sales with questionable ends, for example, were endorsed by sections of the government as a credible, and much needed, money-generating export). Given such extremes, South African foreign policy assumed an unofficial stance of 'universality'. As the word implies, universality was a holistic pursuit meant to accommodate nearly every expectation, need, and ideological conviction. What it meant in reality was that South African foreign policy towards Africa was perpetually disjunctive.*

*In sum, the period about to be covered in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa was a period marked by objectives, realities, and pursuits that were often mutually exclusive, and frequently changing. It was, in every sense of the word, a period of flux.*

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## Chapter Five: A New World Embraced, A New World Alienates

Following President George Bush's unilateral repeal of American sanctions against South Africa, thus resolving 'The South African Question', it appeared that the administration was succeeding in its foreign policy agenda with regard to Africa. Africa's profile, and consequently its perceived importance, had been, and was continuing to be, lowered. Accordingly, administration officials felt the time was right to take their strategy to what they saw as the next necessary step: pursuing a more vigorous form of 'foreign policy *triage*'.<sup>1</sup>

Bush had first articulated a version of foreign policy *triage* in regard to Africa in January 1990. It was then, during a budget address to Congress, that he explained how his administration intended to reduce aid to Africa specifically to free up larger amounts of it to Poland.<sup>2</sup> It was a statement confirming that, while the administration might not view Africa as totally unimportant, Poland, as a part of eastern Europe, was clearly higher on the foreign policy priority list. As such, it was justified to re-allocate finite resources away from what was viewed as an ailing continent, to an area of potential.

But undertaking a sustained form of foreign policy *triage* did not become an overwhelming necessity for the Bush administration until nearly a year and a half later, in

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<sup>1</sup> Author's analogy. *Triage*, as it has been applied in American military field hospitals, is a system of prioritisation for patients meant to maximise survival rates. The objective is to try and identify patients beyond treatment and to make them as comfortable as possible, but then to concentrate finite resources on those with a reasonable chance of survival.

<sup>2</sup> P. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.252.

mid-1991. Faced with the rapid implosion of the Soviet Union, administration officials were struggling to keep pace with the growing number of newly-independent republics emerging from the rubble of the crumbling empire. Nonetheless, US foreign policy makers thought it imperative to be active participants in consolidating the trend toward democracy. This, of course, required resources. Because administration officials were unwilling and unable to create a bigger pie, it was only logical, they reasoned, that the means would have to be carved from existing pieces.<sup>3</sup> There was little doubt as to which piece would be targeted. As Chester Crocker, the former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, remarked: 'Africans could end up paying for the expanding frontiers of freedom everywhere else...' <sup>4</sup>

Crocker's words were to prove prophetic. In order to staff the growing number of consulates and embassies in eastern Europe, the State Department was ordered to trim seventy positions from its Bureau of African Affairs, and to close consulates and embassies in four African countries.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was forced to cut a variety of programmes and staff positions related to Africa, and there were inquiries into the feasibility of merging the subcommittees on African and Latin American affairs as a way to decrease costs.<sup>6</sup> Collectively, these moves were the capstone on a trend that had already seen US military aid to Africa (minus the roughly US\$2 billion

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<sup>3</sup> One piece of legislation which not only embodied the philosophy of 'doing more with less', but also required it, was the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Deficit Reduction Act of 1986, which placed strict caps on government spending.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in 'A Longing for Liberty', *Newsweek*, 23 July 1990, p.27.

<sup>5</sup> Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change*, p. 251.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

given annually to Egypt) plummet from US\$279.2 million to US\$11.39 million, economic support funds plunge from US\$452.8 million to US\$58.9 million, and US foreign assistance decline from roughly 10.3 percent of an overall budget of US\$18.13 billion in 1985, to approximately 7.5 percent of the US\$15.73 billion budget in 1990.<sup>7</sup>

Commenting on the realignment of resources, some analysts observed that once 'America was free to pursue its own interests in Africa' -- meaning once US foreign policy makers were able to move beyond containing communism, opposing apartheid, and maintaining sanctions against South Africa -- 'it found it didn't have any.'<sup>8</sup> A widely-held assumption was that the *triage* strategy underway, at Africa's expense, would continue undeterred as the United States pursued a more regionally-focussed foreign policy based on a narrower definition of self-interest. This was not to be. Simultaneous to an agenda of foreign policy *triage*, Bush announced the concept of a 'new world order'. To him, the new world order 'struggling to be born' was one '... quite different from the one we have known, a world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle, a world in which nations recogni(s)e the shared responsibility for freedom and justice, a world where the strong respect the weak'.<sup>9</sup>

Far from being a new idea, Bush's new world order concept built upon principles that

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<sup>7</sup> United States Agency for International Development (USAID), *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organi(s)ations: Obligations and Loan Authori(s)ations, July 1, 1945 - September 30, 1991* (Washington, D.C.: USAID, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in M. Michaels, 'Retreat from Africa', in *Foreign Affairs: America and the World 1992-1993*: p.93.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush*, Volume 2 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1991), p.1219.

had long found support in US foreign policy. Specifically, there was a continued emphasis on the rule of law and the maintenance of order as a way of promoting freedom. Freedom was best achieved, it was held, if nations as a whole were secure in pursuing and/or achieving self-determination, and if individual citizens within nations could implement their wishes through democratic institutions. In US history, these were the principles which had encouraged Woodrow Wilson to seek to establish the League of Nations, what Franklin Roosevelt felt necessitated America's involvement in World War Two, and to which Harry Truman subscribed in forming his Truman Doctrine when he said: 'I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation... I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.'<sup>10</sup> Even the Reagan Doctrine's 'disorder', resulting from the arming of avowed anti-communist rebel movements, was couched in similar terms: a season of disorder could be justified if it ultimately led to the banishment of totalitarianism. Thus, while the principles of the rule of law and the maintenance of order as prerequisites for freedom continued to form the basis of Bush's new world order, in no way were they new concepts. What was new, in Bush's view, was that in a post-Cold War world with only one truly global superpower, there was a historically unprecedented opportunity to raise these ideals to a level of virtual universal acceptance.<sup>11</sup> The challenge lay in defining to the

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in 'A Message of Harry Truman to Congress', in *A Decade of American Foreign Policy, Basic Documents 1941-1949* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 1256.

<sup>11</sup> Undeniably, Wilson had a 'new world order' -- a universal idealism -- in mind at the end of World War One. However, at the end of World War One no single power, or group of powers, could reach a consensus on how best to achieve it. In the United States, this was confirmed when Congress prohibited Wilson from committing the US to the League of Nations, the entity which

American people and the international community what role the United States could play in making the new world order a reality.

To these ends, Bush described how he thought that the world had been made safe for democracy as a concept, though the world itself was far from democratic.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the foundation for a lasting structure of peace and security had been laid, but it needed to be built upon. Peace and security, Bush noted, would take American leadership; the United States, he said, was 'the only nation on this earth that could assemble the forces of peace'<sup>13</sup> in order to foster a 'peaceful settlement of disputes, solidarity against aggression... and the just treatment of all peoples'.<sup>14</sup> However, Bush warned, there would be those who opposed the principles on which the new world order were to stand, if not American involvement in

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was to serve and protect an international community of common interests. Moreover, there was little or no will to impose an order on others. After such a terrible and destructive war as World War One, this lack-of-will was to prove enduring -- as attested to by the fact that, over a decade later, Nazi Germany was able to swallow up entire parts of Europe before others finally resolved themselves to act.

Likewise, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman had an idealistic 'universal vision' in mind near or at the end of World War Two, albeit this time there was a firmer commitment to a community of interest, embodied in the United Nations. Yet, the arena of international affairs had become bi-polar and subject to the vastly different ideologies of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, the attainment of a new world order, based on uncontested principles, was effectively precluded.

<sup>12</sup> R.W. Tucker and D.C. Hendrickson, *The Imperial Temptation: The New World Order and America's Purpose* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992), p. 66.

<sup>13</sup> President George Bush, 'State of the Union Address, 29 January 1991', in *Dispatch*, 2, no. 5 (4 February 1991): pp.91-94.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in J.S. Nye, 'What New World Order?', in ed. Eugene Wittkopf, *The Future of American Foreign Policy* (St. Martin's Press, 1994), p.50.

promoting and protecting them. About this Bush commented: 'The new world order cannot guarantee an era of perpetual peace, but enduring peace must be our mission.'<sup>15</sup>

Bush had no illusions that the new mission to which he was hoping to commit the United States would incur costs. Most immediately, there was the likelihood that the new world order might require the use of force to counter aggression.<sup>16</sup> In this regard, Bush's vision was an uneasy blending of Wilsonian ideals with Cold War realism. However, as a shrewd politician, Bush knew full well that the use of force would push the outer limits of what would be tolerated in pursuing and sustaining it.

Most immediately, the use of force would be the surest way to arouse criticism within the American electorate and Congress about the financial costs to the country, and whether American lives were worth giving in pursuit of a new vision. In a broader sense, administration officials recognised that the use of America's military might could cause many in the international community to accuse the US of pursuing a form of imperialism. Indeed, in the wake of the Gulf War, many editorialists around the world were accusing the US of using the new world order as a philosophical cover for building 'a world of uncontested US power, in the process subordinating the ambitions of (others) to American interest'.<sup>17</sup> Others went so far as to talk of a 'colonial revival' in which the United States, like some late-twentieth-century Cecil Rhodes, was leading the advanced industrial countries

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<sup>15</sup> President George Bush, 'Address to Joint Session of Congress', *Dispatch*, 2, no.7 (7 March 1991): p.162.

<sup>16</sup> This was markedly different from Wilson, who largely excluded the use of force as an option following World War One, thinking the power of public opinion was enough to either prevent or defeat aggression.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in J.F. Petras and M.H. Morley, *Empire or Republic? American Global Power and Domestic Decay* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.21.

back into the heart of the underdeveloped world.<sup>18</sup>

At the beginning of 1992, then, US foreign policy makers had a considerable dilemma: how best to achieve the new world order, but to do so with minimal resources, as the Bush administration's foreign policy *triage* strategy demanded. The solution to which US foreign policy makers turned was multi-lateralism. Multi-lateralism was to be a compromise between the two extremes of the United States acting as a 'globocop' or retreating into a new isolationism, and therefore expending vast amounts of resources or very few. America's new dispensation was to be one that moved away from being the defender of freedom, as foreign policy makers had claimed during the Cold War, to being a custodian. A major prerequisite for being a responsible custodian was that US foreign policy makers had to accept that the United States could not, nor should it, hold absolute and undisputed sway. In the new world order, the United States could achieve *Pax Americana* -- that is, order through the peaceful adjudication of disputes according to international law, and the advancement and maintenance of liberal democracy and economics -- if it sought collective action (albeit Bush maintained that in extreme matters of national interest, when collective action was unachievable, the United States would still be willing to act unilaterally).

By advocating the notion of a multi-lateral future, US foreign policy makers, at least theoretically, had resolved the inherent contradictions of wanting to downgrade Africa, pursuing a form of foreign policy *triage* confirming as much, and yet still committing the

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<sup>18</sup> From Michael Cox, *US Foreign Policy after the Cold War: Superpower Without a Mission?* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995), p.108. Also, see J. Petras and S. Vieux, 'The Decline of Revolutionary Politics: Capitalists Detour and the Return of Socialism', in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol.24, no.1 (1994): pp.29-33.

United States to helping make the new world order a reality for all. Nonetheless, the Bush administration hoped that they would not have to apply this merger of strategies and ideals in Africa, and to keep the continent on America's 'back burner'.<sup>19</sup> In mid-1992, however, the Horn of Africa, and subsequently the Great Lakes region, were two parts of Africa incapable of being placed on the back burner.

Due to a combination of drought, civil war, and an over abundance of weaponry, Somalia, on the Horn of Africa, was in chaos in 1992. The major cities were in ruins, over 300,000 had died from war and starvation, more than one million were displaced and living as refugees, and another two million were on the brink of famine.<sup>20</sup> Relief agencies were the first to relay information regarding the humanitarian disaster to the media, who then broadcast the plight of Somalis to the larger world. Ultimately, members of the US Congress were moved to call for Presidential action; Senator Nancy Kassebaum, for example, one of Congress's most respected leaders, urged President Bush to establish a force 'to ensure that food gets to those in need'.<sup>21</sup> By early August, both the US House of Representatives and the Senate had passed resolutions requiring that the President take action.<sup>22</sup>

Against this background of heightened media and Congressional interest, yet contrary to the administration's preferences, the White House was obliged to 'do something'.

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<sup>19</sup> Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change*, p.250.

<sup>20</sup> J.O. Ihonvhere, 'Beyond Warlords and Clans: The African Crisis and the Somali Situation', in *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, 6 (1994): p.7.

<sup>21</sup> See *Congressional Almanac* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1992), p.535.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Initially, the 'leading role' to which US foreign policy makers committed centred around an international airlift aimed at distributing 17,000 tons of food and other supplies. By late October, though, it was clear that most of the supplies were not reaching those who so desperately needed it, but instead ending up in the hands of the militiamen who were exacerbating Somalia's human tragedy. Calling up memories of the 1985 Ethiopian crisis, the US Joint-Chiefs-of-Staff Chairman Colin Powell noted the evidence was obvious regarding the inadequacies of the airlift; one had only to turn on the evening news, he observed, to see 'night after night... images of people starving to death before our eyes'.<sup>23</sup>

Still, the administration remained hesitant of increasing American involvement.

The single-most important event that initiated a change in the Bush administration's position occurred when, in early November 1992, Bush lost the presidential election to former Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton. Despite having lost the election, Bush was still president of the sole remaining superpower until January 1993, and therefore, still the chief architect of the new world order. Moreover, as a 'lame-duck' president, he was now unconstrained by domestic considerations associated with seeking re-election. As a result (and perhaps with an eye to secure a favourable place in history mixed with humanitarian aims to be discussed below), Bush had one last window of opportunity in which to set a course for US foreign policy. Somalia, while far from being an ideal locale, was an immediate real-world 'laboratory'<sup>24</sup> in which to experiment with one aspect of the new world order vision.

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in C. Powell, *A Soldier's Way* (London: Hutchinson, 1995), p.564.

<sup>24</sup> A. Adebayo, 'Prophets of Pax Africana', in *West Africa*, 6-12 November 1995, p.1714.

Reflecting the Bush administration's re-prioritisation, by mid-November key foreign policy makers like Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gallucci and Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger began making public statements in favour of forceful US action under UN authorisation. Between 20-24 November, a flurry of meetings were held in the White House discussing options. By 25 November, the White House became committed to a proposed Operation 'Restore Hope' which, as presented by the Joint-Chiefs-of-Staff Chairman Powell, was to be a major multi-lateral 'mercy mission' led by US ground forces. Soon after, and with no public announcement, Bush contacted UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali with the offer of US forces.

On 3 December 1992, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 794 authorising the despatch of an international military force to conduct relief operations in Somalia. The resolution gave the Secretary-General some control over the force's command structure, set up a fund to compensate poorer nations joining the force, and provided for Security Council consultation regarding the duration of the operation. Nevertheless, it was widely recognised that the force would be under US command -- a fact supported by Boutros-Ghali's inability to approve American soldiers wearing blue helmets,<sup>25</sup> and one that led several African states in the General Assembly to protest of another abdication of UN authority to the United States.<sup>26</sup> On 4 December, a mere four days before the first contingent of US forces landed in Somalia, Bush made a televised address announcing the deployment

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<sup>25</sup> J. Mayall, *The New Interventionism, 1991-1994: United Nations Experience in Cambodia, Former Yugoslavia, and Somalia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.111.

<sup>26</sup> See Sola Akinrinade, 'Africa and the United Nations', in *Africa in the Post-Cold War International System*, eds. S. Akinrinade and A. Sesay (London: Pinter, 1998), pp.175-178.

of up to 28,000 troops as America's contribution to a multinational force. 'Every American has seen the shocking images from Somalia,' he stated. 'The United States alone cannot right the world's wrongs... (but) we also know that some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement, that American involvement is often necessary as a catalyst for broader involvement of the community of nations.'<sup>27</sup>

As the above quote attests, Bush's rhetoric in defining the new world order was often pluralistic in terms of means, but solidarist in terms of goals. Broadly speaking, pluralists believe in an international society comprised of sovereign states whose activities are regulated by laws of coexistence. Laws of coexistence maintain that state governments have the right to pursue their own interests, but they must do so in a way that adheres to international law, which includes the minimal rule of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states. By contrast, solidarists believe that state sovereignty is conditional, and that the international community should, in principle, be committed to a universally-accepted set of obligations. In forgoing state, national, and/or individual interests in pursuit of a 'community of humankind' or a 'security of the whole', so the solidarist argument goes, the interests of all will be served.<sup>28</sup> In the new international order emerging in the 1990s, Bush had made his solidarist aspirations known (i.e., a *Pax Americana* where the new world order consisted of the peaceful adjudication of disputes according to international law, and the advancement and maintenance of liberal democracy and economics), yet showed that he also

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the US: George Bush, 1992-1993*, Volume 2 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1993), pp.2174-2175.

<sup>28</sup> For a more thorough description of the pluralist and solidarist paradigms and their implications in the post-Cold War era, see Chapter 1 in James Mayall's *The New Interventionism, 1991-1994: United Nations Experience in Cambodia, Former Yugoslavia, and Somalia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

favoured pluralist means when necessary (as demonstrated in the Gulf War). Somalia, however, was an enigma.

In many ways Somalia fit the challenges US foreign policy makers envisioned in the new world order. That is, in a world where the United States was the only superpower, threats would come from middle and small powers, like Somalia, and not from politically and ideologically hostile adversaries of comparable strength. Nevertheless, these middle and small powers did pose a threat through their ability to transmit misery and chaos -- for example, in the mass movements of refugees resulting from civil war. But a more ominous scenario was that such states, tired of being on the periphery of the international system, might be inclined to pursue aggressive ends like terrorism. This was a frightening thought for US foreign policy makers, particularly since it was not unreasonable to think that even states with the most modest means might be able to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Thus, if America could impose order in Somalia, it might just serve as a useful precedent for the future.

However, for every aspect of the Somalia crisis which confirmed the anticipated challenges US foreign policy makers might face in the new world order, there were countless others which defied a clear place in it. Foremost among these was that Somalia was a country without a government, and therefore, was a state only in name. Added to this was the reality that unlike Iraq, which had violated an internationally-recognised boundary by invading Kuwait and then unilaterally annexed it, the violence in Somalia was being wrought by Somalis in Somalia; moreover, none of the warring clans had made an appeal to the international community to intercede. Accordingly, once the White House had made the decision to intervene, the relevant question ceased to be whether Somalia's continuing

tragedy could justify intervention,<sup>29</sup> but rather, how could intervention be justified?

Initially, US and UN officials turned to Chapters VI and VII of the United Nations Charter to justify intervention. As originally envisioned, Chapter VI was to facilitate, short of enforcement, the pacific settlement of disputes; Chapter VII was meant to provide for international action to repel or deter aggression. Peacekeeping, it has generally been assumed, falls under Chapter VI and requires the Security Council to pass a mandate. In turn, a mandate depends on the consent of conflicting parties and is to occur under circumstances where a cease-fire had been agreed (i.e., where there is a peace to keep). For reasons noted above, the Somalia case failed to fall neatly under either Chapter. As a result, those in favour of intervention began to talk of a Chapter Six-and-a-half directive, one that fell halfway between Chapter VI and Chapter VII.<sup>30</sup> While US foreign policy makers and UN officials might have technically been able to act under such terms, they strengthened their case by employing the solidarist ideal of human rights.

US foreign policy makers were quick to point out that they had consistently maintained that democracy and international order were two sides of the same coin. States who adhere to representative governance based on the rule of law, they asserted, were more likely to contribute to international affairs at best, and at worst not to detract willingly from them. The most basic element in the complex equation of democracy and order, they claimed, was a respect for human rights. In this regard, US foreign policy makers' views were extremely close to those articulated by the UN Secretary-General. Indeed, in his *Agenda for Peace*, Boutros Boutros-Ghali sounded remarkably like George Bush when he argued that 'democracy within nations requires respect for human rights and fundamental

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<sup>29</sup> Mayall, *The New Interventionism, 1991-1994*, p.5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

freedoms, as set forth in the (United Nations) Charter', and when he stated: 'Democracy at all levels, is essential to attain peace for a new era of prosperity and justice.'<sup>31</sup>

Building on the theme of human rights as the moral justification for intervention, the case was then made that they also provided the legal reasons for doing so. As of December 1992, virtually all states had signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the majority had also ratified two supporting conventions.<sup>32</sup> As such, there was 'community of humankind' obligated to upholding the right to life, nationality, political participation, freedom of movement, freedom of residence, and numerous other fundamental 'birthrights' -- birthrights clearly being ignored and/or violated in Somalia.<sup>33</sup>

Having cleared some of the larger moral and legal obstacles for intervention, on 8 December 1992 the first US forces landed in Somalia as the advance guard of a force of 25,400 personnel. Early on, particularly between the months of December 1992 and April 1993, the intervention proved to be a success in the sense that it provided at least a degree of safety for relief work to be carried out. However, in spite of his public statements commanding Bush 'for taking the lead in this important humanitarian effort',<sup>34</sup> from his inauguration as President in January 1993, Bill Clinton was uneasy with his Somali inheritance. Clinton, after all, had run a campaign against a 'foreign policy President',

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<sup>31</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (paragraphs 81 and 82), quoted in Mayall, *The New Interventionism*, p.19.

<sup>32</sup> Specifically, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

<sup>33</sup> For a full listing of rights included in the International Bill on Human Rights, and a summary of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, see Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1992, p.536.

centring his campaign around the mantra 'It's the economy, stupid' -- a reference to the sluggishness of the American economy through much of Bush's presidency. Clinton had picked up on the American electorate's sentiment that foreign policy left them cold in the world without a threat comparable to the former Soviet Union,<sup>35</sup> and though the public understood that the United States was the only superpower, the feeling was that priority had to be given to pressing problems at home. A *Time/CNN* poll at the end of August 1992 had confirmed as much when it asked: 'Which of these is the main problem the candidates should be addressing?' Of the suggested answers, 2 percent opted for foreign policy while 60 percent said the economy.<sup>36</sup>

In order to minimise Clinton's vulnerability in a foreign commitment inherited from his predecessor, the new administration quickly set about trying to distance itself from the Somalia operation. To these ends, a transition to UN command, organisation, and leadership was begun in April 1993, and completed only a month later, by the end of May.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See 'Why America Doesn't Lead,' *The Economist*, 30 April 1994.

<sup>36</sup> J. Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p.336.

<sup>37</sup> As James Mayall points out in *The New Interventionism* ((Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.115-116), even after the transition was completed it was difficult to tell whether the Pentagon or Boutros-Ghali was calling the shots. Mayall states: '...the UN Secretariat was fully aware that support for UNOSOM would be likely to whither on the vine if it was perceived that the United States were "dumping" an insoluble problem onto the UN as a way of extricating itself. Boutros-Ghali accurately calculated that if the operation was headed by an American this would guarantee strong US support. It would also be necessary, if as planned a US force was to serve for the first time in their history under a foreign, albeit UN, command.' To these ends, Lieutenant-General Levik Bir, a Turk with a long history of working with Americans in NATO, and Ambassador Howe, who had served as security advisor to Bush, were given military command. In addition to the prominence of US logistical support and special forces, this inevitably gave a strong 'American orientation'.

Following this, events swung out of control. Encouraged by US Ambassador Madeline Albright, the Security Council adopted a ‘nation-building’ resolution, with Clinton himself speaking of the need for ‘patience in nation-building’. In June, though, twenty-three Pakistani peacekeepers were killed. The ambush was blamed on Mohamed Farah Aideed, and US forces were set the difficult task of arresting him. By August, eight US soldiers had been killed. Then, on 3 October 1993, US forces lost eighteen men in a Mogadishu firefight. For most Americans, the images of dead US soldiers being dragged nude through the streets of Mogadishu and of Somalis looting the UN headquarters was too much to handle. Under intense pressure at home, Clinton announced the imminent end of direct US involvement in Somalia.

Clinton’s announcement, and the subsequent withdrawal of American forces in April 1994, marked not only the end of the Somalia mission; it also marked the end of America’s commitment to a new world order vision as articulated by Bush. Specifically, US intervention under the auspices of multi-lateralism, a growing number of pundits began to argue, was to be ruled out. ‘No Third World interest,’ said one, ‘can justify paying large costs or taking large numbers of (American) lives.’<sup>38</sup>

In the wake of the new world order’s demise, a reinvigorated ‘neo-realism’ emerged as political conservatives like the columnist Pat Buchanan began to advocate a policy of ‘enlightened nationalism’.<sup>39</sup> Americans, Buchanan asserted, had to begin to look ‘with a cold

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<sup>38</sup> Quoted in M. Clough, *Free at Last* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992), p.61.

<sup>39</sup> Buchanan actually borrowed the term ‘enlightened nationalism’ from Walter Lippman who, in his work *The Cold War: A Study in U.S. Foreign Policy* (London: Hamilton, 1947), explored the meaning of ‘the national interest’ in the American case immediately after World War Two.

eye on the internationalist set, (who are) never at a loss for new ideas to divert US wealth and power into crusades and causes having little or nothing to do with the true national interest of the United States'.<sup>40</sup> It was a theme that would resonate with numerous Congresspersons to varying degrees, and one many candidates would embrace as they were swept into Congress in what would prove to be a rightward-leaning Republican Party rout in the November 1994 elections.<sup>41</sup> One Representative, David Funderburk, claimed: 'We're not saying we're protectionist or isolationist. We're just looking to put the interest of our districts first. We represent the latest expression of populist feeling in this country.'<sup>42</sup>

Whatever Congressional officials and political analysts chose to call the new foreign policy air in Washington, the nature of it soon became known. In January 1994, Congress passed laws imposing strict conditions on the future participation of US troops in United Nations peacekeeping missions -- peacekeeping having become synonymous with the 'multi-lateral interventionism' neo-realists opposed. In the future, US participation was to be contingent upon, among other provisos, the UN producing a strategy and timetable for disengagement, other nations demonstrating a greater willingness to share in the financial costs of operations, and, except under extraordinary circumstances, US troops remaining under US command. But it did not end there. Republicans in both houses began to

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<sup>40</sup> M. Clough, *Free at Last* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992), p.61.

<sup>41</sup> The 1992 and 1994 Congressional elections saw the largest inflow of new members into both houses of Congress since the elections of 1946 and 1948. In fact, by 1995 over half of the House of Representative's membership was comprised of Representatives who had arrived since 1989 (Source: *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 3 February 1996, p.306).

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 3 February 1996, p.306.

collaborate to draft a 'National Security Revitali(s)ation Act'. While the bulk of the bill focussed on sharply increasing spending for defence, the bill also sought to impose even more restrictive provisions for determining US involvement in UN peacekeeping. More startling yet, a section of the bill proposed deducting the amount of voluntarily-paid funds the US had given for UN-endorsed operations (such as those in the Persian Gulf, and even in South Korea) from those the United States owed as a part of its regularly-assessed UN peacekeeping dues. Conceivably, if the bill reached fruition and was passed, the US, according to American lawmakers, would go from owing the United Nations an estimated US\$1.2 billion in 1994 to the US being owed US\$400 million!<sup>43</sup>

For those aware of the figures, the neo-realist backlash might not have been at all unexpected. In 1988, the UN was involved in 5 peacekeeping missions and had a budget of US\$230 million to carry them out; by 1994 the number of missions had grown to 17 and the budget had ballooned to US\$3.6 billion. With each passing year the expectations and demands for American support -- in rhetorical, financial, and personnel terms -- had increased. Somalia, however, had been too much. The estimated total cost for the US government alone for all Somali operations amounted to nearly US\$2.3 billion between April 1992 and July 1994.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, 26 American soldiers had died in combat, and still Somalia remained in chaos with widespread human suffering. Add to this a measure of American ambivalence in international affairs resulting from the collapse of global communism combined with economic uncertainty at home, and one finds that there was fertile enough

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<sup>43</sup> Washington Office on Africa, 'Support for Peacekeeping at Risk' (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Africa, 12 February 1995).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

ground for just such a reaction.

So pervasive and vocal did opposition to American multi-lateral interventionism/peacekeeping become that even when faced with outright genocide in Rwanda, US foreign policy makers showed an extreme reluctance to intercede. In fact, when massacres reached their peak in April and May 1994, the formation of an African peacekeeping force was stopped when a US vote in the Security Council blocked its financing. Then, in a move that was to have dire consequences for nearly 800,000 Rwandans, the US lead a vote to reduce the UN force already in Rwanda from 2,500 to 250 troops.<sup>45</sup> The reason, at least in the eyes of one analyst: 'American negotiators in New York were pressing the UN for a higher price for the armoured personnel carriers that were needed to carry out the UN-mandated mission.'<sup>46</sup>

Beyond precluding any direct, widespread American involvement in African peacekeeping -- as one Clinton administration official was quoted as saying: 'It is hard to imagine a situation where American troops would be deployed to Africa again in either a Chapter 6 or 7 operation'<sup>47</sup> -- the neo-realist backlash had other effects. Specifically, the *triage* strategy that had been underway at the African continent's expense became a

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<sup>45</sup> The Canadian UN commander in Rwanda claimed publicly that if he had only modest additions to his force when the slaughter began in April 1994, and an expansion of his mandate, it would have been possible to stop the disaster from spreading (Source: Washington Office on Africa, 'Support for Peacekeeping at Risk', (Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Africa, 12 February 1995)).

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in C.W. Maynes, 'The New Pessimism', *Foreign Policy*, 100 (Fall 1995): p.35.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in S. McCormich, 'The Lessons of Intervention in Africa', in *Current History*, 94, 951 (April 1995): p.166.

haemorrhaging withdrawal of American resources. By the end of 1994, personnel in the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs had been reduced to only 10 percent of its number two years earlier, in 1992.<sup>48</sup> In the US Agency for International Development (USAID), in a major effort labelled 'restructuring', 90 organisational units were eliminated in Washington, reducing staff by over 1,000, and nine of 21 overseas missions closed were in Africa.<sup>49</sup> But nowhere was the scope of withdrawal more evident than in the area of foreign aid.

Most certainly, foreign aid has never been particularly popular in the United States. Its harshest critics have often portrayed it as a hand-out to foreigners, 'socialism by the back door', or as a complete waste of money. To combat such criticisms, at least prior to 1990, foreign aid's supporters had often legitimised it in terms of its value as a weapon of the Cold War. Indeed, the Marshall Plan, the greatest example of foreign aid in the history of the world, had been sold to a parsimonious Congress in 1948 not as an altruistic act to help rebuild the countries of western Europe, but primarily as a way of undermining the legitimacy of the Soviet Union in eastern Europe over the long term. Naturally, then, with the Cold War's demise, 'foreign aid as a weapon against communism' became a mute argument. The already weak case for foreign aid had become weaker still.

To be fair, even in 1994 the United States continued to be the largest aggregate giver of aid. Nonetheless, the amount given was only a small part of America's wealth: between

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<sup>48</sup> M. Michaels, 'Retreat from Africa', in *Foreign Affairs*, 71, 1 (1993): p.94.

<sup>49</sup> 'Statement by Brian Atwood, Administrator, US Agency for International Development, to the Committee on International Relations, US House of Representatives', *The Future of Foreign Aid* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, May 1995).

1990 and 1994, foreign aid took less than 1 percent of the federal budget (versus 20 percent defence received). Still, the former, and not the latter, often prevailed in Americans' minds. A 1994 study showed that 75 percent of Americans felt that the country was spending 'too much' on foreign aid. However, when those polled were asked what percentage of the federal budget they thought was being spent on foreign aid, most overestimated to a huge degree, with the median guess being around 15 percent.<sup>50</sup>

Bolstered by such polls, and compelled little to inform their constituents of the actual amount spent on foreign aid because it would have undermined their neo-realist agenda, many members of Congress began to portray foreign aid as little more than 'a massive international welfare program'.<sup>51</sup> In particular, Africa was singled out as embodying much of what was wrong with foreign aid priorities and programs. In the immediate aftermath of Somalia and Rwanda, American legislators had little incentive to view Africa as anything other than a continent of chaos and decline. To them, the bottom line was that at mid-1994 Africa was the only continent whose people, per capita, were worse off than they had been in the previous decade. On average, Africans' GDP per head had declined by 2.2 percent per

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<sup>50</sup> 'Perceptions of Foreign Aid', a poll conducted by the Program(me) on International Policy Attitudes, School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland, 1994. Also, see 'Foreign Aid Budget: Quick, How Much? Wrong', *New York Times*, 27 February 1995.

<sup>51</sup> 'Hearing before the Subcommittee on Economic Policy and Environment of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 4 and 12 May 1993', *Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Year 1994, Part 3* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1993).

year through the 1980s,<sup>52</sup> or by an average of 2 percent between 1980 and 1994.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, the external debt of states on the continent had doubled. All the while, Africa's population had continued to grow at a rate of 3.2 percent annually, and from this came the exacerbation of such social problems as high rates of unemployment, rapid urbanisation, environmental degradation, and many others -- not helped at all by the existence of 7 million refugees and 15 million displaced persons resulting from Africa's many wars and conflicts. This was the reality of Africa, it was pointed out on the House and Senate floors and in back-chamber committee meetings on Capitol Hill, and all in spite of a significant increase in the total amount of foreign aid given to Africa through the 1980s.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, while US foreign policy makers charged with handling African affairs had always had to contend with the perception of 'Africa as a foreign policy backwater', their jobs were made infinitely harder because of the prevailing pessimism that existed in Washington in mid-1994. Surprisingly, however, for Africa had always presented US foreign policy makers with more pitfalls than promises, the Clinton administration initiated a tentative campaign to counter Washington's neo-realist exasperation with the continent.

The first attempt to change perceptions came at a 'White House Conference on Africa', held 26-27 June 1994. During his speech, Clinton acknowledged that he felt Somalia had been presented 'honestly but wrongly to the American people as something that

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<sup>52</sup> *World Bank Development Report* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.11.

<sup>53</sup> United States Department of State, 'A Continent of Contradictions', a speech by Anthony Lake on 26 June 1994, during The White House Conference on Africa (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> 'Do More for Africa', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 June 1994.

could be done on a purely humanitarian basis when, in fact, unless human tragedy is caused by natural disaster, there is no such thing as a purely humanitarian enterprise'.<sup>55</sup> If one accepted such a view, Clinton inferred, then one could also justify America's deliberate and limited response to the Rwandan genocide. Clinton then said: 'But now the prism through which we viewed Africa has been shattered... We have a new freedom and a new responsibility to see Africa -- to see it whole and to see it as specific nations and specific problems and specific promise.' It was a call meant to exorcise some of the foreign policy demons that had been driving the neo-realist backlash, hopefully slowing its momentum.

Soon after the White House Conference on Africa, State Department employees, for example, began to display buttons bearing the slogan 'JUST ONE PERCENT' -- a reminder of the real proportion of federal tax money devoted to foreign and diplomatic spending. The irony was that while such displays might have done some good for morale within the foreign policy establishment, it did little beyond. Because the foreign policy establishment has historically had a small budget, this actually hinders the ability of individuals within the establishment to rebut misconceptions and hostility. With no natural domestic constituencies, and therefore no vested interests, the establishment, regardless of its pride and enthusiasm, often loses out to entities like the US Department of Defen(c)e, which are capable of doling out projects to specific areas in return for Congresspersons' support.

As a result, at the start of 1995 little progress had been made in stemming the tide of neo-realist sentiment on Capitol Hill. Accordingly, draft bills were introduced in the US

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'Remarks by President Clinton at the White House Conference on Africa, 26 and 27 June 1994' (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 1994).

Senate to cut America's foreign aid by more than US\$1.2 billion, or by nearly 10 percent,<sup>56</sup> and to reduce US payments to the International Development Agency, the low-interest arm of the World Bank that lends to the world's poorest countries, by nearly 50 percent.<sup>57</sup> While these cuts were to affect Africa indirectly, their impact was magnified as African-related allocations became a favoured target for lawmakers' axes. Namely, the already low percentage of the foreign aid budget that went to Africa (less than 8 percent in fiscal year 1994, or about US\$800 million for a continent of nearly 800 million people) was earmarked for a 34 percent decrease,<sup>58</sup> while funds for the African Development Foundation, the US government agency mandated to make grants to grassroots organisations, were to be cut by 33 percent.<sup>59</sup> For the most part, the American public met such proposed cuts with apathy. In the words of one person: 'Who cares about Africa?... It is not important to us. Leave it to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.'<sup>60</sup>

Faced with such legislative action and public indifference, the Clinton administration realised that if the neo-realist backlash was to be halted, and an African agenda salvaged, it was going to require more active and visible efforts from the highest levels of the foreign

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<sup>56</sup> 'Day of Reckoning for Foreign Aid,' *The Guardian Weekly* (London), 1 October 1995.

<sup>57</sup> Z. Minton-Beddoes, 'The Death of Foreign Aid', in *The World in 1996* (London: Economist Publications, 1996), p.80. Also, see 'Foreign Aid Faces Stiffest Challenge Yet in Congress', in *Atlantic Outlook*, no.85 (19 May 1995): p.4.

<sup>58</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 15 July 1995, p.2084.

<sup>59</sup> J. Daniel, 'Southern Africa in a Global Context: Forever in the Slow Lane?' in *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.4, no.1 (Summer 1996): p.87.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86.

policy making establishment. As a result, in May 1995 Clinton came out with his strongest statement yet, offering a more assertive administration stance. He stated: 'We did not win the Cold War to walk away and blow the opportunities of peace on shortsighted, scattershot budget cuts.'<sup>61</sup>

Following Clinton's lead, other administration officials picked up the theme. Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, noted: 'Foreign assistance is under attack by new isolationists from both the left and right, and American leadership is at risk. African countries that have bravely chosen the path of democracy and economic reform are asking why the United States appears to be on the verge of retreat at exactly the moment that they are doing what we have asked of them for decades.'<sup>62</sup> Brian Atwood, Head of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), made a case in strong, clear terms. He claimed it was because of 'Congressional isolationists' that the United States was 'spending twice as much on peacekeeping and disaster relief as we are on development'. While unavoidable, Atwood said, the US needed 'to reverse that ratio' and engage 'in a strategy of crisis prevention'.<sup>63</sup> To these ends, the US had to quit viewing past efforts as one-off relief operations, but rather, 'as a continuum from relief, to recovery, to

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<sup>61</sup> 'The President's Speech', US Information Agency press release, 26 September 1995.

<sup>62</sup> 'Sustained US Assistance to Africa', remarks by Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to the roundtable on sustained US assistance to Africa, Trans-Africa Forum (Washington D.C.: Trans-Africa Forum, 29 June 1995).

<sup>63</sup> 'Remarks by Brian Atwood, Administrator for Agency for International Development' (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), June 1995).

long-term sustainable development'.<sup>64</sup> Finally, if Congressional cuts went through, a press release warned: 'As many as 4 million children may not be inoculated against infectious disease, and some of them will die. Nearly 100,000 children will risk death from lack of oral re-hydration therapy. (America's) ability to track and limit the spread of HIV will be sharply diminished. Declining population growth rates in some countries -- key to stable development -- could increase again...'<sup>65</sup>

In spite of the sharpness of these salvos-of-blame across the bow of Congressional neo-realists, the Clinton administration soon picked up a less fatalist theme. Administration officials came to the realisation that in countering the neo-realist backlash with their own fearful scenarios, they were merely perpetuating images of Africa like those in Robert Kaplan's 'The Coming Anarchy'<sup>66</sup> -- an article that had received much notoriety in Congress because of its portrayal of Africa as a continent of overpopulated cities and countries, and conflicts and tragedies. As a result, Clinton administration officials began to cast Africa in a much different light. In fact, many in the administration began to speak of Africa in almost glowing terms. For example, Clinton remarked: 'As Africans turn away from the failed experiments of the past, they're embracing new political freedoms... It's a good sign, and the lights of freedom shine brighter.'<sup>67</sup> Vice-President Al Gore asserted: 'Sweeping through

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<sup>64</sup> 'Remarks by Brian Atwood, Administrator for Agency for International Development' (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), June 1995).

<sup>65</sup> Department of State press release, July 1995.

<sup>66</sup> See R. Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy', *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1994).

<sup>67</sup> 'The President's Speech', US Information Agency press release, 26 September 1995.

Africa in this last decade of the 20th century is a wave of optimism.' And Brian Atwood reported: 'What is most significant today is that a new group of African leaders has come to power. These leaders are pushing the continent to realise its potential.'<sup>68</sup> But the most profound public statement came from Anthony Lake, who had started his political career as a foreign service officer in Africa in the 1960s. Lake stated that the administration realised that reducing the federal deficit required cuts, which, in turn, required reducing foreign assistance. However, he said:

Singling out Africa is not only unfair, it's unwise.. (because) staying engaged in Africa is in America's interest. Today, the nearly 700 million people who live south of the Sahara comprise a major emerging market, and Africa's wealth of resources -- from oil and uranium to cocoa and coffee -- are in permanent demand here in America. Yet we have barely begun to explore all of the possibilities that trade with Africa holds for US companies and consumers.

US exports to Africa totalled US\$4.4 billion last year, and more than 80,000 American jobs depend on them. These exports -- which exceed those to the former Soviet Union by nearly a quarter -- can be vastly increased. But to do so, we must continue to help stability take hold and democracy take root throughout the continent.<sup>69</sup>

Lake's comments were to be a foreshadowing of what was to become the cornerstone of the Clinton administration's foreign policy aims regarding Africa. In particular, White House officials were to begin to call for heightened US engagement with the continent, claiming it was a major emerging market, and therefore, a continent crucial to the American national interest.

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<sup>68</sup> US Information Agency press release, 14 October 1995.

<sup>69</sup> 'Sustained US Assistance to Africa', remarks by Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to the roundtable on sustained US assistance to Africa, Trans-Africa Forum (Washington D.C.: Trans-Africa Forum, 29 June 1995).

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## Chapter Six: High Expectations Meet Harsh Realities

With the swearing in of Nelson Mandela as President of the Republic of South Africa in May 1994, the 'South African Miracle' had been realised: white minority rule had given way to majority rule, and most impressively, the change had been democratic and without the violence feared. In response, the international community greeted the 'New South Africa' with open arms, often with much revelry and fanfare.

In stark contrast to its days as a loathsome pariah state, the Republic was the darling of the international scene as 'a parade of monarchs, statesmen and garden variety politicians beat a path to (Mandela's) door'.<sup>1</sup> South African government officials were inundated with opportunities for the Republic to assume a place among the nations, which having been isolated so extensively for so long, they readily accepted. From May to December in 1994, South Africa was admitted to sixteen major international organisations, including the United Nations General Assembly, the Commonwealth, the Organisation of African Unity, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), formerly the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). Within a year of Mandela's inauguration, South Africa was to establish full diplomatic relations with 163 countries.<sup>2</sup>

With the wishes of international goodwill came an abundance of expectations and opinions on what course the new South Africa should take. Many spoke of the possibility of South Africa becoming an engine-of-growth for Africa. Others hoped South Africa would

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the article 'When Mandela Went Missing: Why South Africa's Foreign Policy is a Pale Shadow of What It Might Be', in the *Sunday Independent* (London), 21 November 1995.

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Foreign Affairs List*, October 1995.

be an example of multiethnic reconciliation and democratic governance to neighbouring countries. Some desired that South Africa would use its new status to represent the interests of its fellow African countries in the global setting, bridging the divide between the North and the South. And nearly all wished that Nelson Mandela, with his incredible moral stature and worldwide reputation, would project himself into a role of international leadership. In the words of one commentator: ‘Everyone was looking to South Africa to play a bigger role in international relations and to lead.’<sup>3</sup>

Bolstered by international expectations and support, South African foreign policy makers made several moves early on which met with widespread approval. In terms of ensuring democracy, when the Lesotho monarch, King Letsie III, deposed the government’s prime minister, Ntsu Mokhehle, in a coup, Mandela indicated that South Africa would not tolerate the royal takeover. ‘We find it unacceptable that he (the king) should have taken this step,’ Mandela said, adding that Mr. Mokhehle would have to be restored to office.<sup>4</sup> To these ends, Mandela called for an emergency summit in Gaborone, Botswana where South African officials collaborated with their Zimbabwean and Botswanan counterparts on what action they might take. Adding further pressure, Mandela then ordered South African troops to conduct military manoeuvres on the mountain kingdom’s borders. Ultimately, talks took place among Lesotho’s political factions and the democratically-elected government was

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<sup>3</sup> Glen Oosthuysen, from the South African Institute of International Affairs, quoted in ‘West Looks Down on Mandela For Befriending “Pariah” States’, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 31 May 1996.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Lesotho Crisis is Litmus Test of Mandela’s Foreign Policy’, *The Guardian* (London), 24 August 1994.

reinstated.<sup>5</sup> As a result, hopes were raised that the time had arrived when Africa, led by South Africa, would ‘take her destiny into her own hands in order to better the lives of her people.’<sup>6</sup>

In the field of conflict resolution, Mandela undertook a personal diplomatic initiative in November 1994 to persuade RENAMO to rejoin the Mozambican electoral process. Similarly, he stepped in as mediator between the Angolan government and UNITA, attempting to bring an end to Angola’s long-running civil war. However, aware of South Africa’s bully-boy past, Mandela was careful to balance his personal overtures with moves meant to ease concerns of South African hegemony. In addition to speaking to parties directly in Mozambique and Angola, Mandela approached the United Nations, offering South African assistance in any UN-sponsored peacekeeping operations undertaken to end the conflicts.

On disarmament matters here too South African policy makers were active, signing the Chemical Weapons Convention and becoming advocates for an ‘African Weapons Free Zone’ and the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace. Moreover, when progress regarding an extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ground to a halt, South African officials played a pivotal role in re-establishing forward momentum. As the only country ever to have had nuclear weapons then to have scrapped them, along with the programmes for making or

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<sup>5</sup> As a result of the successful resolution of the Lesotho crisis, leaders in the Southern African Development Community agreed to develop collective security responses in the future. This was generally seen as a positive development, contributing to hopes that Africans were becoming more proactive in finding solutions for African problems.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from the article ‘President Mandela Addresses the National Assembly of Mali’, *Africa News*, March 1996.

acquiring them, South African officials presented themselves as capable of understanding the disparate views of the nuclear powers and the non-nuclear nations.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, South African officials offered a number of compromises over a two-month period from April to May 1995, ultimately enabling the list of countries committed to nuclear non-proliferation to be expanded.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, in spite of their early foreign policy successes and the corresponding expectations and accolades that resulted, South African foreign policy makers were soon to be criticised as 'incoherent' and 'lacking in direction'.<sup>9</sup> The reasons for this were numerous, with a major one being South Africa's domestic circumstances.

When the ANC-led government attained power, South Africa was in the throws of its longest recession in recorded history. Signifying the economic malaise, GDP had fallen by 0.5 percent in 1990, by 0.4 percent in 1991, and by 2.1 percent in 1992. Even without official reports to tell the new government otherwise, all indications were that the trend had continued through 1993 and into 1994, thus adding an explanation point to what had been a pattern of decline started several decades earlier. For example, in the 1960s the economy had grown at an average rate of more than five percent. In the 1970s, the average rate had fallen to three percent. In the 1980s, it had slipped further to 2.2 percent, and without a

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<sup>7</sup> For a perspective on South Africa's nuclear programme see 'Space Programme Grounded in S. African Scorched Earth — Missiles to Go Same Way as A-bombs to Keep Them from ANC', in *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 April 1993.

<sup>8</sup> From a confidential personal interview with a Department of Foreign Affairs Desk Officer, conducted 18 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>9</sup> From a confidential personal interview with a Department of Foreign Affairs staff member, conducted 18 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa.

windfall from the gold-boom years of 1980-1981, the figure would have been only about 1.5 percent.<sup>10</sup>

On a more individual level, the declining economy was affecting all, making the poverty-stricken and the wealthy alike work harder to keep their standard-of-living from deteriorating. In 1965, real material wealth per capita had grown by over 7 percent. In the 1980s this had dropped to minus 0.5 percent, sliding to a negative 2.7 percent in both 1990 and 1991. In terms of GDP per capita (measured in constant 1985 prices), levels were Rand 3,331 in 1966, R3,675 in 1970, and R3,985 in 1980. Levels then dropped off to R3,349 in 1992, declining even more in 1993 to about R3,300.<sup>11</sup> These figures are significant because they show how, over nearly a thirty-year period, no real gain had been made in improving the material wealth, per person, of South Africans.

Contributing to the trends of decline was South Africa's high population growth of up to 2.7 percent per year, which exacerbated already high levels of unemployment and poverty. Whereas between 1960 and 1965 the formal economy had absorbed 81 percent of newcomers to the labour market, between 1985 and 1990 the proportion had plummeted to a mere 8.4 percent, dropping to no more than 6 percent by 1993. Indicative of the difficulties the economy's formal sector was having, the gold and coal industries in South Africa had cut 210,000 jobs in the 1990s, more than a third of the entire workforce. Because so many dependents relied on these workers, this meant that between four and six million people were without a source of income following the layoffs. And unfortunately, for those workers who

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<sup>10</sup> South African Reserve Bank, *Quarterly Bulletin* (March 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Human Research Council, *A Profile of Poverty, Inequality and Human Development in South Africa* (Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 1995).

had been laid off, there were few opportunities in the formal sector to find replacement incomes. At the end of 1993, overall formal sector employment stood at only 7.72 million jobs -- about half the economically-active population -- with one in four working for the government.<sup>12</sup> In a bleak state of affairs, the South African economy (outside the agricultural and government sectors) had had no net gain of job opportunities for over a decade, since 1983.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, of the 450,000 anticipated new entrants into South Africa's labour market in 1994, only 27,000 were expected to be able to find jobs in the formal sector. This meant that ever more South Africans were demanding a finite number of opportunities and resources, and if unable to grasp these, were slipping further into desperate conditions.

Looking beyond 1994, South Africa's new government was faced with an equally grim picture. Merely to absorb the annual number of new entrants into the economy -- two-thirds of whom lacked, or were likely to lack, an adequate grasp of reading, writing, and math skills, and would therefore affect wages and productivity -- would require an economic growth rate of 6 percent. If unemployment was even to begin to be rolled-back, then the South African economy would have to grow between 8 and 10 percent. Unless this happened, it was unlikely that the 18 million South Africans in 1994 who were 'struggling to survive', or the eight million who were 'completely destitute', would be able to better their

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<sup>12</sup> M. Meredith, *South Africa's New Era: The 1994 Election* (London: Mandarin, 1994), p.204.

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that some of the balance of unemployed to available jobs in the formal sector was taken up by the informal sector. The informal sector was, and is, comprised of hawkers, small traders, backyard businesses, domestic workers, etcetera. Martin Meredith (in *South Africa's New Era: The 1994 Election* (London: Mandarin, 1994)) estimated that around 3.5 million South Africans found work in the informal economy, and some two million survived on subsistence agriculture.

lives. To add some perspective to the government's assessments, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) calculated that for households living in poverty in 1994 to reach a level above the poverty line, it would take 24 years with an average rate of economic growth of 5 percent a year, or 40 years with an average growth rate of 3 percent a year.<sup>14</sup>

To meet its pressing domestic needs, South African leaders knew that the correct structures of government had to be in place. However, due to apartheid's legacy, they had inherited a whole structure of provincial and local government inappropriate for the new South Africa. As a result, the government deemed it necessary to incorporate the former homeland territories into nine new provinces, and to redesign some 800 segregated local authorities into 300 new multiracial municipal governments. To provide a stable environment for these changes to take place, the government was faced with the associated task of integrating *Umkhonto we Sizwe* personnel and former homeland forces into a national defence force, and overhauling police services in order to regain public trust. Of equal importance to the government was that some of the demands and expectations of South Africa's citizens be realised as soon as possible. So, as it pressed forward with founding the political, military, and police structures necessary to carry it out, the government unveiled a massive programme of economic and social development: the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

At the RDP's unveiling, government officials stated that some 23 million South Africans had no access to electricity, 22 million lacked adequate sanitation, 12 million lacked a clean water supply, 7.8 million lived in shacks (often 'squatting' on land they did not own),

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<sup>14</sup> Human Science Research Council, *A Profile of Poverty, Inequality and Human Development in South Africa* (Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 1995).

one million were homeless, and more than two million children were without schools.<sup>15</sup> The RDP was to address these challenges by undertaking massive public works programmes concentrating on housing, electrification, sewerage and water supply, and measures to boost employment levels. All told, the government hoped to allocate around 4 percent of GDP annually, through 2005, to the RDP. Of course to do this the government needed money, and here too the situation was grave.

In 1993, after falling for five consecutive years, gross domestic fixed investment in South Africa reached an all-time low of 14.5 percent of GDP. Compounding this, between 1985 and 1994, there was a cumulative net outflow of R49 billion, of which R16 billion occurred in 1993 alone as confidence in South Africa's future waned. In order to meet the demands of the RDP, the government was forced to dip into currency reserves and to increase foreign borrowing.<sup>16</sup> By the time Mandela was sworn in, reserves had fallen to R7.3 billion, or less than what was needed for about three weeks' imports -- far below the internationally accepted level of reserves equalling approximately three months' imports.

Thus, South African policy makers were in an unenviable position in 1994. While the international community continued to desire for South Africa to make its presence felt abroad, most South Africans were not discussing what could be done beyond their borders, but what needed to be done right at home. As one might expect, many were of the opinion that it was unrealistic to think that much, if any, attention could or should be given to foreign

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<sup>15</sup> M. Meredith, *South Africa's New Era*, p.206.

<sup>16</sup> The ANC-led government ruled out increasing taxes to fund the RDP even before it came to power. With individuals in the middle- to upper-personal income brackets shouldering a tax burden of 44 percent in 1993, the government feared any tax increase might result in a massive flight of skills and capital.

affairs. However, most in the government acknowledged South Africa needed a foreign policy of some sort, if only as an extension of its domestic agenda. After all, without the full means to meet the nation's challenges, it was the international community which could offer some assistance, particularly through much needed investment. Even so, in order for foreign policies to be formulated, yet alone implemented, appropriate mechanisms of national government had to be in place. Though South Africa did have a government following the 1994 elections, its composition, structure, and character was an unprecedented experiment. Consequently, this too was to influence foreign policy.

During the apartheid era, South African foreign policy became a very centralised affair. For the most part, the white electorate gave their leaders within the ruling minority government a 'blank check' to preserve their interests. What flowed from this was an uninterrupted growth of executive power and autonomy. Indeed, it was common for the executive to undermine other sources of political power, such as the judiciary and provincial governments, and to push through legislation that quieted disgruntled segments of society, including the media, business, and trade unions. But when the ANC achieved power in 1994, it did not inherit such an executive-centred system. As a result of arduous negotiations from 1990 onwards between the De Klerk government and the ANC-led liberation parties, a 'sunset system' of government had been agreed upon. At the heart of this system, embodied in an interim constitution, was the agreement that whatever the size of the majority of the winning party there would be a coalition government, or a 'Government of National Unity' (GNU), slated to last until 1999, when the next national elections would occur. Quoting directly from the interim constitution, all members of the new government were expected to 'endeavour to achieve consensus at all times' and to give 'consideration to the consensus-

seeking spirit underlying the concept of a government of national unity...'<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the interim constitution mandated that any party that won at least 80 seats in the National Assembly 'be entitled to designate an Executive Deputy President...'; these Executive Deputy Presidents were then entitled to become a part of the President's Cabinet.

Perhaps in oversimplified terms, politics can usually be defined as political parties' and individuals' pursuit of rules and systems which favour their perceived interests.<sup>18</sup> One apartheid president/party leader after another pursued and fulfilled this definition with vigour, centralising power in the hands of the executive. What is amazing about the interim constitution and the resulting GNU is how much of a departure it was from the past, and how far it went in defying the above 'golden rule' of politics. In essence, the interim constitutional system ensured that the executive would be weakened in relation to other parliamentary players and extra-parliamentary interests. Moreover, it guaranteed that irrespective of the size of the electorate's mandate, the winning party and its opposition would be constrained. After all, it is rare in politics for a political party that has attained power -- especially one that has done so democratically, and done so with a considerable majority of the votes -- to be obliged to allow opposition party leaders to become part of the government's executive branch. And naturally, it is even more unheard of for the political opposition to be guaranteed a place in the government leader's most inner-circle of confidants (in South Africa's case, the presidential cabinet). Yet, the National Party's leader, F.W. De Klerk, and the Inkatha Freedom Party's leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, each became deputy presidents and members of Mandela's cabinet following the 1994 elections, as set out

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<sup>17</sup> For a full version of the interim constitution see *Government Gazette*, Vol. 343, Chapter 6, sections 75-95.

<sup>18</sup> L.J. Boulle, 'The Head of Government and the Constitution', in *Leadership in the Apartheid State* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1994).

by the interim constitution.

Perhaps unsurprisingly for such an extraordinary patriot, Mandela himself added to the constraints to which the executive office was subject. He did this in two key ways: first, he stated early on that he would be a one-term-only president; second, he hinted that he would be content to leave the day-to-day running of government to others, essentially acting as a chairman of the board.<sup>19</sup> The implication of Mandela vowing to bow out come 1999, coupled with his promises not to use all of the political power entitled to his office, was that South Africa's true centre of political power was dispersed. In other words, no powerful 'Office of the President' as an entity was created, and subsequently, the staff associated with it did not accumulate the kind of political influence prevalent during the Vorster or Botha years, for example. This dispersal of power created a distinct character of governance in South Africa in the months after the 1994 elections. Among other qualities, consensus-seeking and compromise prevailed, and public consultation and transparency were elevated to holy principles. When combined with all of the other economic and structural challenges noted above, this was to have an indelible impact on South African foreign policy towards Africa.

Under apartheid, the foreign policy establishment had largely become a mouthpiece of presidents and National Party leaders, rather than an independent body capable of influencing or setting foreign policy agendas. Bullied by powerful executives, the establishment's bureaucrats in general, and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) officials in particular, had risked being sidelined or dismissed if they sought to 'buck the system'. What resulted was a submissive foreign policy making bureaucracy, one which quietly

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<sup>19</sup> From a personal interview with Garth Le Pere, Director of the Foundation for Global Dialogue (a South African foreign policy think tank), conducted on 24 March 1997 at the Foundation for Global Dialogue, Johannesburg, South Africa.

sought to carry out what came down from above. Following the installation of the GNU, foreign policy makers were given a previously unimaginable degree of latitude in which to act. The irony was, many were unable and unwilling to do so.

The inability of the foreign policy establishment to assert itself was tied, to a degree, to individual foreign policy makers' limited experience in the ways of modern diplomacy. Excluded from all but a handful of international organisations for decades, those who had served under apartheid had little firsthand knowledge of multi-lateral diplomacy, which in the post-Cold War era was becoming the norm of international relations. On the face of it, the fact that the DFA was busy integrating those who had been the ANC's liberation diplomats should have somewhat remedied this situation, because for as long as apartheid governments had been isolated, the ANC's diplomats had been active in multi-lateral fora, including the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Nevertheless, due to sunset clauses and transitional arrangements, absorption of ANC diplomats into the DFA was slow -- a point brought home by the sobering statistic that nearly two years after the April 1994 elections, only 45 ANC people with experience in the organisation's 28 foreign missions during the apartheid years had joined the DFA's 1,552-person staff.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the process of transforming the DFA was skewed and slowed by the rush to appoint black ANC staff to foreign missions from May 1994, leaving much of the DFA's internal leadership in Pretoria unchanged. In fact, a decision was made to retain Rusty Evans, the incumbent Director-General of Foreign Affairs, at least until his September 1997 tenure was up. This left the DFA open to criticisms that South Africa's

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<sup>20</sup> Greg Mills, 'The Mexican Way of Looking at Geopolitics Could Give South Africa's Much-reviled Foreign Policy Just the Focus It Needs', in *Sunday Independent* (South Africa), 7 March 1996.

‘new’ foreign policy was being made by those who had made the ‘old’ foreign policy.<sup>21</sup>

In comparison to ANC appointments during the 1994 to 1996 period, nearly 624 former homeland ‘diplomats’ joined the DFA’s ranks. Though some may point to this number as a success of integration, their professional capabilities, and therefore their ability to contribute to the formulation of South African foreign policy, were questionable. As one DFA staff member was quoted as saying: ‘The only thing you hear out of TBVC (former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei homeland) diplomats is the rustling of newspapers.’<sup>22</sup> While some comments such as this can be attributed to resentment and turf battles between longtime DFA bureaucrats and their new colleagues, with the ‘international experience’ of most former homeland officials limited to South Africa or other homelands, the view was not always unjustified.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> This should be tempered with a word about appointments that did happen promptly and in the ‘right’ places. Such placements did not always mean approving opinions were forthcoming. Take the case of Alfred Nzo, the GNU’s Foreign Minister. Though popular among members of his department, Nzo was not an aggressive, high-profile individual like the flamboyant Pik Botha, nor a master of the sound-bite. As a result, virtually from the moment Nzo was appointed, a number of individuals in certain government circles and the general public stated that the DFA lacked the leadership necessary to help South Africa set a new foreign policy agenda (The above observations are drawn from a confidential personal interview with a Department of Foreign Affairs Desk Officer, conducted 25 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa).

<sup>22</sup> From a confidential personal interview with a Department of Foreign Affairs Desk Officer, conducted 25 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>23</sup> To its credit, following a very public row between the Director-General, Rusty Evans, and the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament, Ray Suttner, the DFA did make an effort to redress some of the charges levelled against it in regard to personnel. Specifically, it began a parallel training scheme for aspiring diplomats at the University of the Western Cape and at Howard University in Washington D.C. Although the courses did not and could not offer any guarantees to formerly excluded populations of gaining access to the diplomatic service, the intention was to widen and deepen the

Beyond the manifold complications associated with structural and personnel changes, there was another limitation to the efficacy of the DFA: funds. In the first post-apartheid national budget, the DFA received a mere 0.7 percent increase in its allocation, an increase far below the rate of inflation hovering around 9 percent. In spite of this, the DFA was expected to establish countless missions and embassies as a sign of South Africa's acceptance back into the international fold -- in addition to its regular duties. As the *Sunday Independent* (South Africa) pointed out in a March 1995 article, the opening of new embassies alone is an expensive business: the cost of establishing a two-person office in Vietnam, for example, was estimated to cost between R8-10 million, or around a half-million US dollars at the prevailing exchange rate. Thus, with even the most creative apportioning of its resources, the DFA was hard-pressed to meet its obligations.

With so much attention being given to resolving South Africa's domestic imperatives, combined with the foreign policy establishment's own structural, personnel, and budgetary challenges of transformation, there was some speculation that South African foreign policy makers might suffer the equivalent of political paralysis. As it turned out, just the opposite happened. With no clear collective foreign policy path to follow, different country desks, committees, and officials began to pursue independent and often disparate objectives. What resulted from this fragmented activity was an unofficial foreign policy of 'universality' -- bi-lateral and multi-lateral links were to be fostered whenever and wherever possible, and

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DFA's recruitment base. An equally admirable goal of the scheme was to give prospective recruits a chance to formulate their own ideas on international issues and bureaucratic processes, thereby avoiding being 'socialised' by the foreign policy establishment. This said, one has to consider when any gains were to be realised. There is an inherent 'lag time' -- often years -- between when individuals start a programme like this, graduate, then are able to apply and get accepted to entities such as South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs.

international interests were to be advanced along with domestic ones. This resulted in a number of vexed questions and dilemmas.

Mandela and the ANC leadership had long promised to place Africa first in its foreign policy priorities. As Mandela explained in 1993: 'South Africa cannot escape its African destiny. If we do not devote our energies to this continent, we too could fall victim to the forces that have brought ruin to its various parts.'<sup>24</sup> Beyond enlightened self-interest, there were other reasons for having this priority. Specifically, after years of hardship, many felt that South Africa owed Africa a debt of gratitude for helping in the fight against apartheid.

Two years on from attaining power, in 1996, Mandela's 'Africa First' commitment was still apparently strong. 'The South African government seeks a rapid promotion of ties between South Africa and its fellow African states,' Mandela was quoted as saying. 'No country in Africa can succeed on its own. Interdependence amongst our neighbours and the pressures of a globali(s)ed economy dictate that we work together...'<sup>25</sup> Numbers, though, told a different story.

After reviewing the GNU's first budget, the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee made the case in May 1995 that for all of the government's rhetoric, South Africa was not giving priority to Africa. Indeed, committee members made a damning claim, alleging that 'the budget is infused with relics of the past and there is an overall tendency towards continuity'. The Committee went on to state that there was a significant disparity between stated policy objectives -- such as enhancing South African relations with Africa -- and the

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<sup>24</sup> N. Mandela, 'South African Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1993): p.88.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from the article 'President Mandela Addresses the National Assembly of Mali', *Africa News*, March 1996.

allocation of resources as reflected in the budget. Namely, diplomatic missions in Africa and the Middle East received an allocation of only 19.6 percent of the Department of Foreign Affairs' total budget, whereas those in Europe and North America continued to receive more than 55 percent of available funds.<sup>26</sup>

Another point of debate involved the moral underpinnings of South African foreign policy. Again, long before Mandela and the ANC achieved government power, Mandela and the rest of the ANC leadership had been adamant that human rights should be one of the pillars on which South African foreign policy stood. From April 1994 until late 1996, South African officials seemed to affirm this pledge by signing 15 human rights treaties, approving the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, voting for and co-sponsoring numerous UN human rights resolutions, accepting a three-year term on the UN Commission on Human Rights, and hosting a pan-African meeting in Cape Town to draw up a 'draft protocol' on the establishment of an African Court on Human and People's Rights.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, one of the first countries Mandela had visited when he was released from prison in 1990 was Indonesia, whose commitment to human rights was abysmal, particularly in regard to East Timor.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Reuters Report* (London), 17 May 1995.

<sup>27</sup> List compiled from an article by Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad entitled 'South Africa: We don't trade off human rights', *Mail and Guardian* (South Africa), 25 April 1997. Pahad's article was in response to a series of articles entitled, 'SA Open to Business With Anyone Who Pays?', run in the *Mail and Guardian* (South Africa), 4-10 April 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Indonesia unilaterally annexed the former Portuguese colony of East Timor by force in 1975. In the resulting struggle for independence, some 200,000 East Timorese died. One of the worst known human rights violations by the Indonesian government in East Timor includes the 12 November 1991 'Santa Cruz Massacre' which left an estimated 271 dead, 250 missing, and 382 wounded. Jakarta has also been condemned for unjustly imprisoning the East Timorese resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao.

This visit had been followed by another visit, this time as state president, in September 1994.

During the latter visit Mandela made only a passing reference to East Timor, calling for 'dialogue', whereas his pleas for investment were many. As for his first visit, it was revealed that President Suharto had given US\$10 million to Mandela for the ANC's 1994 electoral campaign. The investigation into Suharto's donation subsequently unearthed evidence that General Sani Abacha's junta in Nigeria had given a cash donation of about US\$1.8 million to Mandela during his visit to that country in 1994, also to be used in the ANC's 1994 campaign.<sup>29</sup> These developments cast serious doubts on the importance of human rights in South Africa's foreign policy -- or more specifically, if it was up for sale -- a point not lost on Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad when he stated:

We start from the premise that South Africa is committed to human rights. The problems we face in this regard is the issue of possibilities and limitations on South Africa in the real world. How do we get human rights enforced and implemented in the international environment? There must be a possible contradiction between ...co-operation and the values we may want to project. There has to be interaction between theory and practise.<sup>30</sup>

In a related issue, when the ANC-led Government of National Unity came to power in 1994, it was expected that the arms industry would lose its importance. After all, it was South Africa's powerful defence capability that had done much to sustain apartheid regimes, enabling them to project their wishes regionally and to suppress opposition within South Africa and abroad. In reality, the government decided that the weapons industry, which in 1994 was South Africa's second-biggest source of export earnings, would continue to play

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<sup>29</sup> 'Cash Buys Policy in South Africa', *The Guardian* (London), 8 December 1995.

<sup>30</sup> 'Summary of Concluding Remarks', DFA Foreign Policy Workshop, Randburg, 9-10 September 1996, p.8-9.

an important role in South Africa's manufacturing and exporting sectors.<sup>31</sup> As a result, pre-election policy pronouncements driven by anti-militarist and pacifist sentiments had given way to a pragmatic appreciation of the economic rationale of arms exports -- so much so that by March 1997 Armscor's<sup>32</sup> exports had swelled from R1.3 billion in 1994 to over R2 billion a year, equivalent to 2 percent of the global arms market.<sup>33</sup> Only three weeks into his presidency, Mandela had explained this seeming contradiction by saying:

The trade in arms is worldwide and I don't think it will be fair to say that a particular country should not engage in trade in arms. After all, arms are not provided for the purpose of suppression of a particular population group in a country. Arms are for the purpose of defending the sovereignty and the integrity of a country. From that angle, there is nothing wrong in having trade in arms. But we are going to look very carefully, in so far as our own country, to be sure that our trade in arms does not violate considerations of humanity and does not allow any particular country to use those arms for suppressing the legitimate aspirations of any ethnic group in that particular country.<sup>34</sup>

In line with such reasoning and assurances, in 1995 the South African government cancelled a deal with Turkey worth R1.2 billion, citing that country's human rights abuses against its Kurdish minority. Yet, at the same time the government contemplated or signed arms deals with Indonesia, China, Syria, Israel, and Rwanda -- all countries with dubious

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<sup>31</sup> From a confidential personal interview with a Department of Foreign Affairs Desk Officer, conducted 25 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>32</sup> Armscor (Armament Corporation of South Africa Limited) is South Africa's state-owned weapons-making, marketing, and export-licensing company. Denel is Armscor's privatised manufacturing subsidiary.

<sup>33</sup> 'Arms Trade Seeks Profits in New Moral Order', *Inter Press Service*, 6 March 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in a British Broadcasting Corporation television interview 'Mandela interviewed on volkstaat negotiations, reconstruction, foreign policy', segment aired by the South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (in English) on 24 May 1994.

human rights records. But even when arms sales went ahead with countries meeting the requirements Mandela outlined above, there were added controversies. For example, a Johannesburg paper revealed in March 1997 that South African-made arms sold to Uganda had ended up in the hands of Sudanese rebels.<sup>35</sup> Collectively, these dealings led to questions as to how decisions regarding arms deals were made, and more ominously, whether the government was laundering weapons and pursuing hidden agendas.<sup>36</sup>

A final complication arising from South African foreign policy makers' unstated policy of universality was that it was assumed that South Africa could associate with any country, with any regime, with any organisation, with few or no tradeoffs. For example, universality resulted in the government seeking to retain official diplomatic recognition of Taiwan while simultaneously looking to establish official reciprocal ties with the People's Republic of China; it also resulted in presumptions within the foreign policy establishment that South Africa could expand links with states such as Iran, Cuba and Libya, and still be able to seek aid and investment from the European Union and the United States. And even when the contradictions were not as provoking, it did not mean they were any less problematic. A case-in-point was policy makers' desire for South Africa to have an 'Afro-centric' orientation. Some thought this meant that South Africa's efforts should be continent-wide and channelled through the OAU; others by focussing on southern Africa and working within SADC. Commenting on the nuances of Afro-centrism, Glen Oosthuysen, a researcher

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<sup>35</sup> 'Arms Trade Seeks Profits in New Moral Order', *Inter Press Service*, 6 March 1997.

<sup>36</sup> See W. Gutteridge, *South Africa's Continuing Defence Dilemmas* (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, Project No.4 (1995)), for further perspectives on South Africa's arms trade.

at the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg, said: ‘It’s like wanting to have your bread buttered on both sides. The government doesn’t have a clear-cut strategy. We don’t have a foreign policy, it is more like a guideline. People don’t know where we stand.’<sup>37</sup>

In a dramatic step to clarify just where South African foreign policy should stand, the DFA formulated a 33-page *South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document*,<sup>38</sup> distributing it to Parliament, interest groups, newspapers, and the public in June 1996. It was a concerted effort by the DFA to not only to make foreign policy making less secretive and more responsible to public opinion, but also to correct weaknesses arising from the inconsistencies of universality. Inconsistencies could be eliminated, Foreign Minister Nzo argued, because all would be free to comment on the document, and once the comments were absorbed, South Africa’s foreign policy experts would have a clear understanding of the values and priorities on which decisions should be premised.<sup>39</sup> Ironic for the ends Nzo highlighted -- namely, eliminating inconsistencies -- the *Discussion Document* presented a myriad of ‘pillars’, ‘cornerstones’, ‘principles’, and ‘priorities’ for South African foreign policy. The document claimed that South Africa had a role to play in everything from creating a ‘responsible global citizenry’, to furthering ‘the advancement of human rights and the promotion of democracy’, to supporting ‘the work of the UNCHR’, and a chance in

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in ‘West Looks Down on Mandela For Befriending “Pariah” States’, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 31 May 1996.

<sup>38</sup> ‘South African Foreign Policy: Discussion Document’, Department of Foreign Affairs, July 1996, can be seen in its entirety at <http://www.polity.org.za/gov.docs/discussion/foreign.html>.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Summary of Remarks’, DFA Foreign Policy Workshop, Randburg, 9-10 September 1996.

helping to ‘secure world-wide peace, promote disarmament, prevent genocide, restrict proliferation of nuclear arms of mass destruction and achieve a new world security regime’.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the best of intentions, the DFA’s *Discussion Document* did little to assist in the formulation of a ‘national consensus’ that foreign policy makers could use in ‘shaping, directing and executing South Africa’s foreign policy’. Drafted in the spirit of the interim constitution and the government of national unity, the document appeared to be nothing more than a wish-list meant to appeal to every ideological creed. Most noticeably, it failed to offer any perspective on the constraints imposed by the international system, or for that matter, South Africa’s daunting domestic challenges. In fact, the only firm guidance the document gave was that ‘South Africa’s policy initiatives should be modest and not overly ambitious’<sup>41</sup> -- a positively absurd statement given the list of ‘pillars’, ‘cornerstones’, ‘principles’, and ‘priorities’ noted above.

In summarising South African foreign policy towards Africa from April 1994 to mid-1996, it was a period in which South African foreign policy makers attempted to limit the choices they had to make by trying to accommodate nearly every expectation, need, and ideological conviction while being a friend to all. What resulted was a disjunctured foreign policy of paradoxical agendas normally unsustainable in international relations. The fact that South African foreign policy makers had the successes they did can in no small part be attributed to the window of goodwill that followed the ‘South African Miracle’, and the immense respect the international community had for Nelson Mandela.

However, as the carnival atmosphere resulting from South Africa’s 1994 elections

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<sup>40</sup> ‘South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document’, July 1996

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

began to fade from the international community's memory, South African policy makers were faced with the reality that the Republic was becoming 'just another country'. By mid-1996, it was clear that 'universality' needed to be replaced with a more focussed agenda -- one that would enable South Africa 'to compete with many others similarly placed for a share of the world's largess'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Quotes are from a talk entitled 'Oh Brave New World: Reflections on South Africa's Foreign Policy', delivered by Professor Jack Spence at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 18 February 1996.

## Flux Summary

The flux period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa started very differently for each country's policy makers. For the Bush administration in mid-1991, the period commenced with its practising foreign policy *triage* -- that is, re-evaluating all American resources committed to Africa, and where possible, re-allocating them to places like eastern Europe. The thought behind *triage* was twofold: first, to give greater attention to areas where there were overt US interests while minimising US involvement in areas where there were not; and second, to direct finite resources to areas perceived to have great potential and away from areas where it was felt there was little hope for making a significant difference. As one might assume, the Bush administration considered Africa in the latter category on both accounts.

What kept the Bush administration from pushing Africa to farthest reaches of foreign policy obscurity was Bush's own new world order vision. As the sole superpower, Bush believed the US had an unprecedented opportunity, as well as a responsibility, to consolidate democratic trends and the rule of international law. What was not publically stated was that, preferably, this was to be done selectively (e.g., in Europe or the Middle East rather than in Africa). Yet when famine wrought by war in Somalia was made a national issue, the administration was forced to include the Horn of Africa in its new world order calculations. At first, US policy makers tried to bridge the divide between minimal American involvement in Somalia (*triage*) with maximum American leadership (the new world order). To these ends, multi-lateralism became the optimal concept, justified on humanitarian and human rights grounds. The concept was first applied unsuccessfully in Somalia through food-relief airlifts, but eventually culminated in the commitment of over 28,000 US ground troops as a part of UN-sanctioned intervention force.

When Bill Clinton replaced Bush in the White House in 1993, it was made clear that he was not comfortable with his Somalia inheritance. Thus, when eighteen US soldiers were killed in a Mogadishu fire-fight, Clinton ordered all US troops out of the Horn of Africa by April 1994; his order not only ended US involvement in the Somalia intervention, it also ended America's commitment to the new world order. Furthermore, when the American military pulled-out of Somalia it proved to be the harbinger of a haemorrhaging African withdrawal of American resources continent-wide. In a neo-realist backlash, the Bureau of African Affairs, African aid programmes, US missions on the continent -- all became marked for 'restructuring' or even elimination. Indeed, so reticent did US foreign policy become in regard to Africa after Somalia that even when faced with the genocidal murder of 800,000 Rwandans in 1994, virtually no desire to intercede was shown.

Eventually, however, the Clinton administration steeled itself and began to battle to keep the US involved with Africa. Given, the administration's stand was more reactive (against isolationist forces in Washington, and in response to African-American voters' demands) than inspired, but it nonetheless slowed and/or checked policy makers' complete handwashing of the continent. Ultimately, in 1995, US foreign policy towards Africa swung back in the direction of engagement. It was then that the White House began to make the case that emerging markets were the key to American prosperity, security, and influence. As a continent of 700 million potential consumers, White House officials argued, the national interest demanded that Africa not be ignored.

Whereas US foreign policy towards Africa during the flux period had started with a systematic effort to disengage from the continent, for South African foreign policy towards Africa the flux period started with indiscriminate re-engagement. Following the April 1994

elections, South Africa was the darling of the international scene and unrestricted in terms of with whom its government could establish official relations. Moreover, because of its miracle transition to majority rule, combined with its regional economic hegemony, the country was perceived to have unmatched moral and political clout in Africa. As a result, the international community placed high hopes on the Republic, desiring for it, say, to be an example of multiethnic reconciliation and democratic governance to neighbouring countries. These hopes were only heightened early on when President Nelson Mandela undertook a personal diplomatic initiative to persuade the Angolan government and UNITA, and the Mozambican government and RENAMO, to end their long-running civil wars and to settle their differences via the ballot box. Though undoubtably noble, and arguably even in South Africa's long-term interests, Mandela's efforts in Angola and Mozambique did little in the near-term to remedy South Africa's own daunting challenges.

When South Africa's first fully-democratic government took office in May 1994, its policy makers were confronted with harsh realities like reversing the nation's longest-running recession, restructuring the military, police, and government at all levels, and meeting the majority's needs by providing electrification, sanitation, clean water, and housing. Thus, South African foreign policy makers were expected to ground international initiatives (above and beyond taking South Africa back into the international fold by hosting visitors, sending emissaries, and establishing new consulates and high commissions) with domestic imperatives. For example, foreign investment was to be enticed in order to help fund the government's national Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP). To complicate matters, government leaders gave mixed signals as to the tone South African foreign policy should have -- as demonstrated when the ANC leadership said that human rights was to be one of

pillars on which South African foreign policy was to stand, yet one of the first countries Mandela visited as president was Indonesia, whose commitment to human rights was abysmal, particularly in regard to East Timor. And all the while, the foreign policy establishment was having to deal with its own structural, personnel, and budgetary challenges. With no one clear foreign policy path to follow and countless constraints, South African re-engagement turned into an unofficial foreign policy of universality.

Under universality, South African foreign policy makers sought to retain official diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, for example, while simultaneously looking to establish relations with the People's Republic of China. In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, an 'Afro-centric' orientation under universality meant that precious South African resources were dispersed widely and sometimes impractically: continent-wide through the Organisation of African Unity, and also regionally through the Southern Africa Development Community. A discussion document in June 1996 was supposed to clarify South African foreign policy and eliminate contradictions. If anything, the document only perpetuated universality. It presented a myriad of 'pillars', 'cornerstones', 'principles', and 'priorities' for South African foreign policy, and painted each as equally meritorious. As a result, few were willing to sacrifice the agendas they thought most important when faced with competing agendas because a balanced case had been made for all.

During the flux period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa, South African pursuits with regard to the continent hardly registered with American policy makers, and *vice versa*. In Washington, this was because the flux period opened with the intentional marginalisation of Africa as a part of the Bush administration's *triage* strategy. But even at the height of US involvement in Somalia, South Africa, embroiled in the last leg

of its transitional process, hardly registered as the Republic posed no direct threat (or for that matter, benefit) to the task at hand. However, each country's lack of prominence with the other was most attributable to the inward focus of policy makers. In both Washington and Pretoria, changes in national leadership and government, and domestic challenges and constraints meant that government officials were pre-occupied with what was going on at home. From this flowed very fluid African foreign policies. Indeed, as shown above, the aims of each country's policy makers in regard to Africa varied and/or vacillated tremendously. In international affairs, the existence of such states of foreign policy flux are rarely desired, and more importantly, normally unsustainable. Consequently, US and South African foreign policies towards Africa had to gain a focus, and did, albeit the associated focus period was to present its own inherent difficulties and dilemmas.

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## PERIOD THREE: FOCUS

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*The focus period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa began when policy makers started to develop clearer goals for the future.*

*In Washington, the Clinton administration formulated a tenet which maintained that American prosperity and preeminence demanded that the country, in Clinton's words, 'compete and not retreat' from an increasingly interdependent world and global economy. As a part of this, administration officials identified ten 'big, emerging markets' (BEMs) that, though marginal today, possessed vast potential. The key to unlocking that vast potential -- and subsequently creating an environment conducive to international American investment and business, identified as crucial to the American national interest -- was to promote, simultaneously, democratic and economic liberalism. Collectively, the Clinton administration's objectives came to be known as a doctrine of 'enlargement'.*

*In terms of how enlargement was relevant to US foreign policy towards Africa, from mid-1995, the White House viewed Africa as a continent of 700 million-plus potential consumers on the cusp of positive change. As a result, administration officials worked hard to champion Africa not as a continent of irreversible decline (i.e., a 'bad neighbourhood' where few should want to go), but one demanding American interest because multi-party elections and economic reform were on the rise. At the forefront of the trend was South Africa, the exemplary example of democratic and economic practise in Africa to US foreign policy makers, and the only African country to be identified as a BEM. As such, the Clinton administration showed an eagerness to have South Africa as a partner in enlargement: a US-South African Binational Commission was established (the only high-level binational entity of its kind between the US and a sub-Saharan African country), and US Secretary of State Warren Christopher conducted a high-profile diplomatic visit to South Africa (capping off a series of visits by US government officials and business leaders). Unfortunately for US foreign policy makers, their goal of an enlargement partnership was to be eclipsed by other events. First, an American-proposed 'African Crisis Response Force' (ACRF), unveiled during Christopher's visit, failed to gain Pretoria's endorsement, and in fact, resulted in public statements of thinly-veiled annoyance. Then, an open row erupted between Washington and Pretoria when it emerged that South Africa had plans for selling advanced fire-control systems to Syria, a state US policy makers claimed was a sponsor of terrorism and one which posed an unsettling threat to America's close Middle Eastern ally, Israel. To say the least, the two controversies frustrated officials in Washington because they de-railed their African enlargement agenda.*

*Similar to how the focus period ended for US policy makers, for South African policy makers the period commenced with them feeling frustrated. In 1996, officials in Pretoria were at a loss as to why they were enduring a seemingly growing number of foreign policy debates, disappointments, and outright failures. For example, they had been unable to rally*

*international support for sanctions against Nigeria, in response to the Abacha regime's execution of Nigerian human rights activists, and the value of the rand had tumbled, an indication that international confidence in South Africa might be waning. In part, this frustration led South African policy makers' to offer tepid responses to the American proposed ACRF, and to engage in heated exchanges with American policy makers regarding a proposed sale of military equipment to Syria. To paraphrase one South African government official, South Africans were 'rankled' -- they were very sensitive to any event that they thought went 'against' South Africa, or any views they felt were being 'imposed' on them.*

*Nevertheless, a realisation slowly gained currency that as time progressed, the aura of the 'South African Miracle' (i.e., the elections of April 1994) was diminishing; for many countries, South Africa was becoming more and more like so many others, and therefore, worthy of fewer favours and less leeway in international affairs. From this realisation emerged a very sophisticated strategy of sorts. The strategy had a three-fold focus where Mbeki and Mandela each pursued agendas separately, with the third focus consisting of them working in tandem. In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, one vision that cut straight across the three-fold focus of its policy makers was the idea of an 'African Renaissance' -- a sustained move by Africans themselves to take the steps necessary for bettering their lives. Employing the renaissance vision, Mbeki sought to secure Western interest and investment in Africa generally, and South Africa specifically; Mandela sought to assuage regional worries of South African hegemonic intentions while building African solidarity; and together, Mbeki and Mandela sought to turn the hope 'African solutions for African problems' in to reality by undertaking a substantial South African mediation initiative when war broke out in Zaire. Yet, for all of the appeal of the African renaissance, by late 1997 it was unclear whether a three-fold focus could endure.*

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## Chapter Seven: Of Bad Neighbourhoods and Big Emerging Markets

As of June 1995, the Clinton administration had succeeded in fending off many of the draconian cuts Congress had proposed for programmes and sections of the foreign policy making establishment relating to Africa. However, the Clinton administration's efforts had rarely been couched in terms of acting on Africa's behalf, but rather, in terms of fighting irresponsible American isolationism. Thus, while the administration had hinted at its reasons, it had yet to state explicitly, consistently, and convincingly why Africa in its own right deemed America's attention and engagement. As a result, and perhaps because of this, there remained an indifferent, if not outright aversive, attitude towards Africa. For most Americans the continent continued to be a 'bad neighbourhood' -- a troubled place where few wanted to go.

Rightly or wrongly, Africa as a bad neighbourhood has proven to be an enduring perception in US foreign policy, perhaps more so than any other region. Beyond Somalia (the impact of which cannot be understated), many of the reasons lie in the continent's recent history. For example, during the 1980s the momentum that had been generated for economic advancement in many regions, especially Asia, and sustained right in to the 1990s, had not occurred in Africa. In fact, Africa had stood in stark contrast to the trend. Reflecting this, *circa* 1995 Africa's debt was in the US\$300 billion range, a figure two and a half times greater than it had been in 1980.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the figure was equivalent to 90 percent of the

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<sup>1</sup> So great had Africa's debt become relative to its potential to pay it back that organisations and countries were moved to take the following action in the early 1990s: the United Nations launched a 'Special Initiative on Africa'; G-7 leaders agreed to finance an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility; the United States unilaterally forgave over US\$1.1 billion in concessional debt for 19 of the poorest African countries; and then, in 1994, the US joined other Paris Club governments in offering to reduce non-concessional debt owed by

entire continent's GNP, and in sub-Saharan Africa, it was 110 percent of GNP.<sup>2</sup>

In other areas, too, Africa had achieved gloomy notoriety. While population growth had levelled out in many parts of the world, even declined in some, Africa's remained the highest, at 3.2 percent. Though the average life expectancy had improved significantly the world over, Africa's had improved only marginally and still remained the lowest, at only 51 years, despite the fact that the full impact of HIV and AIDS (of which Africa, according to some estimates, has 90 percent of all cases) was still to come. Whereas food production in much of the rest of the world had kept up with growing demand and even produced surpluses, in Africa it had fallen below 1970s levels, meaning the continent had switched from being a net food exporter in the immediate post-independence years to becoming heavily dependent on food imports.<sup>3</sup> Thus, while most Americans in 1995 could make a case that much of the rest of the world had gotten better, the perception was that Africa, 'the most crisis-ridden, most debt-distressed, most marginal, and most poverty-stricken (continent) in the world',<sup>4</sup> had gotten worse. In short, it was an alienating place to be avoided if at all possible. It was, indeed, a bad neighbourhood.

Not surprisingly, then, the expectation was that though the Clinton administration had deterred the worst cuts to aid and programmes relating to Africa, this was to be a short-lived victory. It was anybody's guess as to whether White House officials could or would want

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select African countries.

<sup>2</sup> J.O. Ihonvbere, 'Beyond Warlords and Clans: The African Crisis and the Somali Situation', *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, 6 (1994): p.8.

<sup>3</sup> S. Akinrinade (ed.), 'Africa and the United Nations', in *Africa in the Post-Cold War International System* (London: Pinter, 1998), p.179.

<sup>4</sup> Ihonvbere, *op. cit.*, p.7.

to go head-to-head with Congressional forces again to save what had been salvaged in early 1995. However, from mid-1995 the Clinton administration put some of the speculation to rest. Increasingly, the White House was trying to integrate Africa into its evolving foreign policy convictions. Africa was changing from a proxy battlefield between the White House and neo-realists -- against whom the Clinton administration's campaign had largely been a defensive one as it struggled to temper isolationism<sup>5</sup> -- to a project in Clinton's foreign policy vision.

While it is true that Bill Clinton had beaten George Bush by stressing domestic issues over international ones, it is a mistake to assume that he had come to power without a very clear world view. To him, American security and strength was dependent on how it made its way in the world economy -- a world economy where the distinction between what was domestic and what was international was arbitrary at best. When one in seven American jobs was linked to trade, with exports totalling well over US\$400 billion annually in the 1990s, and when US investments overseas amounted to several hundred billion dollars, the US could hardly afford to distance itself from the world, Clinton maintained. If the United States was

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<sup>5</sup> David F. Gordon, of the Overseas Development Council, had this to say about the struggle between the White House and neo-realists: 'In the aftermath of the loss of lives on the streets of Mogadishu in October 1993, and especially after the 1994 elections, US Africa policy has been under something of a "state of siege". Somalia was a watershed in encouraging congressional and public hostility toward(s) the UN and toward(s) active US engagement in Africa. A barrage of anti-internationalist pressures from the public and Congress, specific calls from Senators Helms and McConnell to substantially cut US assistance to Africa, and large cuts in the international affairs budget have left Africa policy makers on the defensive, scrambling to justify continued American involvement and to find the resources needed to support that engagement.' (Source: 'Assessing the Clinton Administration's Africa Policy', prepared testimony of David F. Gordon, Overseas Development Council, before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa (Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, 26 September 1996)).

not economically strong at home, it was sure to be weaker abroad because it would lose its ‘ability to finance military readiness, afford an activist foreign policy, or inspire allies by example’.<sup>6</sup> Over and over, he had stressed that America’s future prosperity and influence rested in Americans’ ability to understand, even embrace, global economics and finance. Accordingly, he had made the call for America to ‘compete, not retreat’.<sup>7</sup> To this he added: ‘In a new era of peril and opportunity, our overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world’s community of market-based democracies.’<sup>8</sup> Thus, with the American economy growing strongly in 1995, the essence of Clinton’s foreign policy priorities were well known. But it was Anthony Lake who summarised the administration’s vision best -- conveniently in sound-bite size -- when he stated that ‘the successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of *enlargement*... enlargement of democracy and free markets’.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See *Clinton on Foreign Policy Issues* (Washington, D.C.: United States Information Service, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Quote is by Jeffrey E. Garten, Undersecretary for Trade at the Commerce Department, in a speech entitled ‘The Clinton Administration’s Trade Priorities for 1994... and Reflections on Europe’, in *Atlantic Outlook* (28 January 1994): pp.1-2.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in C. Kegley and E. Wittkopf (eds.), *American Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), p.72). Kegley and Wittkopf made an important point when they noted Clinton’s declared foreign policy agenda should not have been mistaken for economic revisionism. Economic revisionists see the United States as pursuing capitalist imperatives in foreign policy -- i.e., obtaining wealth in world markets, with profit being the motivation for employing means and the ultimate end. The argument here was that Clinton’s objectives were very much rooted in the national interest: political and economic preeminence went hand-in-hand, and were the key to national power, security, and influence in the international system.

<sup>9</sup> Author’s italics. Quote is from L. Miller, ‘The Clinton Years: Reinventing US Foreign Policy?’, *International Affairs*, 70 (1994): p.626.

It is important to note that in nearly every case where administration officials spoke of enlargement, economics and democratic principles were mentioned simultaneously. To them, the two concepts were inseparable. Administration officials believed fully in the Wilsonian ideal -- itself a manifestation of the claim made in Immanuel Kant's eighteenth-century treatise *Perpetual Peace* -- that democracies do not wage war on each other.<sup>10</sup> Without war, so the reasoning went, there is a greater chance for stability and security; greater stability and security is conducive for economic growth; economic growth, while it does benefit everyone who has it, is the key to American prosperity and preeminence in the international system. Accordingly, the Clinton administration's enlargement vision was not to be seen as pure economic and political self-centeredness, nor as pure economic and political altruism. Instead, it was a form of 'enlightened self-interest' encompassing both.

As promised in his rhetoric, Clinton undertook several moves early on in his term to make some of the structures of government more conducive to implementing enlargement objectives. With much enthusiasm Clinton had sought to strengthen the role of the Trade Promotion Co-ordinating Committee (co-ordinating trade promotion activities among several federal trade agencies), the Export-Import Bank (providing loans for foreign buyers of US goods and US companies that need cash to produce products for exports), and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (providing insurance and loans for medium and long-term overseas US investments).<sup>11</sup> Moreover, through an Executive Order, he had created the National Economic Council, effectively moving the 'centre of gravity' on economic policy

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<sup>10</sup> M.W. Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12, 3 (Summer 1983): pp.205-235.

<sup>11</sup> L. Hadar, 'Potholes on the "Dollar Diplomacy" Road', *Business Times* (Singapore), 10 February 1995, p.15.

away from the Treasury Department and into the White House.<sup>12</sup> The net affect on the more traditional structures of the foreign policy establishment was that its personnel had to find ways to merge better diplomacy and economic principles.

To these ends, by mid-1995 all US embassy staff up to the ambassadorial level were being given enhanced business support, a new economics-oriented curriculum for Foreign Service Officer training was underway, and even those in the ‘caring’ foreign policy sectors, such as aid and development, began increasingly to calculate how their work helped to advance US economic interests.<sup>13</sup> When asked to comment on the priority economics was being given in US foreign policy, Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, said: ‘For a long time secretaries of state thought of economics as “low policy”, while they dealt with high science like arms control. I make no apologies for putting economics at the top of our foreign policy agenda.’<sup>14</sup>

Within the administration’s overarching foreign policy of enlargement, a key focus became ten ‘Big Emerging Markets’ (BEMs).<sup>15</sup> Though not seen as alternatives to more traditional (and much larger) markets such as Canada, Japan, and western Europe, the BEMs were all regarded as critical areas of growth into the twenty-first century. Commerce Department planners, for example, estimated that by the year 2000 US trade with the ten

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<sup>12</sup> W. Safire, ‘Who’s Got Clout?’, *New York Times Magazine*, 20 June 1993, p.25.

<sup>13</sup> M. Cox, *U.S. Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Superpower Without a Mission?* (London: Pinter, 1995), p.32.

<sup>14</sup> *Newsweek*, 6 March 1995, p.10.

<sup>15</sup> Undersecretary for International Trade Jeffrey Garten first unveiled the ‘BEMs’ in a document produced by the Commerce Department dramatically titled *The Big Ten: The Big Emerging Markets and How They Will Change Our Lives*.

BEM countries could easily exceed that with Europe and Japan combined. In another report, the CIA calculated that between 1994 and 2010 BEMs would account for nearly 44 percent of non-US growth in world imports.<sup>16</sup> The notable countries were: China (including Taiwan and Hong Kong), Indonesia, India, South Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Poland, Turkey, and South Africa.

In many ways South Africa's notoriety as the only country in all of Africa to be singled out as a BEM merely confirmed what many Americans thought of the continent: again, Africa was a 'bad neighbourhood'. It is because of this that administration officials found it imperative to blend the rhetoric used to counter neo-realists with the economic and political vision Clinton had brought to the White House. Their hope was to change the overwhelmingly negative perceptions Americans tended to have of Africa, thus underscoring the White House's belief that enlargement should know no international bounds. After all, they warned, those places that were marginal today might just prove crucial in maintaining American hegemony tomorrow.<sup>17</sup>

As a part of their efforts to cast Africa in a better light, US foreign policy makers were quick to point out that since the fall of the Berlin Wall some 30 African countries had held multiparty elections. Indeed, in a matter of five years, they claimed, the number of competitive party systems had ballooned from 10 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 states to 75 percent, with nearly all of the rest declaring their intentions to undertake democratic

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<sup>16</sup> M. Cox, *U.S. Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Superpower Without a Mission?*, p.34.

<sup>17</sup> From a personal interview with Peter O'Keefe, Associate Director for Business Outreach in the Office of Public Liaison at the White House, conducted 7 July 1999, London, England.

reforms in the near future.<sup>18</sup> Party pluralism, it seemed, was becoming the rule and not the exception. Given, US foreign policy makers did recognise that many of the 'democratic' states were so in only the minimalist western sense, and some of the others who had made promises for democratic reform would most surely break them; nonetheless, they were keen to stress that the political realities in Africa in 1995 were a big improvement over what had existed before. As one put it: 'For the first time in decades it was easier and quicker to list those states which had not experienced at least some progress towards multi-partyism than those which had.'<sup>19</sup>

As for how democracy had affected Africa's economic climate (after all, enlargement assumed democracy and liberal economics were inseparable), here, too, US foreign policy makers presented optimistic news. According to administration officials, at the end of 1995 roughly two-thirds of African countries which had undertaken democratic reform had also tackled some form of economic reform; as a result, sub-Saharan Africa's GDP (quoting World Bank figures) had grown by 4 percent in 1995, and the foundation had been laid for long-term growth.<sup>20</sup> Commerce Department staff were even more enthusiastic: for those Americans who had taken advantage of the surge of democracy and economic reform in

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<sup>18</sup> C. Clapham, 'Democratisation in Africa: Obstacles and Prospects', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.14, no.3 (1993): p.430.

<sup>19</sup> J.A. Wiseman, *The New Struggle for Democracy in Africa* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1996), p.2.

<sup>20</sup> 'The Second Annual Report of the US Trade Representative on Africa Trade and Development Policy', found in its entirety at <http://www.ustr.gov/reports/africa/1997/index.html>, and posted 1 March 1997. The impetus for the report was that the US Congress, in approving the Uruguay Round Trade Agreements in 1994, included a provision that the President should develop and implement a comprehensive trade and development policy for Africa, and present annual reports on its progress over a four-year period.

Africa, their investments had yielded an average 30 percent return, compared to worldwide returns of 11 percent.<sup>21</sup> As for its contribution to hammering home positive messages about Africa, the State Department released statements that spoke of 'another Africa of plate-glass skyscrapers and new stock markets, of political opposition and outspoken newspapers'.<sup>22</sup>

Given the statements above, it is not without a hint of irony that those US foreign policy makers who so publicly and enthusiastically rejected 'Afro-pessimism' also went to great lengths to stress that they were not willing to 'seek refuge in the illusions of Afro-optimism' either. Instead, they claimed to adhere to a notion of 'Afro-realism' -- one which echoed a sentiment expressed in a World Bank report which claimed 'there (was) no single African reality'.<sup>23</sup> Hence, while administration officials claimed they had hope for Africa as a whole, the truth was that some regions had far greater potential than others for political and economic progress. Almost always, southern Africa was the region with the highest expectations. In the words of Anthony Lake:

To those who have no hope (in Africa), I have only four words of advice: come to southern Africa... Come and look... (at) the multi-party elections and tolerance for some degree of political opposition that has come to every nation here, save Angola; to the peaceful passing of power in nations like Zambia and Malawi; to the deep interest in participation demonstrated in Mozambique, where an astonishing 88 percent of the voters -- some of whom had to cross minefields -- cast ballots in that nation's first free and fair elections. Come to southern Africa and see how the increasing strength of democracies is leading to regional stability... Where once the frontline states had to expend all their energy on the fight against apartheid. To those who see no hope for Africa, I say come to the subcontinent and see the unmistakable

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<sup>21</sup> S. Lamar, 'Lifting Africa from Poverty', *Journal of Commerce* (14 November 1996): p.7A.

<sup>22</sup> Quotes are from the United States Department of State press release, 'US Support for Democracy in Africa' (9 January 1995).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

signs of national and regional economic progress...<sup>24</sup>

Within southern Africa, US foreign policy makers viewed South Africa as the crown-jewel example of democratic governance and economic practise. In spite of the countless perils the transition from minority to majority rule had posed, South Africans had handled them admirably; President Nelson Mandela's reconciliation government had set an inspiring example of respect for ethnic differences and transparent, representative democracy. Additionally, his government had continued a prudent nurturing of the country's economic potential, giving due attention to maintaining infrastructure, keeping a sound currency, and exploiting the country's vast natural resources. From what those in Washington could tell, and from what they were telling the international community, South Africa's democratic and economic foundation was solid. The implicit hope was that the foundation was deep and strong enough to anchor efforts in the region to further the Clinton administration's regional enlargement agenda.

As a sign of the importance with which US foreign policy makers viewed South Africa, in March 1995 Washington and Pretoria established a US-South Africa Binational Commission, to be chaired by US Vice President Al Gore and South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki -- the only high-level binational entity of its kind between the US and a sub-Saharan African country.<sup>25</sup> In the words of James Joseph, the US Ambassador to South

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<sup>24</sup> United States Department of State, 'The Promise of Southern Africa', an address by Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, before the US-Zambia Business Council, Lusaka, Zambia (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, 9 January 1995).

<sup>25</sup> Although the founding of the US-South Africa Binational Commission is sometimes singled out as a watershed in US-South African relations, US foreign policy makers under the Clinton administration had shown considerable enthusiasm for South Africa before then, relative to previous

Africa: 'The thrust of the Commission is to streamline government-to-government co-operation', necessitated by the fact that 'over 500 US firms had established a presence in South Africa -- their names reading like a Who's Who of American Business... over US\$4 billion worth of goods crossed the Atlantic in 1994' and, in his view, 'US trade and investment in South Africa (would) continue to increase as US firms discover the dynamism of the southern African region'.<sup>26</sup>

As figures from 1995 became known early in 1996, it was with delight Clinton administration officials acknowledged that many of their economic aspirations and predictions for Africa were being met. US government officials stated that over 30 countries had continued to push ahead with the liberalisation of exchange rates and prices, undertaken the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, practised greater fiscal discipline, cut costly

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years. For example, in 1993 USAID provided some US\$37 million to support programmes ranging from voter education, to conflict resolution, to black private sector development. Also, White House staff had worked to ensure the passing on Capitol Hill of the 'South African Transition Support Act of 1993' (Source: 'Testimony of John F. Hicks, Acting Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, USAID', given before the United States House of Representatives, Subcommittee for Africa on Foreign Affairs (Washington, D.C.: Federal Document Clearing House, 30 September 1993)). In 1994, White House officials obtained funding 'for democratic elections and institutions in Africa' totalling US\$119 million, up from US\$5 million the previous year, the bulk of which went to South Africa (Source: United States Department of State, 'An African Culture of Democracy', an address by Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, before the Benin Human Rights Institute, Cotonou, Benin (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, 21 December 1994)). And for fiscal year 1995, of an African aid budget of around US\$800 million, Clinton approved US\$135 million to go to South Africa (Source: R. Chase, E. Hill, and P. Kennedy, 'Pivotal States and US Strategy', *Foreign Affairs* (January 1996): p.33).

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in 'Nomination Hearing of James Joseph to be Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa', prepared testimony of James Joseph before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs (Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, 26 September 1995).

subsidies, and reduced barriers to trade and investment. Because of this, sub-Saharan Africa's GDP growth was accelerating, ready to go beyond the 4 percent growth it had experienced in 1995. Additionally, they pointed out, gross domestic savings was up, rising to a level two times higher than in the previous three years. Conceivably, this was an indication that Africans' job prospects and incomes were improving, thereby enabling them to better meet the costs of day-to-day living and still be able to put some money away for the future.<sup>27</sup>

In an effort to highlight their belief that trade with Africa provided a 'win/win' situation, White House officials pointed out that nearly US\$12 billion worth of exports had made their way from Africa to the United States in 1995. In turn, US merchandise exports to the continent had jumped nearly 23 percent over 1994 levels, to more than US\$5.4 billion. Already, they remarked, 'the African market was nearly as large as that of the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, including Russia'.<sup>28</sup>

In a larger sense, other figures, too, bolstered the administration's belief that its enlargement agenda was succeeding in Africa. In what the White House viewed as a not at all unrelated set of events, an increasing amount of dialogue could be heard regarding regional integration, more than 30 sub-Saharan countries had become members of the World Trade Organisation, and 25 of the region's national elections had generally been recognised

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<sup>27</sup> Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 'A Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for the Countries of Africa: Executive Summary' (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 11 September 1997).

<sup>28</sup> 'The Economic Situation in Sub-Saharan Africa', a statement by George E. Moose, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, before the Subcommittee on Trade of the House Ways and Means Committee (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1 August 1996).

as free and fair.<sup>29</sup> Once again, South Africa was the African star shining brightest. By vigorously upholding democratic principles while simultaneously presenting 'an economic blueprint of strategies to promote export growth, create a stable environment for investment, encourage privatisation, reduce government spending, develop human resources, encourage industrial development, and modulate wage demands', Mandela's government had been rewarded: South Africa's economy had improved for the second consecutive year, witnessing growth of 3.4 percent.<sup>30</sup>

Positive rhetoric, positive figures, enthusiastic reports -- all made 1995 a notable year in US foreign policy towards Africa in the sense that the Clinton administration made consistent efforts to cast Africa in a positive light, and to seek to give the continent a tangible value, thereby justifying US engagement. Because of this, some interest was evident in Washington at 1995's close as observers waited to see how prominently Africa would figure in Clinton's enlargement agenda in 1996.

On the face of it, US foreign policy makers' rhetoric at the start of 1996 changed little: their statements continued to give full endorsement to the view that democratic governance and economic liberalism were two sides of the same coin, and that people were better off when both existed. In fact, so common did the democratic-economic mantra for Africa become -- stay committed to democratic reform, create a stable environment for investment, promote export growth, encourage privatisation, reduce government spending and growth will follow -- the question ceased to be whether it would be mentioned in

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<sup>29</sup> Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 'A Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for the Countries of Africa: Executive Summary' (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 11 September 1997).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

conjunction with Africa during a statement or speech, but how many times. However, it soon became clear that the administration's initiatives were becoming less-balanced in terms of highlighting the reciprocal 'win/win' situation that enlargement was to mean for both the United States and Africa. Increasingly, emphasis was being given to how the US alone benefited.

The first significant act of 1996 to underscore this emerging pattern was when a 'Commercial Development Mission', led by the Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown,<sup>31</sup> went to Africa. During the trip, Brown and his entourage held discussions with government leaders and private representatives from nearly 40 African countries and more than 150 US firms. Purportedly, this one trip resulted in contracts and agreements for American companies totalling nearly half a billion dollars, with the potential for future sales of more than US\$3 billion in US exports.<sup>32</sup> In all of the post-mission summaries, though, hardly a word was mentioned as to what, if anything, Africans had achieved or obtained.

In similar fashion, White House officials announced that the Overseas Private Investment Corporation had heeded their recommendation and would authorise a US\$120 million private investment fund called 'The New Opportunities Fund' for US investments overseas. Furthermore, the Export-Import Bank (which provides loans for foreign buyers of

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<sup>31</sup> Arguably, Ron Brown did more than any other US government official in portraying Africa in a positive light, and raising awareness of its potential. Brown's African activism can be demonstrated from the fact that during his tenure as Secretary of Commerce, he averaged two trips a year to Africa. Thus, when Brown died in a plane crash in 1996, there was a very real concern that US interest and involvement in Africa might falter.

<sup>32</sup> Africa Policy Information, 'A Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for the Countries of Africa: Executive Summary' (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 11 September 1997).

US goods and US companies that need cash to produce products for exports) worked with the White House to create a US\$1.3 billion fund with the express purpose of minimising Americans' investment risks 'in less credit-worthy markets'.<sup>33</sup> Again, references as to how these funds would help Africa and Africans were seldom, if ever, made. Indeed, about the only notable variations from the emerging 'America First-ism' in the early months of 1996 was in a USAID programme and the White House's 'Leland Initiative'. Regarding these two, USAID issued US\$100 million -- under one-tenth of the total amount being considered in the two OPIC and Eximbank funds mentioned above -- for a Southern Africa Enterprise Development Fund meant to support micro-enterprise in South Africa and Zimbabwe; the 'Leland Initiative' was to be a five-year effort to improve internet access for 20 African countries -- an endeavour of questionable value considering Africa's average telephone density was about 0.4 lines per 100 inhabitants, the lowest in the world.<sup>34</sup>

In the end, the emphasis given to promoting American interests first and foremost proved to be somewhat of an aberration in the Clinton administration's enlargement agenda for Africa. By August 1996, US foreign policy makers had returned to the more steady, balanced tack of highlighting what was 'right' with Africa in terms of democratisation and economic reform, and what benefits US involvement, especially trade, offered for Americans

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<sup>33</sup> James Joseph, US Ambassador to South Africa, said such funds were necessary because 'more than 750 (US) firms have some form of involvement with South Africa with reports of almost one new (US) business starting per week...' (Source: Transcript of a speech entitled 'United States-South Africa Relations: A Partnership of Mutual Benefit', delivered by James Joseph, US Ambassador to South Africa, on 8 August 1996 at the South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa).

<sup>34</sup> Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 'A Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for the Countries of Africa: Executive Summary' (Washington, D.C.: Africa Policy Information Cent(re), 11 September 1997).

and Africans. For example, Regina Brown, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, once again could be heard speaking of 'consolidating real gains -- both economic and political -- that have been made on the continent', and of US exports being 'nearly as much as our exports to all of Eastern Europe and the new independent states of the former Soviet Union combined'.<sup>35</sup> To this she added:

For every problem in Africa there is a possibility. The resilience, the courage, and the potential of Africa's people are as remarkable as the challenges they face. The policies we in the Clinton administration seek to apply are designed to meet those problems and build on that potential. Our aim is to help strengthen the capacity of Africans themselves to manage their destinies.<sup>36</sup>

In all likelihood, the two faces administration officials showed in 1996 regarding enlargement as it applied to Africa -- initially America First-ism then the more win/win dimension -- can in part be attributed to Clinton's pursuance of a second term. As David F. Gordon, Director of US Policy Program(me)s at the Overseas Development Council, noted: 'Approaches to Africa by advocates of many political stripes tend to veer among absolutes: either complete hand washing, domination of a single theme -- be it the environment, democracy, or trade promotion -- or massive over extension.'<sup>37</sup> In showing two different positions in an election year, the hope was that Clinton would be able to deflect criticism that he had been too soft regarding US interests while simultaneously demonstrating that trade coupled with selective aid could benefit those at home and others in Africa. It was a

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<sup>35</sup> 'Remarks by Regina C. Brown, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs,' at the International Seminar for Diplomats, Salzburg, Austria, 2 August 1996. Speech can be seen in its entirety at <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/>.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> 'United States and Africa: Administration Has Positive Record on Africa', *Africa News Service*, 1 October 1996.

calculated political move meant to appease and appeal to the widest range of critics and voters.<sup>38</sup>

Likewise, when Clinton sent Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Africa on a five-nation tour in October, less than a month before the US Presidential elections, this, too, was interpreted in some quarters as mere politicking. After all, one in every ten Americans could trace their ancestry to Africa, and this represented a significant number of potential voters.<sup>39</sup> But regardless to what extent the presidential election was a factor in Christopher's visit, it did provide the most high-profile reiteration yet of how the Clinton administration's enlargement vision applied to Africa. 'Our approach to Africa is to promote democracy, to prevent conflict, to encourage economic prosperity and integration and to support sustainable development. These elements are inseparable,' he said while in South Africa. 'Political freedom is the key to peace within nations. Economies perform best where people are free to shape their destiny.' Then, in what Christopher said was meant to be a message meant for

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<sup>38</sup> From a personal interview with Peter O'Keefe, Associate Director for Business Outreach in the Office of Public Liaison at the White House, conducted 7 July 1999, London, England.

<sup>39</sup> With one in ten Americans being able to trace their ancestry back to Africa, the suspicion was not without reason. Ironically, though, the criticism that received the most press did not come from within the United States. French Co-operation Minister Jacques Godfrain initiated a shouting match between Washington and Paris by stating: 'I welcome the fact that, after Washington cut development aid by 15 percent, and after President Clinton has not been once to Africa, after he made no mention of Africa in his address to the UN General Assembly, a few weeks before presidential elections, Africa becomes a priority of the American government.' Similarly, while in South Africa Christopher and his aides faced questions from local officials about the three-and-a-half year gap between Christopher's pledge in a speech to give the African continent 'the attention it deserves', and his first visit (Source: 'US tones down shouting match with France over Africa', *Agence France Presse*, 16 October 1996).

Americans as much as Africans,<sup>40</sup> he stressed how Americans ‘have an interest in helping Africa realise its immense and mostly untapped economic potential’, and how ‘as Africa’s regions come together, as its nations become more stable and free, opportunities for investment and trade will only grow’.<sup>41</sup>

Christopher then delivered a point that many Africans heard to be directed almost exclusively at them, and would prove to be a significant addition to the Clinton administration’s foreign policy towards Africa:

Like other regions, Africa also needs strong regional and sub-regional organisations, like SADC, that can take responsibility, in partnership with Africa’s friends abroad, at moments of crisis. It needs well-trained regional forces that can be deployed rapidly when and where they are needed for humanitarian and peacekeeping missions. It needs a mechanism that combines the experience of Africa’s armed forces with the resources and capabilities of its non-African partners. To meet this need, we are working with our partners in Africa and around the world to create an African Crisis Response Force (ACRF).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> ‘Africa’s Good for US (and *Vice Versa*), Christopher Argues’, *International Herald Tribune* (Neuilly-sur-Seine, France), 14 October 1996.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted from a transcript of ‘Address by Secretary of State Warren Christopher’, delivered 12 October 1996 at the South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> Quoted from a transcript of ‘Address by Secretary of State Warren Christopher’, delivered 12 October 1996 at the South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa. The genesis of an African Crisis Response Force can be traced back to the early 1990s and the then Assistant Secretary of State, Herman J. Cohen, though it did not take specific form until late 1995. In November 1995, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (of the various branches of the military), offered a proposal for intra-agency review regarding US sponsorship of a multi-national force. The proposal was not adopted. In mid-1996, the Burundi crisis revived the idea. At the request of the National Security Council (NSC), the proposal was presented to NSC Advisor Anthony Lake, who quickly approved it. In mid-September, Deputy National Security Advisor Nancy Soderburg went to Europe and Assistant Secretary of State George Moose visited Africa to solicit support for the idea. However, because of its lack of details resulting from the short notice under

With the announcement of the ACRF, the Clinton administration had once again shown incredible political agility in an election year. Depending on how sceptical or supportive one was, the case could be made that the ACRF was a cosmetic showing of American support for Africa that would require few American resources, or it was a sincere effort to help Africans create ‘homemade peacekeeping initiatives’, thus supporting their efforts to find ‘African solutions for African problems’.<sup>43</sup> More than likely, it was a mixture of both.

In 1995, the US Department of Defen(c)e disseminated a document which stated that the United States had ‘very little strategic interest in Africa’. Nonetheless, Bush and Clinton alike had found reasons that had necessitated US involvement. Between 1990 and 1997, for example, the US had conducted at least eight noncombatant evacuations, and committed military forces to at least sixteen interventions in Africa -- the largest number for any single continent<sup>44</sup> -- despite the fact that it was these missions which posed some of the greatest political liabilities (read: Somalia). Furthermore, Clinton’s enlargement vision had demanded that Africa receive attention beyond crises, albeit the underlying neo-realism in Washington placed severe restrictions on how much could be tolerated or given. This had posed administration officials with a peculiar situation: while enlargement was meant to

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which it had been drafted, little interest had been generated. Accordingly, it was a surprise when Secretary of State Christopher went ahead and announced the initiative during his southern African visit in October 1996.

<sup>43</sup> F. Olonisakin, ‘African “Homemade” Peacekeeping Initiatives’, *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol.23, no.3 (Spring 1997): pp.350-356.

<sup>44</sup> United States Department of Defen(c)e, ‘United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa’ (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defen(c)e, Office of International Security Affairs, August 1995), p.3.

translate in to stability and prosperity through democracy and liberal economics -- which was in America's interest, as well as others -- democratic and liberal economic principles could not take root without some degree of stability; war, by its very nature and of which Africa has its fair share, precludes stability and therefore needs to be stopped. But how to do so without risking American soldiers' lives?

With this line-of-thought, and faced with the vexing question it naturally led to, the ACRF, at least to Clinton administration officials, had made perfect sense. Because the ACRF would provide a means for stopping hostilities (thereby giving some degree of security), was couched in terms of African empowerment, and would not place Americans in harm's way, US foreign policy makers reasoned it was as fail-safe of a tool as they could hope for in order to complement their enlargement agenda for Africa. Furthermore, the signs they were getting from southern Africa was that the time had never been better to create an ACRF: in the first half of 1996, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), greatly re-invigorated with the entry of South Africa, had taken the first step towards expanding its role into the security field by creating an organ of defence, politics, and security.<sup>45</sup>

In an effort to seize the perceived moment, US foreign policy makers set about winning support for an ACRF from the American public and Congress. Specifically, officials publicised the fact that the ACRF should be viewed as a form of insurance. They noted how, for example, in the eighteen months following the genocidal violence in Rwanda

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<sup>45</sup> J. Cilliers, 'The SADC Organ for Defence, Politics, and Security', *Institute for Defence Policy Papers*, no.10 (October 1996). For further information, also see W.D. Bajusz and K.P. O'Prey, 'An All-African Peace Force: An Immediate Option or Long-Term Goal for the Region?', *Strategic Forum*, no.86 (October 1996).

in 1994, the US spent approximately US\$700 million responding to events associated with that one country's turmoil -- an amount equivalent to the total bi-lateral development assistance given to all of the rest of Africa that year.<sup>46</sup> With the US playing 'the role of catalyst, technical adviser, and honest broker... (in supporting) the nascent effort of Africans to take the lead in resolving conflicts and peacekeeping efforts in the region',<sup>47</sup> they argued, crises could be stopped early, thus saving lives and money.

Simultaneous to their publicity campaign, the White House also pushed ahead with the more tangible aspects of creating an ACRF. US foreign policy makers and defence officials were instructed to draw up plans on how the Expanded Military Education and Training (IMET) programme could assist African officials charged with oversight of the military, and to facilitate dialogue between African military leaders, civilian officials, and civil society organisations. Other logistical matters to explore included ways in which the professionalisation of African militaries might be furthered through regular contacts between US military personnel and their African counterparts, including joint training exercises, visits to US military command, attendance of US military schools, and US military visits to Africa.<sup>48</sup>

While US foreign policy makers did everything they could to win support at home, and paid attention to planning details, they failed to realise the obvious point that their efforts

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<sup>46</sup> 'Africa: American Assembly', conference proceedings posted at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/amassembly/>, 6 May 1997.

<sup>47</sup> "The prepared testimony of Steven Metz before the House International Relations Committee, Africa Subcommittee" (Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, 1 October 1997).

<sup>48</sup> *Op. cit.*

would count for little without African support, thinking that the benefits to Africans would be self-evident. As African leaders began to speak out, it became obvious that this was not the case, and that there was much skepticism that arose from historical experience.<sup>49</sup> Many African leaders had seen a number of US programmes announced with great fanfare, only to see them die from lack of continuing interest, funding, or unanticipated difficulties.<sup>50</sup> It was clear that the new proposal had many of the qualities that could doom it to die before it even truly began. Specifically, the proposal lacked definition in such critical areas as to how an ACRF would relate to other international bodies (like the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity), its mandate, command and control relationships, and the specifics of external support. Additionally, there was confusion as to how, if in any way, US efforts were related to those of their European allies. The French, too, were speaking of their own plans for an African peacekeeping force in Francophone Africa, and the British were already working with several African military establishments on several peace operations.<sup>51</sup>

While each of the above provided their own unique impediments to African leaders' acceptance of an ACRF, another arose from political and personal sensitivities. Many were

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<sup>49</sup> For example, see 'OAU Cool on US Idea of an African Force', *Panafrican New Agency Electronic Newswire*, 14 October 1996, or the editorial in *The Star* (Johannesburg), 10 October 1996.

<sup>50</sup> This skepticism did have some merit. Zimbabweans could recall unfulfilled and forgotten promises associated with soliciting their support for participation in the US-led Somalia mission in early 1993. When the Zambians committed a force to the UN Peacekeeping Operation in Angola in 1995, its request for a US airlift in to southeastern Angola was ignored; subsequently, Zambia deployed its forces by land through Namibia, a considerable logistical feat given the distance covered and the lack of infrastructure in war-damaged southern Angola.

<sup>51</sup> L. Williams, 'EU Supports South African Stand on African Peace Force', *Panafrican News Agency Electronic Newswire*, 15 October 1996.

irritated by the apparent offer of participation for some African countries but not others. Some accused Washington of ulterior motives, claiming an ACRF was a way for the United States to gather military intelligence, or to give it a military foot in Africa. And nearly all took issue with the fact that they had had little or no prior consultation regarding an ACRF. Almost to a person, African leaders resented the fact that Washington had seemed bent on imposing its solutions, rather than working with them as equals to create them. In particular, South Africa's President Mandela had been one of the most vocal regarding these points, stating: 'My point of view is if this initiative is to succeed, it must have credibility. It must not come from one country. It should be the initiative of the UN.'<sup>52</sup> He then added: 'Africans would like to feel they are handling things themselves... not acting in response to suggestions that come from outside the continent.'<sup>53</sup> Finally, Mandela articulated the very volatile suspicion: he was worried that African soldiers serving on an ACRF like the one the United States was proposing 'might simply become America's or Europe's policemen.'<sup>54</sup>

For all extents and purposes, the fact that Mandela was not sold on America's ACRF concept meant that the initiative was stillborn. The simple fact was that South Africa was the most powerful democratic state in sub-Saharan Africa, and the one best suited to mobilise, project, and sustain forces necessary for extensive peacekeeping. US foreign policy makers had made no secret of the fact that the ACRI could not go forward, or very few other initiatives in southern Africa, without South Africa. Christopher had acknowledged

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<sup>52</sup> 'US will not walk away from its role in Africa -- Christopher', *Business Day* (South Africa), 14 October 1996.

<sup>53</sup> 'Mandela to Discuss African Crisis Force', *Business Day* (South Africa), 11 October 1996.

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit.*

as much shortly after unveiling the ACRF idea, notably done while in South Africa, delivering the following comments at a well-publicised event:

The most important thing South Africa can do for Africa and the world is to ensure that its own transformation succeeds. We remain optimistic about the future of the South African economy and its leadership. But I know you do not believe your responsibility ends at home.

South Africa has already made great progress in promoting regional co-operation and peace in southern Africa. SADC has been a tremendous success and under President Mandela's leadership it will only grow stronger. But even this region is not where your national interest ends. After all, no one wants the nations that we once called the 'frontline states' to find themselves on a new frontline, facing instability and poverty to the north.<sup>55</sup>

Regardless of Christopher's appeal to what he saw was South Africa's regional duty, as has been shown above, US officials had failed to bring Mandela to the American-proposed ACRF cause. Consequently, they knew they had to alter their tactics if they hoped to see an ACRF become a reality. Ideally Clinton's winning of a second term in November 1996 *should have* provided a more conducive environment to do so. White House officials *should have* been in a position where they would not have to exaggerate as much -- in order to swoon the American electorate and to counter political opponents -- how Clinton's enlargement agenda for Africa had American interests first and foremost in mind. The corollary to this was that they *should have* been able to reassure African leaders -- especially Mandela -- more openly and often of the benefits that an ACRF could afford them, that the United States had no desire to try and strong-arm them into acceptance of the idea, or that the initiative was part of a hidden agenda. Note the words 'should have'. Before US foreign

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<sup>55</sup> Quoted from the transcript of 'Address by Secretary of State Warren Christopher', delivered 12 October 1996 at the South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, South Africa (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1996).

policy makers could act as they might have wanted, a heated row with South Africa occurred, thus guaranteeing the ACRF would be pushed into the shadows as other events took centre stage.

Following the leak of secret South African cabinet documents on the weekend of 12 January 1997, it emerged that South Africa had plans to sell advanced fire-control systems to Syria. US officials had no choice but to react strongly: 'The United States is deeply concerned about the proposed sale,' said one State Department official a day after the leak was reported in the press. 'It would be extremely serious if these sales actually occurred.'<sup>56</sup> While the US and South Africa had had previous points of contention over South Africa's moral support for countries such as Cuba, Iran, and Libya, considered by the US to be pariahs like Syria, the Syrian matter was 'much more serious because it involves military support to a state sponsor of terrorism... (and) it has much more serious implications.'<sup>57</sup>

First, US officials pointed out, the sale posed an unsettling threat to America's close Middle Eastern ally, Israel. Reportedly the sale would enable the Syrians to extend the utility of their Soviet-era T-72 battle tanks by another 10 to 15 years, but it would also 'instantly level the playing fields with regard to tank warfare involving Middle Eastern countries and Israel, whose own equipment is... fitted with a similar system'.<sup>58</sup> Second, because of Syria's terrorist blacklisting in American law, Congressional legislation would require the

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<sup>56</sup> 'S. Africa Reject US Threat on Syrian Arms Deal', *Reuters North American Wire*, 14 January 1997.

<sup>57</sup> Quotes are from an un-identified Western diplomat in 'US to S. Africa: Halt Weapons Deal to Syria', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 22 January 1997, p.11.

<sup>58</sup> 'SA in dilemma over proposed arms sales', *The Star and SA Times International*, 29 January 1997, p.9.

suspension of certain economic aid packages to South Africa if the sale went through. Nevertheless, South African foreign policy makers were undeterred. A spokesman for President Mandela complained of 'public American bullying', and of Washington's refusal to treat Pretoria 'as equals'. Mandela himself made a very public claim of defiance, stating: 'There is no country that will dictate to South Africa.'<sup>59</sup>

Needless to say, at the start of 1997 US foreign policy makers were frustrated. Having worked long and hard to overcome the enduring perception of Africa as a 'bad neighbourhood', they were ready to reap something tangible for their toil. For this they had put their hopes in the ACRF initiative -- an initiative that 'had been a hard sell to Americans because it was perceived as having little direct benefit for the US, and yet promised unlimited benefits for Africans'.<sup>60</sup> Much to their dismay, however, the initiative had died because numerous African leaders had shown a disinterest in, even an aversion to, the idea. Moreover, the one country US foreign policy makers had thought they would be able to count on, indeed the one that was necessary if it were to become a reality, South Africa, had failed to give a political endorsement, yet alone an offer of money, manpower, or material. But before they had been able to understand fully African leaders' positions generally, and South Africa's specifically, on why support had not been forthcoming, South African foreign policy makers had caused a national security incident by considering to sell arms to Syria. Then adding insult to injury, South African foreign policy makers had appeared largely

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<sup>59</sup> 'Mandela's Diplomatic Roller Coaster Hits Middle East', *Reuters*, 15 January 1997.

<sup>60</sup> From a personal interview with Francis Kornegay, Jr., Director of the African-American Institute, on 8 May 1997 at the African-American Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa.

unconcerned, even indignant, when US foreign policy makers attempted to make their concerns known. Indeed, the South Africans had given the impression they would push even harder for the sale to go through if they, US foreign policy makers, continued to try and voice their worries.

A political commentator once expressed the opinion: 'Aside from Americans' good will -- some might call it a missionary zeal -- there is precious little to keep them engaged in Africa. There is no political mileage in it.'<sup>61</sup> Though US foreign policy makers had expended much effort, the rewards had been few and far between, and even these had been overshadowed by disappointment and discouragement in the early months of 1997. Undoubtedly, even some of Africa's biggest advocates in the US foreign policy establishment had to wonder, at least secretly, if the headaches were worth the distant benefits.

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<sup>61</sup> From a personal interview with Francis Kornegay, Jr., Director of the African-American Institute, on 8 May 1997 at the African-American Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa.

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## Chapter Eight: Coming to Terms With Self and Situation

When the United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher called in on President Mandela in October 1996, South African foreign policy makers had already experienced a roller-coaster ride of a year. Among the highs had been South Africa's hosting of the ninth meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, President Mandela's assumption of the Chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and his triumphant state visits to Britain, France, and Germany. As for the lows, some of these had included: Mandela's failed attempt to rally international support for sanctions against Nigeria, in response to the Abacha regime's execution of Nigerian human rights activists (which, incidentally, led to questions as to why South Africa had issued low-profile responses to other obvious human rights violators, like Indonesia); bitter trade negotiations with the European Union; a divisive row in the government surrounding South Africa's 'two Chinas' policy; and an inability to mount a clear response to crises in the Great Lakes area. In other words, the mix was indicative that South Africa was increasingly becoming 'just another country'.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that South Africa was becoming 'just another country' in 1996 in many ways was nothing more than a product of time's passing. Assuming the adage 'a day in politics is like a year' is true, the reality was that two full years had elapsed since the South African elections of April-May 1994. Consequently, the international community's recollection of

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<sup>1</sup> Quote is from Jack E. Spence's valedictory lecture at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House, London) entitled 'Oh Brave New World: Reflections on South Africa's Foreign Policy', delivered 18 February 1996.

events -- even given the level of euphoria at the time -- had begun to fade. With this dulling of the collective memory had come a corresponding change in how South Africa was perceived. For many countries, South Africa was becoming more and more like so many others.

However, as of late 1996 key South African foreign policy makers had not yet realised the extent to which international perceptions had, and were, shifting. For them, the events of April-May 1994 were as if they had happened yesterday -- not at all surprising given the length of their struggle and the sacrifices made to end apartheid. From this arose sentiments that, on one hand, Mandela's 'international moral authority' should and could be enough in its own right to shift the diplomatic playing field in South Africa's favour,<sup>2</sup> and on the other, that having successfully pulled off 'The South African Miracle', South Africa deserved a larger degree of latitude than most other countries for a longer period. Put another way, reputation -- whether personal or national, real or perceived -- had become a major factor in South African foreign policy. This was causing an ever-widening gap between what the international community thought of South Africa and what South African foreign policy makers themselves thought of South Africa. As a result, in late 1996 many of the latter were convinced that they could still use reputation to avoid having to make certain difficult choices, or to shield them from the negative effects of choices made.<sup>3</sup> This, of course, had

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<sup>2</sup> 'China's pressure on South Africa to cut diplomatic links,' *Financial Times*, 25 March 1996.

<sup>3</sup> The unofficial foreign policy of 'universality', for example, typifies this attitude. Universality, as the word implies, was a holistic pursuit. Among its unstated objectives was that bi-lateral and multi-lateral links were to be fostered whenever and wherever possible, and international interests were to be advanced along with domestic ones.

implications.

Whereas most 'ordinary' countries would have accepted (though some better than others) that the mixed bag South Africa had experienced in its international affairs in 1996 was par for the course, South African foreign policy makers were finding it difficult to come to terms with the debates, disappointments, and the outright failures of the past year. Reputation, it seemed, was causing defensiveness and cognitive dissonance. In regard to defensiveness, it would fall between two extremes, depending on the subject and events. In its more harmless form, government officials would make the claim, say, that the lows in South Africa's international affairs -- made to appear even lower because of the unreasonably high expectations South Africa had had placed upon it -- would always receive disproportionate attention; negative headlines, it would be pointed out, was what sold newspapers. The other extreme, though, was much more serious. Some South African policy makers had begun to speculate that they were intentionally being portrayed as incompetent, inconsistent, ineffective, ill-informed, or driven by a skewed understanding of international affairs. In turn, this often led to discognisant knee-jerk responses whenever international events took a turn 'against' South Africa. For example, when the value of the Rand plummeted in early 1996, certain government officials failed to speak of structural reasons but made the emotive accusation that the international monetary markets were 'amorphous and racist'.<sup>4</sup>

This background is crucial for understanding why South African support was not forthcoming when US Secretary of State Christopher unexpectedly announced, during his

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<sup>4</sup> 'The New South African Foreign Policy: Incentives and Constraints', in *The New South Africa: Prospects for Domestic and International Security* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998), p.166.

visit to South Africa in October 1996, America's hopes for an African Crisis Response Force (ACRF). This is particularly important when one considers that the ACRF appeared to be congruent with many of South African foreign policy makers' recent announcements and moves, both national and regional, and the domestic support these had garnered.

Indicative of how South Africa might have been expected to support the ACRF, at least philosophically, in February 1996 Mandela announced that South Africa had contributed R1.2 million to the Organisation of African Unity's Peace Fund, the fund falling under the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution. According to Mandela, such support was imperative because 'the continent's regional organisations should have the instruments needed for them to play a meaningful role... to reduce tension, prevent conflict, and solve existing conflict situations'.<sup>5</sup> He then made a statement that could have just as easily been uttered by US foreign policy makers when speaking of their proposed ACRF. 'In the final analysis,' Mandela said, 'we are talking about the resolution of (conflicts) not as an end in itself, but because we believe that development cannot take place without democracy or prosperity without peace.'<sup>6</sup>

Significantly, Mandela's beliefs in regard to conflict resolution and peacekeeping had widespread support within South Africa. In May 1996, a *Defence White Paper* incorporating views from across the political spectrum, including the various political parties and numerous parliamentary committees, was released. In it, it was recognised that the vast majority of armed conflicts in Africa were 'taking place within, rather than between, states', and that

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<sup>5</sup> 'President Mandela Addresses the National Assembly of Mali', *Africa News*, 8 March 1996.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

these conflicts needed to be ‘increasingly regarded as regional and international concerns’.<sup>7</sup> States that failed to have internal peace and stability, the document pointed out, would have implications ‘not confined to national borders... and impact negatively on neighbouring states’ through, *inter alia*, debt crises, environmental degradation, and movements of refugees, diseases, drugs, stolen goods, and small arms.<sup>8</sup> The *White Paper* then stated that such negative developments ‘present a profound challenge to the notion of the “sanctity” of state sovereignty and national borders’.<sup>9</sup> The inference: a broad section of the government supported South Africa playing an active role in peacekeeping and conflict resolution -- utilising the South African National Defence Forces (SANDF) when necessary -- albeit not because of humanitarian concerns, but in the name of South African national security.

Likewise, the idea of a South Africa actively involved in peacekeeping and the resolution of conflicts had broad public support. At the beginning of 1996, 4,400 individuals throughout South Africa were asked whether they would support Mandela if he opted for South Africa’s direct participation in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents, or 62 percent, said ‘yes’. Moreover, 75 percent favoured the SANDF playing an active role in maintaining stability in southern Africa, 63 percent believed the SANDF should defend the borders of other countries in the region, and 73 percent agreed that

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<sup>7</sup> *Defence in a Democracy: White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa* (Pretoria: Republic of South Africa, 1996), Ch.4.5.1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 4.8-4.10.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, Chapters 4.5.2 and 4.5.3.

South Africa should help train other military personnel in the region.<sup>10</sup> Interpreting the results, Jakkie Cilliers, Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies (South Africa), said: 'Despite the cost and pitfalls of regional peacekeeping... South Africans believe that South Africa's security cannot be pursued in isolation from its neighbours, and they support the concept of collaborative security in southern Africa.'<sup>11</sup>

Accordingly, when Christopher announced the United States' plans for an ACRF, many thought Mandela's response would be favourable. As has been mentioned, this was not the case. At a joint press conference with Christopher in Cape Town, Mandela did acknowledge that the ACRF idea had 'quite a lot of potential', even going so far as to say that 'the fact that the leader of the west should be concerned about what is happening in Africa is a source of satisfaction to me'. But this was to be as gracious as he was to get regarding the American idea. As long as the US was punting the plan alone, Mandela had said, it would fail to have 'credibility'. Then, in a tone that barely veiled annoyance, Mandela stated:

We are a part of the UN. We are part of the Organisation of African Unity. If we are asked by these organisations, of which we are members, and if we have the capacity, we will discuss the matter with the minister of defence, with the head of the defence force... and with Parliament. And wherever we feel it is absolutely necessary for us to make a contribution, we'll do so.

We are quite aware that, especially in our region, no military initiative can succeed without the involvement of South Africa and we say so not to boast but because it is reality. If we are asked by international bodies of which we are members to make a

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<sup>10</sup> 'Opinion Favours Active Defence Role for South Africa', a poll conducted by the Institute for Defence Policy and the Human Sciences Research Council, in *Africa News*, 6 August 1996.

<sup>11</sup> 'Most S. Africans Back Overseas Peacekeeping Operations', *Xinhua News Agency*, 10 June 1997.

contribution, I am sure we will be keen to do so.<sup>12</sup>

In their own right, but especially when measured against the expected shows of warmth such state visits normally entail, Mandela's words were harsh. Nevertheless, it was with some satisfaction that South African policy makers watched Mandela all but 'hand Christopher his hat' on the ACRF issue.<sup>13</sup> Due to the impact reputation was having in South African foreign policy, Christopher's message had appeared particularly arrogant and condescending. The United States had once again made a plan unilaterally, many South Africans felt, excluding the very government(s) for whom the ACRF idea was to benefit, not to mention on whose shoulders the hard chore was to be born. That US foreign policy makers had unexpectedly and publicly 'unveiled' their ACRF plan -- as guests in South Africa, mind you -- had only made matters worse as it implied that they had assumed that their South African counterparts would fall obediently in to line behind the idea. In the words of one influential foreign policy consultant: 'South Africans take great pride in extending extraordinary hospitality to visitors. Yet, they expect a certain level of respect and gratitude. It was as if Christopher had been invited in to Mandela's house, then when offered a chair on which to rest, he had proceeded to tell his host what kind of chair he should have and where it should be in the room.'<sup>14</sup> A Department of Foreign Affairs official put it more succinctly: 'What really rankled us was not the proposed ACRF itself, but the fact that it

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<sup>12</sup> 'Missionary Zeal Keeps the US in Africa', *Business Day* (South Africa), November 1996, p.7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> From a personal interview with Garth Le Pere, Director of the Foundation for Global Dialogue (a South African foreign policy think tank), conducted on 24 March 1997 at the Foundation for Global Dialogue, Johannesburg, South Africa.

was, apparently, being imposed on us.<sup>15</sup>

But if South African foreign policy makers felt that the US was trying to impose its will on them in regard to the ACRF, it paled in comparison to what was to come. When Washington learned from documents leaked to the press that the South African cabinet was contemplating approving the sale of military equipment to Syria, US officials reacted strongly. An unidentified administration official commented: 'We certainly ought not to put into the hands of state sponsors of terrorism -- in this case the Syrian government -- lethal weaponry. And that is the core of the American concern as we look at this question.' Nicholas Burns, spokesman for Secretary of State Warren Christopher, said: 'We are deeply concerned... It would be extremely serious if these sales actually occurred.' Speaking on behalf of the president, Clinton's press secretary stated: 'We think it is a very bad idea... We urge the government of South Africa not to go through with the sale. We have confidence the government of South Africa understands the seriousness of the issue.' The 'seriousness' to which he was referring was laid out in no uncertain terms: 'Both the Foreign Operations and Foreign Assistance Acts prohibit forms of US assistance to governments which supply lethal equipment to Syria. South Africa is one of our largest aid recipients.<sup>16</sup> Any country

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<sup>15</sup> From a personal interview with Bennie van Rensburg, Department of Foreign Affairs America Desk Officer, conducted 25 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>16</sup> Washington's development aid to South African non-governmental organisations and other groups stood at approximately R500 million (US\$108 million) in 1996, and around R400 million (US\$86 million) had been earmarked for 1997. Total bi-lateral aid to the South African government, as promised by Clinton in 1994, was to be near R2.5 billion (US\$540 million), to be used for housing and other social needs (Source: 'SA Ruffles Feathers', *The Sowetan*, 15 January 1997, p.11A).

that does sell arms to state sponsors of terrorism exposes itself to US law.<sup>17</sup>

However, Pretoria's response via the Office of the President was unequivocal: 'We don't like grandstanding and they (US foreign policy makers) should not do that... The Americans are not going to guide us, they are not going to tell us what to do. We don't like being shouted at. We hope that they would know that it is not the right way of dealing with us... We don't shout at them when they are doing things.'<sup>18</sup> Mandela himself made a very public claim of defiance, stating: 'We will never allow any support or assistance from any country, no matter how powerful it is, to dictate our foreign policy, nor allow any country to violate our sovereignty and undermine our national pride.'<sup>19</sup> Even a week on, as some within Washington and Pretoria's foreign policy establishments were attempting to make sincere amends to ease tensions, Mandela was determined to drive his opinions home. He said: 'There is no country that will dictate to South Africa. What will be decided upon (in regard to the Syrian arms sale) will be in the interest of South Africa and South Africa alone.'<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, South Africa did have a substantial interest in seeing the Syrian arms sale go through. The one Syrian order was to be for R3-billion (US\$645 million) -- more than twice as much as South Africa's entire defence exports for 1996, which had stood at R1.3

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<sup>17</sup> Quotes are from the article 'SA Ruffles Feathers', *The Satan*, 15 January 1997, p.11A.

<sup>18</sup> 'S. Africa Rejects US Threat on Syrian Arms Deal', *Reuters North American Wire*, 14 January 1997.

<sup>19</sup> 'Mandela's Diplomatic Roller Coaster Hits Middle East', *Reuters*, 15 January 1997.

<sup>20</sup> 'US to S. Africa: Halt Weapons Deal to Syria', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 22 January 1997, p.1.

billion (US\$280 million), and most certainly would have added to the 50,000 jobs the industry already provided.<sup>21</sup> But once again attention has to be given to becoming 'just another country' and reputation. Some South Africans felt slighted because the Americans were clearly valuing interests in the Middle East over the good the sale could do for South Africa. Above and beyond this, many speculated that the US was not being completely honest about its motivations. Might the US, the largest exporter of arms in the world, want to constrain a competitor, they asked? And could this be a part of a larger agenda?<sup>22</sup>

To answer these questions, South African policy makers noted two facts: first, in 1997 the US was the only country still to have a selective arms embargo in place against South Africa; and second, though Pretoria and Washington had been negotiating over it, US government lawyers were still pursuing a 1991 apartheid-days indictment against Armscor for sanctions-busting and smuggling American technology. As proof to what benefits maintaining sanctions and legal action provided for the US, the South Africans pointed out, one had to look no farther than Armscor's bid to sell a number of Rooivalk helicopters to the British -- helicopters being a segment of the arms market traditionally dominated by American (and European) manufacturers. Though the British had expressed avid interest in the South African Rooivalks, but equipped with an American-developed gunsight, the Americans had refused to issue the permit that would have enabled South African companies

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<sup>21</sup> 'SA in dilemma over proposed arms sales', *Star and SA Times International*, 29 January 1997, p.9.

<sup>22</sup> Demonstrating how competitive the South African arms industry was becoming, in 1997 Armscor officials said they were poised to boost their exports to well over two billion rand a year, equivalent to two percent of the global arms market (Source: 'South Africa: Arms Trade Seeks Profits in Moral Order', *Inter Press Service*, 6 March 1997).

to obtain the necessary parts. In the end, Armscor had lost the deal, probably at the gain of America's arms industry.

Yet as has been alluded to, fallout from the loss of the contract went beyond matters of international commercial competition. Because Armscor is South Africa's state-owned weapons-making, marketing, and export-licensing company, its successes and failures were intricately tied to 'sovereignty' and 'national pride'. By undercutting Armscor, then opposing the Syrian arms sale, some South African government officials surmised that America was engaged in a deliberate attempt to subvert and control South Africa's economic, and indeed political, destiny. It is in this light that one begins to understand why Mandela had made the claim that the 'efficacy and sovereignty of the South African government itself had been impugned following the Rooivalk deal, and why his responses had been so vehement when Washington expressed opposition to the Syrian sale.

Regardless of whether US officials were being completely honest about its motivations for resisting the sale, or if South African speculation was well founded, key players in the international system let their feelings be known with their feet, so to speak. As the row between Pretoria and Washington gained in intensity, the South African bond market began to stumble. Summarising the correlation, one South African columnist, Simon Barber, noted: 'Piss off the richest, most powerful nation on earth, and not only do you become suspect to its own capitalists, but the cost of your money becomes dearer as the superpower's friends and clients begin to see you as flaky.'<sup>23</sup>

The timing of events between the Syrian arms row and the decline in the value of South African government bonds proved to be a wake-up call for sections of the South

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<sup>23</sup> Simon Barber, quoted in the *Reuters Financial Service* wire, 15 January 1997.

African foreign policy establishment. An understanding was dawning that reputational responses could have tangible, detrimental effects. From this arose a reflective concern that South African foreign policy had become dangerously ad hoc, that off-the-cuff recriminations and decisions had increasingly come to replace measured policies and statements. The trepidation was that, in so doing, South Africa had hurt, or was hurting, its overall international efficacy. In short, it was the beginnings of the realisation that in the 'post-1994, post-euphoria context', reputational posturing and profile could be no substitute for pragmatic policy and action.

It was this realisation which determined the tone and course of events when South African Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki hosted US Vice President Al Gore for a meeting of the US-SA Binational Commission (BNC) in February 1997.<sup>24</sup> While numerous opportunities had been laid for confrontation because of the prevalence of the Syrian arms row, it was clear from the beginning that Mbeki and Gore were keen to ease tensions between the US and South Africa. Proving as much, Gore said: 'Friends will sometimes have disagreements. Friends work through their disagreements in a mutually respectful way... It's not for me to speak on a decision that is South Africa's.'<sup>25</sup> For his part, Mbeki was quoted as saying: 'No two countries would agree on everything, but we agree on most things that

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<sup>24</sup> The BNC, as it was founded after Mandela's visit to Washington in 1994, paired six South African government ministries with their equivalent in Washington. Mbeki and Gore were the co-chairs, and each headed his respective country's delegation during twice-yearly, alternating visits to the US and South Africa.

<sup>25</sup> 'Gore mum on SA arms deal', *The Citizen* (South Africa), 17 February 1997, p.11A.

matter... (The proposed Syrian arms sale) has not been a threat at all to our relationship.<sup>26</sup> It was in this spirit a reconciliation that at the end of Gore's visit he and Mbeki announced that they had been able to negotiate an end to the US indictment against Armscor for its past activities. Furthermore, a face-saving, joint *communiqué* was released regarding the proposed Syrian arms sale. The *communiqué* announced that the final decision on the sale would rest with Mbeki, but South Africa would 'consult Washington before making a final decision'.<sup>27</sup> In the end Mbeki's answer came from his refusal to bring the matter up publicly again, remarking that 'certain issues are best discussed in private'.<sup>28</sup> As a result, the matter eventually faded from public view and in to history.

In hindsight the events surrounding the February 1997 BNC meeting proved to be a watershed in South African foreign policy not because of what they resolved or accomplished, but because they signalled what was to come. Following the February 1997 BNC meeting, South African foreign policy, including towards Africa, was to become rather like London's underground system in that it would be twin-tracked<sup>29</sup> with an electrified third rail. The 'first track' was to be primarily Mbeki. The 'second track' was to be comprised

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<sup>26</sup> 'Protecting Pretoria: U.S., S. Africa Cozy Despite Arms Flap', *Chicago Tribune*, 15 February 1997, p.3.

<sup>27</sup> 'South Africa Moves to Calm Tension with United States', *ABC-CLIO, Inc.* (United States newswire), February 1997.

<sup>28</sup> 'SA, US play cards close to chest', *Star and SA Times International*, 19 February 1997, p.1.

<sup>29</sup> The idea for calling South African foreign policy 'twin-tracked' comes from a 7 January 1997 article written by Donald McNeil for *The Sowetan* entitled 'SA's struggle with foreign policy'. The article opens by saying: 'As South Africa struggles to develop a foreign policy in the post-apartheid era, it seems to be running its diplomacy on two separate tracks.'

of Mbeki and Mandela and supported by Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad, and much of the rest of the foreign policy making establishment. The 'third rail' was to consist almost entirely of Mandela. As one would expect based on the profiles, personalities, and dynamics involved, each 'track' and the solitary 'rail' was to have distinct characteristics and causes.

In regard to the first track of South African foreign policy, it was significant that the South African-US Syrian arms row had fallen to Mbeki, and that he had handled it in the way he had. While it was an open secret prior to the row that it was Mbeki who was running the day-to-day affairs of the government<sup>30</sup>, the Syrian arms row was the first high-profile confirmation that he was to have an influential hand in international matters as well. Moreover, in utilising more traditional rhetoric and channels of diplomacy, combined with a healthy dose of personal interaction through the BNC, Mbeki had made a clear move away from foreign policy influenced by reputation. In part this was necessary -- Mbeki, after all, did not have the stature of Mandela -- but it was also evidence of a belief gaining popularity in certain foreign policy circles.

At its essence, the growing view maintained that South African foreign policy had to be tied to addressing domestic disparities -- a theme that had been reiterated many times

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<sup>30</sup> Arguably, Mbeki had better political training than Mandela, particularly in terms of international affairs. Mbeki, after all, had spent most of his life abroad during the anti-apartheid struggle, first as a student in England, but then as the head of the ANC's international relations organisation. In contrast, Mandela had spent 28 years in prison before his release in 1990. In several personal interviews, Department of Foreign Affairs officials said that Mandela and Mbeki were aware of this, and this is, in part, why Mandela had assumed a role of 'Director of the Board' for the South African government, choosing to focus on national reconciliation, and Mbeki had assumed the role of the day-to-day manager.

since 1994. But additionally, the growing view recognised that the dividends associated with 'Mandela mania' were becoming fewer and farther between, and similarly, that South Africa was inescapably subject to international forces that granted few favours. For example, in the honeymoon period of 1995, some R20 billion (US\$550 million) of foreign capital had flowed in to South Africa; but in 1996 the inflow of funds had almost dried up, and the rand had tumbled by nearly 28 percent against the US dollar.<sup>31</sup> These events could not be attributed solely to bad fortune or coincidence. To this was an acceptance of the paradoxical fact that while South Africa in 1997 had an economy about the size of Belgium's and a location north of Antarctica on a troubled continent, it was still an African giant politically, militarily, and especially economically. A South Africa that failed to come to terms with its situation and self, so the thinking went, risked marginalisation. If South African foreign policy makers hoped to advance South African interests, they had to establish better priorities, and to pick and choose their issues and moments carefully.

Of course there is a distinction between comprehending complex dynamics and being able to convey them clearly. As the chief advocate of the emerging line of thinking in the first track of South African foreign policy, Mbeki succinctly captured its essence in a speech in the United States on 19 April 1997 when he spoke for the first time of an 'African Renaissance'. The African Renaissance he envisioned was a 'sustained movement towards the elimination of failed systems and violent conflicts... of the establishment of genuine and stable democracies in Africa', and the creation of conditions conducive for 'rational business decisions and long term investments'. This was the only way, Mbeki stressed, that 'people's basic needs in jobs, welfare, education, health, and the alleviation of poverty' could begin

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<sup>31</sup> 'Facing the New Global Realities', *Financial Times* (London), 22 April 1997.

to be met. While the speech could have been appreciated for its eloquence, for many in the international community it was the pragmatic content that appealed most to them. Mbeki was speaking in a language that showed he had a clear idea where he thought South Africa and Africa should go, and how to get there.<sup>32</sup>

When the vision of Mbeki was paired with the charisma and stature of Mandela, thus creating the second track of South African foreign policy, it proved to be extremely complimentary. For example, Mbeki had spoken of an Africa ‘readying itself for growth and development, fuelled by her own efforts’; Mandela had spoken of an Africa able ‘to come into her own, to take her destiny into her own hands in order to better the lives of her people rather than to suffer perpetual marginalisation and continue as supplicants with begging bowl in hand’.<sup>33</sup> However, as President of the Republic and the continent’s most recognised and respected voice, Mandela had failed to outline adequately how this was to be done. In this regard Mbeki’s African Renaissance provided tangible means for the ends they both desired. ‘It is clear to all of us that we cannot achieve this sustained rate of development,’ Mbeki said, ‘unless Africa succeeds to attract the necessary international private sector capital and directs such domestic capital as it can generate to productive uses.’<sup>34</sup> For this to happen, he surmised that Africa had to ‘resist all tyranny, (and) oppose all attempts to deny liberty’, and to promote the ‘liberalisation of trade, (and) the reform of financial, commodity, and other

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<sup>32</sup> Quotes are from the transcript of ‘Address by Executive Deputy President Thabo Mbeki’, delivered to the Corporate Council on Africa’s ‘Attracting Capital to Africa’ Summit on 19 April 1997, Chantilly, Virginia, USA.

<sup>33</sup> ‘President Mandela Addresses the National Assembly of Mali’, *Africa News*, 8 March 1996.

<sup>34</sup> *Op. cit.*

markets.<sup>35</sup>

Conversely, despite the fact that Mbeki was increasingly assuming international and domestic political responsibilities, and though he had a definite agenda, he did face very real constraints. Namely, he was the Deputy Vice-President -- by definition, not the top man on the totem -- and he lacked the international profile and reverence of Mandela. Accordingly, having Mandela visibly and vocally on-side was tremendously helpful because it was Mandela who was constitutionally and emotionally most able to marshal and mobilise South African resources. Needless to say, when Mandela spoke of 'a renaissance that must mean that Africa refuses to be a passive onlooker in a changing world', for example, it did much in terms contributing to the Renaissance's legitimacy, visibility, and indeed, efficacy.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, when Mandela and Mbeki committed themselves in April 1997 to mediating a resolution of the six-month-old rebellion in Zaire, the feeling was that the second track of South African foreign policy was moving promotion of one aspect of the Renaissance from the rhetorical. Indeed, analysts pointed out that South Africa was finally assuming its 'moment in the diplomatic sun'<sup>37</sup> and 'cutting its teeth on a major African political

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted from the transcript of 'Address by Executive Deputy President Thabo Mbeki', delivered to the Corporate Council on Africa's 'Attracting Capital to Africa' Summit on 19 April 1997, Chantilly, Virginia, USA.

<sup>36</sup> 'Mandela Says Africa's Renaissance Time Has Come', *Reuters North American Wire*, 19 May 1997.

<sup>37</sup> 'Mandela Dons Mantle of Africa's Mediator', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1 April 1997, p.7.

problem'.<sup>38</sup> The process began when Mbeki approached the rebel leader Laurent Kabil and the head of state Mobutu Sese Seko. With Mandela's endorsement Mbeki reportedly offered Mobutu 'a golden exile' in South Africa if he were to hand over the reigns of power. Mobutu, though, was not tempted. Next, Mbeki and Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad changed tacks and began working with Mohammed Sahnoun, the UN and OAU Special Representative for the African Great Lakes Region. In so doing, they managed to bring representative's of Zaire's warring factions together for face-to-face discussions in South Africa. These meetings, however, also proved unfruitful. Undaunted, South African foreign policy makers then drafted a number of proposals for cease-fires and for the peaceful transfer of power which Mbeki duly delivered in a flurry of shuttle visits. These, too, were set aside. Still South African foreign policy makers pressed on, maintaining contact with the various parties in the hopes of facilitating dialogue. Commenting on why South African foreign policy makers were undeterred, Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad said: 'We understand the significance of Zaire to all of us. Africa is now in a position where it is confidently beginning to say we can have an African Renaissance and an African renewal. But if we continue to have conflicts... we will not be able to achieve this vision of ours.'<sup>39</sup> Quite clearly, South African foreign policy makers had become convinced that Zaire was a pivotal first step in the likely legitimacy and success of the Renaissance.

It was South Africans' high level of commitment to fostering 'African leadership in African affairs' as a part of the Renaissance which eventually brought Mandela himself to

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<sup>38</sup> 'South Africa: Mbeki Takes Care in Zaire', *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 5 April 1997.

<sup>39</sup> 'Mandela Lauded for a Long Shot', *Washington Post*, 6 May 1997.

the combatants at the end of April. From a South African combat-supply and ice-breaking vessel anchored at Pointe Noire, Mandela prodded and cajoled, waited and hoped, as he tried to arrange a meeting between Mobutu and Kabilia. Perhaps symbolic of the fact that this was South Africa's first major post-1994 diplomatic foray in southern Africa, a number of obstacles emerged. Firstly, Mandela's satellite phone kept going out, interrupting conversations with Mobutu and Kabilia at crucial points as details for a meeting were being negotiated. Then, when Mobutu did agree to come to the ship, a South African official admitted that they had failed to realise that Mobutu, aged 66 and having recently undergone prostate cancer surgery, was incapable of walking the 31 steps from the dock to the deck of the South African vessel. Nevertheless, solutions were found: in regard to the phone, Mandela's staff requisitioned a more reliable one from journalists; and when Mobutu arrived, he was driven up a ramp and into the ship's hold for a short walk to an elevator.<sup>40</sup>

However, the greatest difficulties proved not to be those surrounding equipment and logistics, but rather, those that Kabilia created. With his troops bearing down on Kinshasa, Kabilia became so emboldened that he began to list conditions he wanted met before he would fly to the ship to begin talks. These reportedly included that none of Mobutu's family were to be on board, that all Zaireans had to be unarmed, and that the ship had to sail in to international waters. In the process of conveying his demands, Kabilia kept Mandela and Mobutu waiting and resulted in Mbeki shuttling several times by helicopter between Pointe Noire and the northern Angola town of Soyo, where Kabilia was. After waiting an entire day (Mobutu having slept on board the South African ship), Mandela finally lost his patience. An aide recalled that Mandela had bellowed 'get him (Kabilia) on the line', then proceeded

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<sup>40</sup> 'Mandela Lauded for a Long Shot', *Washington Post*, 6 May 1997.

to tell Kabila: ‘You come here now or I’m leaving. I’m not prepared to accept these conditions.’<sup>41</sup> In the end Kabila acquiesced and met Mobutu. Yet, for all the efforts, the meeting lasted a mere 80 minutes and no agreement was reached.

Ultimately, Mobutu fled Zaire for Morocco and Kabila took the country by force. Though many observers felt that South Africa had failed in terms of foreign policy objectives, there may have been less-obvious successes. Greg Mills, Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, stated: ‘South Africa’s diplomacy may, perhaps, have helped to prepare a relatively “soft landing” of Kabila’s military in Kinshasa, by helping to persuade Mobutu’s generals not to defend the city, by preventing them from recruiting South African mercenaries, by urging Mobutu allies not to intervene and, perhaps, by helping convince Mobutu that the game was up.’<sup>42</sup> For a country that was already in shambles from over three decades of dictatorial kleptocracy, Zaire could have ill afforded any more destruction. Arguably, South African foreign policy, motivated by the Renaissance vision, had played a part in keeping Zaire from falling in to absolute ruin -- which it most assuredly would have done had the Mobutuists fought to the last. In turn, this had probably prevented even more Zaireans from streaming out of their country and in to others with innumerable regional consequences.

But if observers had a difficult time measuring the successes of South African policy in Zaire, the benefits of South Africa’s third rail of foreign policy, comprised almost entirely by Mandela alone, were often even harder to assess. As has been alluded to, Mandela had

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<sup>41</sup> ‘Mandela Lauded for a Long Shot’, *Washington Post*, 6 May 1997.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Seeds of an African Renaissance?’, *Jane’s Intelligence Report*, Vol.4, no.10 (1 October 1997): p.12.

shown a tendency to surprise when it came to international affairs. It was he who had abruptly announced in November 1996 that South Africa would drop diplomatic recognition of Taiwan in favour of China. Similarly, it was Mandela who, after months of quiet diplomacy and sending emissaries to plead for an end to repression, did a sudden about-face and lashed out at Nigerian president Abacha for executing the human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others, ultimately calling for sanctions against Nigeria and its expulsion from the Commonwealth. But it was Mandela's resolute loyalty and interaction with the world's 'pariahs' which most confounded.

Mandela had reiterated time and again that 'the enemies of the west are not my enemies',<sup>43</sup> affirming that he would not turn his back on anyone who had stood by him during the struggle against apartheid. Yet, following Mandela's mediation efforts in Zaire as a part of the second track of South African foreign policy, many in the international community were hoping that Mandela would begin to adopt an ever more prudent stance in his international relations, that he would begin to downgrade his allegiance towards, and associations with, the likes of Cuba, Iran, Indonesia, and Libya. If anything, in the last half of 1997 Mandela became even more dedicated to affirming his long-standing ties to these countries and their leaders.

To these ends, over the course of a few weeks in October and November 1997 Mandela conducted two state visits to Libya, agreed to conclude two finance agreements with Iran, had South Africa's UN Ambassador deliver a castigating speech about US sanctions against Cuba at the United Nations, and awarded the Order of Good Hope, South Africa's highest civil award, to Colonel Qadhafy of Libya and President Suharto of Indonesia. It was,

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<sup>43</sup> 'Arms for Syria?' *The Economist*, 18 January 1997, p.59.

in the words of one reporter, 'a diplomatic hat-trick with... "pariah" states'".<sup>44</sup> Naturally, some western governments -- particularly the US and Britain -- publicly questioned the 'level of diplomatic contact (South Africa) wants to have with regimes prepared to pursue such rogue behaviour as supporting international terrorism'.<sup>45</sup> One Western diplomat commented: 'For forty years South African foreign policy was a single issue. Now it's multi-issue. (Mandela) has a steep learning curve making the transition from an ideological stance to pragmatism... It is certainly noble but unrealistic, this notion that (he) can have universal relations.'<sup>46</sup> Mandela's response: 'Can you imagine what they would say if I said Boris Yeltsin should not visit Albania? They would say I am the most arrogant black man. Notwithstanding the changes in the world, the contempt for blacks is still deep-seated. I am master of my own fate.'<sup>47</sup>

Fate, however, was not the greatest force at work in formulating Mandela's views and in determining his subsequent actions. Indeed, Greg Mills believed Mandela's international exploits had a very calculated purpose. He said: '(Mandela's relations with pariah states) reflects a need to be seen to be impressing on local and African audiences an independent

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<sup>44</sup> 'Friends of Mandela Aren't US Friends', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 November 1997, p.5.

<sup>45</sup> For a listing of Moammar Qadhafi's alleged and known human rights abuses -- the underpinnings for the West's view of Libya as a 'pariah', and the basis for United Nations sanctions -- see 'Mandela Won't See This Libya', *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 23 October 1997.

<sup>46</sup> 'Mandela Won't See This Libya', *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 23 October 1997.

<sup>47</sup> Quotes are from 'Mandela Begins Visit to Gadhafi As US Protests: Calling Washington's Policy Arrogant, South African Heeds Sanction on Libya', *International Herald Tribune*, 23 October 1997, p.1.

foreign policy. Especially in southern Africa, South Africa is viewed warily because it is the newest and biggest kid on the block. Cocking your nose at the West is one way to get some sympathy and possibly to gain some trust.<sup>48</sup> To this was the added factor that Mandela might have been hedging bets for the future. For example, in providing Qadhafy with multiple photo opportunities by visiting him twice in less than a month, Mandela had made the equivalent of a political 'I.O.U.' 'Having done this bit,' said Tom Lodge, a professor in political science at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, 'there is a strong sense Qadhafy owes him. He won't have to go back to collect the check.'<sup>49</sup>

Supporting these suppositions that the third rail was grounded in pragmatism, one of Mandela's spokespersons argued that Mandela's visits and statements 'may appear conspicuous if anally(s)ed from the sideline, but he does not engage in showmanship... (He wants) to promote South African interests'.<sup>50</sup> These interests, of course, ranged from meeting very basic domestic needs right up to macro-economic imperatives, and the simple fact was South Africa had found some solutions by dealing with those whom the West had refused to. For example, a number of Cuban doctors were working in South Africa, helping to address the national shortage of trained physicians and filling gaps in demand by agreeing to work in difficult areas. Similarly, countries like Iran (from whom South Africa bought 65 percent of its oil in 1996) offered countless trade opportunities because of the west's embargoes; indeed, in the period between 1994 and 1997 the value of imports from Iran had

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<sup>48</sup> From a personal interview with Greg Mills, National Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, on 26 March 1997 at the South African Institute of International Relations, Johannesburg, South Africa.

<sup>49</sup> 'For Mandela, A Balancing Act', *Boston Globe*, 6 November 1997, p.A1.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

almost tripled and exports doubled.<sup>51</sup>

A Department of Foreign Affairs official remarked: 'It's a very fine balance between losing more traditional and economically strong allies and doing what you think you should do.'<sup>52</sup> While it would be wrong to say that South African foreign policy makers had set out to create a twin tracked-third rail foreign policy, by late 1997 they had settled on one. What resulted was a situation where Mbeki was able to interact with top-level officials of the world's economic and military superpower through the BNC,<sup>53</sup> and to talk of 'capital investments' and 'global trade' with the rest. Simultaneously, Mandela was able to make steady references to South Africa's commitment to the Organisation of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement, and even the so-called 'pariahs'. Occasionally the disparate foreign policy parts would merge, as they had in regard to Zaire under the African Renaissance vision. What many had to question was whether such a precarious balancing act was sustainable. To this Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad provided an answer of sorts when he remarked: 'We're having to, as we say, learn as we're running.'<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> 'SA's Struggle with Foreign Policy', *The Sowetan*, 7 January 1997, p.11.

<sup>52</sup> From a conversation with Sheldon Moulton, Department of Foreign Affairs America Desk Officer, on 25 March 1997 at the Union Buildings, Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>53</sup> In July 1997, Mbeki headed a delegation of 10 South African cabinet ministers (a full third of the cabinet), two deputies, and more than 100 other officials for a fifth meeting of the US-SA Binational Commission in Washington. For reference, see 'Mbeki to lead controversial S. African delegation to US', *Agence France Presse*, 25 July 1997, and the editorial 'United States and Africa; A special relationship', *Cape Argus* (South Africa), 2 August 1997.

<sup>54</sup> 'Friends of Mandela Aren't US Friends', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 November 1997, p.5.

## Focus Summary

The focus period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa was one where key officials in Washington and Pretoria were able to move beyond merely reacting to events, and instead, began to formulate clearer goals for the future. For the Clinton administration, nearly all goals were tied to its enlargement doctrine -- a doctrine which maintained that the US had an obligation, and indeed an inherent national interest, in broadening and deepening democratic and economic liberalism. Moreover, because it could become a major emerging market, enlargement was to be pursued even in places like Africa, a continent historically considered (at least by most Americans) at the fringes of international affairs. Yet, administration officials realised that any of their grand enlargement aims in regard to Africa would be in vain unless they could change the enduring perception most Americans had of Africa as a 'bad neighbourhood'.

In broad strokes, administration officials strived to paint Africa as a continent that had turned the corner; figures highlighted included that by 1995 two-thirds of African states were engaged in democratic reform, that the continent as a whole was posting economic growth above 4 percent, and that American business interests on the continent were yielding an average return of 30 percent, versus the worldwide average of 11 percent. More specifically, US foreign policy makers emphasised that one African country was a star amongst stars when it came to what was 'right' and 'good' with Africa: South Africa. South Africa was held up as an exemplary example of democratic and economic practise in Africa. It was also identified as a 'Big Emerging Market' (though less emphasis was given to the fact that it was the *only* African country designated as such) in no small part, administration officials were quick to point out, because of its commitment to democratic and economic liberalism (i.e., enlargement).

So convinced were US foreign policy makers that South Africa embodied much of what was positive, and could be, with Africa, a US-South African Binational Commission (BNC) was founded in March 1995, the only high-level binational entity of its kind between the US and a sub-Saharan country. Furthermore, when US Secretary of State Warren Christopher conducted a five-nation African tour in October 1996, he spent much of his time in South Africa, and it was there where he unveiled hopes for the creation of an 'African Crisis Response Force' (ACRF). Prior to its unveiling, it was generally assumed in Washington that Pretoria would be receptive to the ACRF. This was good, because it was also assumed that the idea would be overwhelmingly dependent upon South Africa, one of the few African countries US foreign policy makers perceived as possessing the necessary moral weight and resources to make the idea a viable reality. All of these assumptions boded well for enlargement, as one thought underpinning the doctrine was that democracy and economic prosperity best flourished in the absence of conflict; the ACRF, naturally, was to help end African conflicts, a goal with which US foreign policy makers could hardly imagine their South African counterparts taking issue.

Thus, American officials were taken aback when their South African counterparts expressed considerable reservations, and even outright criticisms, of the ACRF. While not opposed to some of the ACRF's principles in theory, South African officials resented that the ACRF-idea was being imposed *on* them, they felt, instead of created *with* them. Consequently, South African support for the ACRF did not transpire and the idea was stillborn. But before US foreign policy makers could fully understand why their initiative failed, they found themselves engaged in a shouting match with Pretoria regarding the possible sale of South African weapons to Syria. Near the end of the focus period, the row

overshadowed nearly all else in US foreign policy towards Africa. This left American policy makers wondering when, or even if, some significant successes might result from their toil.

Like their American counterparts, frustration was an emotion not at all unknown to South African officials -- especially at the start of the focus period. In 1996 alone, they had endured criticism of South Africa's 'two Chinas' policy, faced bitter trade negotiations with the European Union, and been unable to respond effectively to crises in the Great Lakes area. Whereas the rest of the international community was beginning to treat South Africa more as 'just another country', many South African officials still believed that, having pulled off 'The South African Miracle' in April 1994, their country deserved a larger degree of latitude than most other countries for a longer period. This gap in perception had implications.

When Secretary of State Christopher unveiled the American ACRF idea unexpectedly during his visit to South Africa, South African officials, already emotionally charged, felt that a line had been crossed. To them, the American plan -- made without input from the very African government(s) on whose shoulders it was apparently to be born -- was the epitome of arrogance. Naturally, many South Africans felt that their policy makers' responses of thinly-veiled annoyance rather than support for the ACRF idea was justified -- even in light of the fact that in May 1996 a *Defence White Paper* had pointed out that peacekeeping and conflict resolution was crucial to South Africa's national security, and two-thirds of a national survey had favoured South Africa's direct participation in African peacekeeping operations. Likewise, when American officials expressed displeasure with a *proposed* (and not an actual) South African sale of military equipment to Syria, some officials in Pretoria, Mandela among them, made claims that the South African government's efficacy and sovereignty were being impugned. Whether it was coincidental or not, as voices

rose in Washington and Pretoria, a corresponding drop occurred in the South African bond market. In turn, cooler heads prevailed; South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and US Vice President Al Gore were able to amicably resolve the row in the course of a February 1997 BNC meeting.

In the wake of the resolution of the Syrian arms row, South African foreign policy took on a sophistication of sorts. Deputy President Mbeki courted western involvement in South Africa and Africa, and reenforced his country's commitment to pursuing sound democratic practises and rational economic policies. President Mandela, on the other hand, made overtures of friendship abroad, including with the west when protocol demanded, but largely with fellow African states and states considered less than respectable to many in the international community (e.g., the Lybias, Cubas, and Irans of the world). Lastly, Mbeki and Mandela worked jointly on occasion, merging Mbeki's practicality with Mandela's stature on selected issues. Yet regardless of which aspect one looked at regarding the three-fold focus South African policy had assumed, one vision resonated throughout: an 'African Renaissance'. In sum, the renaissance vision was one where Africa, in Mandela's words, ceased to be a passive onlooker in a changing world. To these ends, in April 1997, South African policy makers attempted to mediate an end to a six-month-old rebellion in Zaire.

So committed did South African foreign policy makers become to ending the fighting in Zaire that when one initiative would fail, they would move on to another undeterred; for example, South African efforts progressed from correspondence and telephone calls with proposals for peace, to hosting discussions in South Africa, to Mandela and Mbeki actually going to the warring parties themselves. Ultimately, however, South African arbitration failed and the Zairean government was forcibly overthrown. Whereas what had been gained

and what had been lost was obvious to the warring parties in Zaire, the same could not be said for the South African peace initiative. Clearly, South African policy makers had not been able to engender a negotiated settlement; still, a case could be made that they had fostered a 'soft landing' where Zairean government forces had not fought to the last, and rebel forces had shown some magnanimity in victory. In other words, South African foreign policy was in a state of illucidity.

During the focus period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa, each country was very prominent with the other's policy makers. The nature of the prominence, though, was complicated. In Washington, South Africa was viewed first as an essential example to be used to counter the 'bad neighbourhood' image most Americans had of Africa, and then as a wanted ally in the Clinton administration's enlargement plans for the continent. In Pretoria, American engagement was welcomed, but only to a point; when US policy makers appeared to press too hard with their agendas, many South African policy makers' inclination was to resist what was being proposed. The situation was ironic: both US and South African policy makers understood that their countries' African aims could be furthered with the other country's help; however, these same policy makers often wondered if immediate challenges arising from their interaction could ever be overcome so that their respective longer-term goals would be realised.

It was the uncertainty as to the tenability of US and South African policy makers' aims in regard to Africa which brought the focus period to a close. In the place of uncertainty emerged an understanding that it was all well and good to formulate clear objectives for the future and to focus on them, yet it was pointless unless strategies necessary for their attainment were employed in the here-and-now. In the next period, aims and

strategies would coalesce, and US and South African foreign policies towards Africa would become strikingly similar.

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## PERIOD FOUR: COALESCENCE

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*The coalescence period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa was one where past lessons, present realities, and future aims merged.*

*For US foreign policy makers, the start of the period proved that they had learned that being overly assertive and openly confrontational in African affairs could result in frustration (e.g., the failure of the African Crisis Response Force proposal, and the US-South African 'Syrian arms row'). As a result, a pattern emerged where, whenever possible, they sought to convey American goals and ideas, but also sought to underscore how these had been, or would be, shaped by Africans themselves. This was done in two US-South African Binational Commission meetings, during an African tour by the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, and in several fora which brought American and African policy makers together. Indeed, when the 'Africa Growth and Opportunity Act' (AGOA) emerged in Congress, it reflected the empathetic and collaborative tone present in US foreign policy towards Africa. Still, the AGOA's contents were not as innocuous as its title might suggest: American loans, aid, and projects were to be doled out only to African countries which pursued 'growth oriented strategies' and freer trade. And in this regard, the AGOA proved to be a harbinger.*

*The AGOA provided the Clinton administration with substance -- that is, a 'carrot' and a 'stick' -- to round out its African agenda. Administration officials began to speak of high-level meetings between American policy makers and African ministers, of the granting of US trade preferences, of American efforts to reduce African debt -- but all was to be contingent upon economic reform and freer trade on the part of Africans. Specific American benefits would only be extended when reforms were undertaken, and US foreign policy makers would engage and listen only to those African leaders pursuing 'aggressive growth-oriented policies'; for all others, exclusion and/or marginalisation was an implied possibility. Ultimately, the economic reform and trade mantra was carried with proselytising confidence to Africa by the highest of US foreign policy officials: first, by Secretary of State Madeline Albright in December 1997, and then by President Clinton himself in late March/early April of 1998. Tellingly, Albright's and Clinton's itineraries were structured to highlight which countries and leaders were, in their eyes, the economic exemplars of the continent.*

*In South Africa, indications early on in the coalescence period were that the government was not that at odds with the overall thrust of US foreign policy towards Africa. At the heart of this congruence was the South African government's 'Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR)' strategy, unveiled in June 1996. GEAR set a target of ambitious economic growth and job creation through privatisation, increased competitiveness, fiscal prudence, and the corresponding enticement of foreign investment. In brief, it was a programme that promised, through liberal economics, the achievement of a better future. However, the promise often lacked conviction -- a factor of government policy makers needing to undertake pragmatic reform while still appearing true to old allies, neighbours,*

*and regional organisations. For example, even though the South African government was a signatory to World Trade Organisation accords obliging it to broaden and deepen economically liberal rules of trade, the government still refused to abandon the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) which, in essence, was a discriminatory trading club. This reticence was related to countries' ironic stance of not wanting to see an end to SACU's all-important revenue-sharing arrangement -- enabled through South Africa's economic hegemony -- even as claims were made of southern Africa becoming 'a warehouse' or 'sales post' for South African goods.*

*The event which most encouraged the full-affirmation of key South African policy makers to the principles and mind-set of GEAR came in December 1997, when a 'Medium Term Budget Policy Statement' was released projecting unglamorous levels of growth. In response, Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki stated that his commitment to the fundamentals of economic liberalism and to the parameters of fiscal prudence set out in GEAR were 'set in stone'. President Mandela, too, had similar views. In June 1998, Mandela unveiled what he hailed as the largest development initiative on the African continent: the Maputo Corridor Project, connecting South Africa's economic heartland to the port of Maputo in Mozambique. At an elaborate unveiling ceremony, Mandela not only spoke of the obvious benefits of increased trade flows and of 'spin-off' enterprises, but of how the Project had built a 'platform of infrastructure' -- by offering government grants equalling no more than 10 percent of the total cost of the project -- while the remaining 90 percent of the project's costs were to be met through private capital. Praise was then given for other prospective cross-border projects in Angola, Zambia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and the Congo, as was encouragement for African governments to take the necessary steps to entice investors.*

*In sum, the coalescence period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa was one where key American and South African foreign policy makers articulated clear objectives, and coupled these objectives with the employment of strategies most likely to ensure their attainment. While the individual strategies of Washington and Pretoria often varied, remarkably, given the individual courses of US and South African foreign policies with regard to Africa in the 1990s, the ultimate ends became strikingly similar. On both sides of the Atlantic, an intense desire prevailed to increase trade and commercial links, and to integrate better Africa into the global economy.*

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## Chapter Nine: Liberal Economics Preponderate

When Vice-President Gore's trip to South Africa in February 1997 concluded on a positive note, with Mbeki and him exchanging warm words and handshakes, US foreign policy makers were relieved. Having faced South African aversion to their proposed African Crisis Response Force (ACRF), then having become embroiled in a shouting match with Pretoria because of the possible sale of South African-manufactured arms equipment to Syria, the affirmative conclusion of the meeting assured them that no irreparable harm had been done to US-South African relations. Nevertheless, a lesson had been learned: if US foreign policy makers hoped to advance agendas of mutual benefit in Africa, a concerted effort had to be made to connect intent, perception, and action.

It was in the hope of better connecting the three that led President Clinton in March 1997 to assign Marshall McCallie, an experienced Foreign Service Officer and former US ambassador in Africa, to lead an inter-agency working group (IWG) regarding an ACRF. As directed, the IWG consulted at length with African governments, the Organisation of African Unity and the UN, as well as Britain and France. By May, the IWG's efforts had resulted in the ACRF being renamed the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI).<sup>1</sup> While the name shift was subtle -- done largely in deference to African sensitivities -- it emphasised a clean break from mistakes and emotions surrounding the ACRF proposal and enabled some

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<sup>1</sup> For further details on the ACRI, see 'African Crisis Response Initiative', an on-the-record briefing delivered by Marshall McCallie and David E. McCracken on 28 July 1997 in Washington, D.C. The briefing can be found in its entirety at [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/aci\\_briefing970728.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/aci_briefing970728.html). Also, see Marshall McCallie's comments in 'Building an "African" or an "African-Intervention Crisis Response Force"?' in *Improving African and International Capabilities for Preventing and Resolving Violent Conflict*, pp.144-146.

headway to be made.

Firstly, opposition stemming from apprehension about American hegemony subsided as dialogue clarified how an African force would fall under the aegis of the UN or the OAU. Secondly, some of the ACRI's harshest critics, convinced that it was another American pie-in-the-sky idea, were placated; the Clinton administration obtained some US\$15 million for the initiative in fiscal year 1997, a modest sum, but guaranteed seed money nonetheless.<sup>2</sup> Of greatest importance though, at least in terms of the ACRI's potential in Africa, was that South Africa seemed to be warming to the initiative. Indeed, when Deputy President Mbeki came to Washington in July for a fifth US-South Africa Binational Commission (BNC) meeting, he made the heartening statement that South Africa 'would appreciate the support from the developed world' to ensure that Pretoria had the means to finance peacekeeping operations. Mbeki also announced that South Africa and the United States had agreed to form a bi-lateral committee on defence co-operation.<sup>3</sup>

Pleased with what they saw as progress from seeking and obtaining in-put in regard to the ACRI, US foreign policy makers were compelled to consider that adopting a similar manner for other African foreign policy themes and issues might also result in gains. Accordingly, a subtle change occurred in the tone and content of US foreign policy towards Africa. Ironically, the first person to articulate, and demonstrate, US foreign policy makers' adjusted thinking was not one of their own *per se*, but Hillary Clinton, the First Lady. During a six-nation African tour at the end of March 1997, Mrs. Clinton laid out her

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<sup>2</sup> 'Change in US Position on African Intervention Force Noted', *Le Figaro* (Paris), 24 June 1997, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> 'Clinton, Mbeki Discuss New US Trade Push in Africa', *Agence France Presse*, 31 July 1997.

husband's hopes for the continent time and again. However, she was equally persistent in pointing out that she was in Africa, in part, to serve as her husband's eyes and ears. What African concerns and views she saw and heard, Mrs. Clinton promised, she would relay back to the President.

In subsequent weeks, US foreign policy makers began to mirror the format and manner Mrs. Clinton used: first conveying specific American goals and ideas, but then underscoring how these had been, or would be, shaped by Africans themselves. For example, in a 'US State Department Town Meeting' in New Orleans, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs William Twaddell spoke of the need 'to press the remaining autocracies and kleptocracies of Africa to move toward reform'. But he then went on to pledge that the United States would 'engage African governments and citizens' in order to assess what the 'priorities were for many Africans'.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, when foreign policy makers gathered with politicians at a meeting in Washington called 'The National Consultation on US Policy Toward Africa', they did so with the express purpose of exploring 'ways to strengthen US aid, trade, and investment ties and support for human rights and democracy in Africa'.<sup>5</sup> Yet, as one attendee pointed out, real and meaningful consultation required the engagement of Africans -- hence the value of having guests like South African Trade Minister Erwin present. 'We want to work in effective partnership with the new democracies in... Africa,' the attendee said, 'keeping faith with African people in countries... struggling for democracy.'

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<sup>4</sup> United States State Department, 'Remarks at a US State Department Town Meeting', transcript of a speech by William Twaddell, Deputy Secretary for African Affairs, delivered in New Orleans on 7 April 1997 (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> See 'United States and Africa; US State Legislators Meet on Africa', *Africa News*, 23 April 1997.

To achieve these goals, US policy making must itself become more inclusive and more democratic.<sup>6</sup>

Just as US foreign policy makers began to project more assertively the desire for Africans' inclusion, events in Africa provided a test of resolve. With the rebels of Laurent Kabil swallowing up entire swaths of Zaire from the east, President Mobutu, a Cold War ally of the United States for decades, was in trouble. Still, few voices of support for Mobutu were coming from the continent. Knowing this, would the US side with an old ally, or would it favour, as one journalist asked, 'the new mood, with African heads of state rather than western governments shaping the course of events'?<sup>7</sup> The message for Mobutu -- who during his 32-year reign had not had one new hospital or school built in his country -- from Deputy Assistant Secretary Twaddell was ominous: 'Africans are tired of regimes that (leave) them each generation worse off than its predecessor... They are demanding an end to wasteful prestige projects and lavish leadership lifestyles.'<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, American officials weighed in on one hand with implicit approval for the lead the South Africans had taken in seeking a negotiated settlement ensuring Mobutu's departure. On the other, they tacitly sanctioned rebel leader Kabil's armed struggle by turning a blind eye to the fact that Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Zambia were all helping Kabil -- usually with material, but

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<sup>6</sup> Quotes are from Jennifer Davis, Africa Fund Executive Director, found in 'United States and Africa; US State Legislators Meet on Africa', *Africa News*, 23 April 1997.

<sup>7</sup> 'Africa's Turn at Top Table; Clinton is Setting Out to Lift Debt Burden of Saharan Fringe', *The Guardian* (London), 20 June 1997.

<sup>8</sup> United States State Department, 'Remarks at a US State Department Town Meeting', transcript of a speech by William Twaddell, Deputy Secretary for African Affairs, delivered in New Orleans on 7 April 1997 (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, 1997).

possibly with personnel too -- and that 'crack Rwandan troops (were) fighting alongside Kabilia's rag-tag rebels.'<sup>9</sup>

While events in Zaire demonstrated that US foreign policy makers were willing to respond in congruent fashion to the desires of African leaders, they were also to show that, on some matters, there were limits. After Kabilia came to power in May 1997, he registered alarm in Washington by placing a ban on all political activity -- an ironic point considering that he had renamed Zaire the *Democratic Republic of Congo* (DRC). The action prompted US Secretary of State Madeline Albright to warn: 'We have hopes, but we are watching very closely the actions of Kabilia.' Pretoria, though, was of the opinion that it would be 'suicidal' to allow immediate political activity in a country that had been ruled by a dictator for more than three decades. 'It was quite reasonable for him to ensure law and order were stabilised before (allowing) all political parties to function,' Mandela said, adding that he thought Kabilia was an 'outstanding' and 'dynamic' leader who was handling the transition from a dictatorship 'in an excellent manner'.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, John Dinger, a US State Department spokesman, had this to say: 'The United States hopes this will be a short-term ban. Clearly, free political activity is essential as the Congo embarks on a democratic transition which will lead to elections.'

Ultimately, it was not events on the ground in Africa in 1997 which most animated US foreign policy towards Africa. Rather, it was to come from within the United States. On

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<sup>9</sup> 'Africa: New Club of African Leaders the Event of 1997', *AAP Newsfeed*, 24 December 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Quotes are from the article 'Mandela Standing as Kabilia's Ally; S. African Leader Drawing Criticism in US, at Home', *Baltimore Sun*, 29 May 1997, p.1A.

27 April 1997 several members of the African Trade Caucus, a bi-partisan group supporting the opening of American markets to African goods and services, introduced the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in Congress.<sup>11</sup> In brief, the AGOA sought to: 1) lift American import duties on African apparel and textiles; 2) expand the number of sub-Saharan African countries eligible to fall under the US's General System of Preferences for developing nations; 3) create a US\$650 million investment fund (to be administered by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation); and 4) establish a US-Africa Trade and Co-operation Forum to improve communication on trade issues.

As the only continent (with the exception of Antarctica, for obvious reasons) for which the United States had no trade policy, the AGOA's drafters hoped that its passing would fill a void.<sup>12</sup> But in the broader sense, they wanted to move Africa beyond its pigeon-hole status within the context of budget battles and programmes, to carving a legislative niche in and of its own right. As one analyst reported: 'For Africa's potential to be realised... (it) must be mainstreamed as a "regular" component of policy, instead of being pushed behind an "Iron Curtain" of ignorance and exceptionalism. Only then will Africa be discussed seriously, criticised seriously, praised seriously, and engaged seriously just like any other region.'<sup>13</sup> The AGOA promised to encourage just such 'seriousness' by giving Africa some semblance of permanence in American policy.

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<sup>11</sup> 'United States and Africa; US Trade and Development Initiatives', *Africa News*, 25 July 1997.

<sup>12</sup> 'Is It a Carrot or a Stick?', *National Journal*, 18 April 1998.

<sup>13</sup> 'Prepared Testimony of David F. Gordon on Behalf of the Overseas Development Council Before the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, and the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade' (Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, 21 May 1997).

Though the AGOA's drafters were motivated to correct what they perceived to be a major oversight in American policy, they also realised that the success of the AGOA was tied to the appeasement of neo-realists on Capitol Hill. Most of the AGOA's drafters -- who, like Representatives James McDermott and Charles Rangel, tended to be long-time Africa advocates and veterans of Washington beltway politics -- had toiled over a similar act, the 'African Growth and Opportunity: The End of Dependency Act' of 1996, only to see it die at the committee level in the previous Congressional session.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the AGOA introduced in 1997 included a number of revisions and concessions (or, if viewed from another perspective, a number of expectations and demands). Namely, the AGOA stated that African countries would have to agree 'to lower quotas and tariffs', to pursue 'growth-oriented policies', and to explore the creation of free trade areas in order to benefit from some of the Act's provisions, like direct loans for small and medium-sized businesses, and funds for infrastructural projects.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps unsurprising for a bill drafted to appeal to everyone from Africa advocates to isolationists, views of the AGOA were varied. One of the bill's drafters, Representative James McDermott, made the claim that the bill was to 'do something substantive for Africa'; by contrast, an aide for one Senator commented that the bill would 'throw a bone to the Africans -- but not a very big bone'.<sup>16</sup> Even amongst traditional allies there were splits. Some African-American politicians, for example, decided that they would oppose the legislation in order to protect domestic labour interests; others had endorsed the bill,

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<sup>14</sup> For a summary of the 1996 bill see 'USA: Move to Expand US-Africa Trade', *African Economic Digest* (14 October 1996).

<sup>15</sup> 'US-Africa', *Agence France Presse*, 22 May 1997.

<sup>16</sup> 'Is It a Carrot or a Stick?', *National Journal* (18 April 1998).

believing it would strengthen America's ties with Africa and lay the groundwork for even more legislation.

It is not without irony that the Clinton administration, having often been critical of Congress for failing to follow the administration's lead in regard to Africa, essentially hijacked the AGOA — or more specifically, its contents -- for its own in May 1997. In the run-up to the Group of Eight (G8)<sup>17</sup> summit in the US city of Denver, Clinton announced an initiative called the Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa (PEGOA). Echoing the AGOA's contents but not referring to the bill directly, Clinton stated that the Partnership proposed to give African nations greater access to US markets through tariff and quota reductions, and to boost US investment in African infrastructure and private enterprise through the establishment of two funds, to be under the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, totalling US\$650 million. However, there was a condition he said: all was to be contingent upon African nations 'pursuing a course of political and economic reform'.<sup>18</sup> For those African countries demonstrating 'the greatest commitment to economic reform', Clinton added, again mirroring the contents of the AGOA, invitations would be extended to participate in annual economic meetings with US officials at the ministerial level, and extra trade preferences would be awarded.<sup>19</sup> It was only then that Clinton offered a variation in his Partnership from the AGOA; the variation: that the United States would 'work to eliminate bi-lateral debt for the poorest of Africa's reforming nations, and maintain our leadership in

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<sup>17</sup> In previous years the G8 had been the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies, or G7. In 1997, though, Russia was invited to attend.

<sup>18</sup> 'United States and Africa; Clinton-Africa "Partnership" Draws Praise', *Africa News*, 19 June 1997.

<sup>19</sup> 'US-Africa: Clinton's Plans for Africa', *Inter Press Service*, 17 June 1997.

the effort to reduce their debts to the multi-lateral institutions'.

In recognising that the AGOA's contents provided a way to bridge the divide between Africa optimists and sceptics, then seizing them for their own, Clinton and administration officials positioned themselves brilliantly. White House staff knew there was a chance that the AGOA could make it through the House and Senate and ultimately on to the President's desk for his signature. If this were to happen, they would be able to claim that the Partnership had played a part in advertising the bill's merits and securing bi-partisan support; indeed, based on the low level of awareness most Americans had regarding legislation relating to Africa, the perception might even be that it was the administration which had led events. More importantly, they could say that the administration had successfully advanced enlargement, which promised to better the lives of an untold numbers of Africans *and* Americans.<sup>20</sup> However, should the AGOA fail, claims could be made that, once again, the administration had done everything that was politically prudent, only to be stymied by acrimonious quarters of Congress.

In the immediate term, however, it was not the success or the failure of the AGOA which most concerned White House staff. Instead, it was the potential furor Clinton's Partnership 'requirement' could cause: the condition that African nations had to implement economic reforms to become eligible for new programmes. The contention of this point was

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<sup>20</sup> True to form, an administration official in July 1997 testified: 'The administration's initiative is itself partly the result of ideas that were developed first in Congress, and in Africa itself. Our thinking drew strength and direction from co-operative, bi-partisan efforts on this subject... We look forward to continuing this important work in the same spirit of collaboration...' (Source: 'Testimony of Treasury Deputy Secretary Lawrence Summers, 31 July 1997, Before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry', *Africa News*, 31 July 1997).

obvious when, shortly after Clinton announced the PEGOA, one African lobbyist remarked: 'The United States should not insist that African nations introduce specific economic policies... The country's citizens -- not the US government -- (should) determine the most appropriate economic development path for their country.'<sup>21</sup> Yet even on this point Clinton demonstrated an uncanny ability to turn political events in his favour.

One of the most pressing problems of African leaders was their countries' overwhelming debt obligations. Illustrating how extensive these had become, in the period from 1980 to 1995 sub-Saharan African debt had ballooned from US\$84 billion to US\$223 billion. In 1997, debt payments by sub-Saharan nations claimed 80 percent of the region's foreign exchange earnings,<sup>22</sup> and for 28 countries of 48 in the region, their individual amassed debt equalled more than twice their annual income from exports of goods and services.<sup>23</sup> Thus, when Clinton pledged to work with African countries to tackle the debt crisis as a part of his PEGOA, he was able to dampen criticism that he was proposing a one-sided partnership, and instead, exhibiting sincere American empathy for African concerns. Furthermore, as the host of the G8 summit in Denver, Clinton was better placed than his critics to 'spin' the merits of the Partnership and to broadcast them widely. As *The Guardian* in London observed:

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<sup>21</sup> Quote is from Terence Miller, Director of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Justice and Peace Office, in 'United States and Africa; Clinton Africa "Partnership" Draws Praise, Criticism', *Africa News*, 19 June 1997.

<sup>22</sup> 'Clinton Goes Big-Game Hunting in Africa', *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 20 March 1998.

<sup>23</sup> 'Prepared Statement of Imani Countess, Executive Director of the Washington Office on Africa before the House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Trade' (Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, 1 August 1997).

Every summit has to have its crowning success, a diplomatic triumph that makes the whole razzmatazz worthwhile. In the early 1990s it was help for Russia and in the mid-1990s it was keeping the GATT trade liberalisation talks on the road. Anti-corruption drives, crackdowns on drug smugglers, action on terrorism have all had their moment. Now it is Africa's turn. President Bill Clinton has decided that the 1997 summit will be remembered for finding an answer to the debt burdens crippling countries in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>24</sup>

Following the high-profile unveiling and advocacy of Clinton's PEGOA, itself spawned from the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act of 1997, a noticeable shift occurred in US foreign policy. Specifically, nearly all goals and ideas came to be centred around economic reform and trade. Indeed, in the coming months US foreign policy makers were to make a marked return to these issues as a part of Clinton's enlargement vision, stressing its benefits for both Americans and Africans, and even subordinating other aspects of enlargement, like democratic reform, to the subject. Jesse Jackson, appointed as the President's Official Envoy to Africa in October 1997, confirmed the change when he stated: 'We now have a new government policy and a new visionary leader in President Clinton who sees a new US-Africa relationship based on reciprocal trade... It's indeed a new day.'<sup>25</sup>

For US foreign policymakers, focussing on economic reform, trade, and related issues offered a number of advantages on the ground. First, it was much easier to speak of how

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<sup>24</sup> 'Africa's Turn at Top Table; Clinton Setting Out to Lift Debt Burden of Saharan Fringes', *The Guardian* (London), 20 June 1997, p.27. Despite Clinton's desire to make African debt a major issue of the 1997 G8 Summit as a part of his PEGOA, to say that Clinton's Partnership failed to impress other G8 leaders in Denver would be an understatement. In a pre-summit briefing, Jacques Santer, the European Commission President, said: 'I am very glad to see that the US, too, is showing interest in developing relations with Africa;' another European official commented: 'The Americans have at least discovered there is an African problem.' (Source: 'US Summit Partners See Little Value in Africa Initiative', *Agence France Presse*, 21 June 1997.)

<sup>25</sup> 'US Interest in Africa Takes a New Turn in 1997', *Agence France Presse*, 17 December 1997.

trade could benefit an African leader's countrymen, for example, than of how his political departure could do so. Second, trade offered US foreign policymakers both a 'carrot' and a 'stick' -- in the first instance by enabling them to refer to specific benefits the US would extend when reforms were undertaken, and in the second, by suggesting exclusion and/or marginalisation if not. Finally, trade could even be used in US foreign policy makers' commitment to the format of conveying American goals and ideas, but then underscoring how these had been, or would be, shaped by Africans themselves. Simply put, it offered them a 'selective strategy': the African leaders to whom US foreign policy makers would listen most closely, and from whom in-put would be sought, would be the ones pursuing 'aggressive growth-oriented economic policies'.<sup>26</sup>

Rallied around trade and its related issues -- heartened that it offered them a diplomatically viable topic, incentives and leverage, and parameters for seeking and obtaining acceptable consultation -- in the second half of 1997 US foreign policy makers felt they had an African agenda of unmatched maturity in the 1990s. From this arose an unprecedented, almost proselytising confidence.<sup>27</sup> The newly-appointed Assistant Secretary

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<sup>26</sup> Quote is from Charlene Barshefsky, US Trade Representative, in 'Africa's Turn at Top Table; Clinton Setting Out to Lift Debt Burden of Saharan Fringes', *The Guardian* (London), 20 June 1997, p.27.

<sup>27</sup> This confidence can be attributed a number of inter-related variables. A significant one was that in 1997 the American economic boom was in its seventh year. From this came a triumphalism conveyed in headlines like 'US Economic Success Sends Out Political Ripples Around the Globe' (*International Herald Tribune*, 19 May 1997, p.5). Furthermore, the dynamics of the upper echelons of the US foreign policy establishment had changed. Madeleine Albright, confirmed as Secretary of State in 1997, was much more assertive than Warren Christopher, her predecessor. Likewise, Susan Rice, newly-appointed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was no pushover -- 'Susan Rice is Young, Whip-Smart and Fiercely Ambitious', (*Business Day* (South Africa), 23 March 1998) said one headline. Rice, at 33,

of State for African Affairs, Susan Rice, conveyed this when she said:

In the new Africa, the people will insist on determining their own destiny. There are new leaders whose primary interest seems genuinely to be the welfare of their own citizens. Bold market reforms are spurring unprecedented rates of growth. In short, the era of African dependency is ending... We seek to accelerate Africa's full integration into the global economy. As the world forges closer economic ties, Africa must not be left behind. Integrating Africa into the global economy entails simultaneous pursuit of several core activities: promoting economic reform, trade, and investment...<sup>28</sup>

If Rice, at the highest Africa post, could not exhibit any clearer American intent, the US foreign policy establishment as a whole could. In her time as Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright had become personally and publicly involved with African affairs only once, when she had conveyed US displeasure at the fact that Kabilia had banned all political activity in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus, when Albright not only picked up the African economic reform/trade banner, but began to carry it, and carry it to places such as the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community, it was a bold statement. At the United Nations, at the first-ever United Nations Security Council Ministerial Session on Africa, chaired by Albright herself, she said:

Today, we know that in Africa, as elsewhere, the primary impetus for economic growth must come from the private sector. That requires strategies that make indigenous investment rewarding and foreign investment welcome. It requires privatisation, more open markets, and regulatory and financial reform... Today we know that aid cannot substitute for reform.<sup>29</sup>

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had credentials that included a doctorate in international relations from Oxford University, where she was a Rhodes Scholar, and a posting as the National Security Council's Senior Director for Africa before assuming her Assistant Secretary of State for Africa position. As an interesting biographical fact, Albright was also Rice's godmother -- literally -- and principal mentor.

<sup>28</sup> ‘United States and Africa; Assistant Secretary Rice Calls for New Policy “Paradigm”’, *Africa News*, 24 October 1997.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations, ‘Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright: Statement at the United Nations Security Council Ministerial on Africa’, a statement released

With even greater certainty, Albright told SADC officials:

...We (have) undertaken the most fundamental change in our policy toward Africa since the independence movement blossomed on that continent four decades ago. And that change is clearly embodied in the African Growth and Opportunity Act... It reflects our strategy for placing trade and investment at the forefront of our economic relations with Africa.

The benefits contained in this bill are not entitlements. They will not be available to every country. Some object to that. But, quite frankly, we would be doing no favour to Africa or ourselves if we failed to recognise in our laws the strides that African reformers are taking. This bill is designed to encourage African governments to place their economies on sound financial footing; to allow private enterprise to function within the rule of law; to permit outside investment; and to liberalise trade.<sup>30</sup>

If actions truly do speak louder than words, it follows then that when Albright conducted a tour of Africa in December 1997,<sup>31</sup> it conveyed that US foreign policy makers were serious about their African agenda. In terms of convictions, seriousness was displayed when Albright called in at the Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa to give a speech to the Economic Commission for Africa. There she stressed the American mantra of economic reform and trade. As for selectivity, American seriousness was equally apparent. During her visit, Albright met 'Africa's new breed of leaders' who were, first and foremost, pursuing economic reform or liberalism, or secondly, who were perceived as being able to affect the star performers.<sup>32</sup>

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by the Office of the Spokesman, United Nations Security Council Ministerial on Africa, New York City, 25 September 1997.

<sup>30</sup> Southern African Development Community, 'Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright: Remarks to Southern African Development Community', a statement released by the Office of the Spokesman, Southern African Development Community, New York City, 25 September 1997.

<sup>31</sup> For details of Secretary Albright's African tour in December 1997, see the homepage at <http://secretary.state.gov/> with corresponding links.

<sup>32</sup> 'Africa's "New Breed" of Leaders Put to Test', *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 23 December 1997.

US interest and intent in Africa reached a peak when Clinton conducted a six-nation tour between 23 March and 2 April 1998. His visit, in the words of Albright, was 'the first comprehensive trip to Africa ever undertaken by a sitting American President',<sup>33</sup> and at 11 days, was the longest foreign excursion of Clinton's presidency. The length of his visit, Clinton hoped to show, was proportionate to the promise he saw in Africa, where 'from Cape Town to Kampala, from Dar es Salaam to Dakar, democracy is gaining strength, business is growing, peace is making progress'.<sup>34</sup> His optimism was further buoyed by the fact that the House of Representative's had passed the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act on to the Senate the week before -- a sure sign, he indicated, that Americans were ready to broaden and deepen US engagement with the continent, and subsequently, to work with Africans to consolidate the gains of the new era at hand.<sup>35</sup> Clinton's direct personal engagement, however, was to follow closely the recently-established pattern in US foreign policy towards the continent.

By making stops in Botswana, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda,

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<sup>33</sup> United States Department of State, 'Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright: Address on US Policy Toward Africa, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, 19 March 1998', a transcript released by the Office of the Spokesman, US Department of State. While Albright was correct to say that Clinton's visit was 'the most extensive', he wasn't the only sitting US President to visit Africa: Franklin Roosevelt had made a refuelling stop in 1943, Jimmy Carter had visited Nigeria and Liberia in 1978 and attended Zimbabwe's independence ceremony in 1980, and George Bush had paid a brief visit to US troops in Somalia in 1992.

<sup>34</sup> From a personal interview with Francis Kornegay, Jr., Director of the African-American Institute, on 8 May 1997 at the African-American Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

Clinton and his entourage, comprised of 981 people<sup>36</sup>, wanted to spotlight some of the exemplars for the rest of the continent -- 'the harbingers of an African awakening'.<sup>37</sup> To this select group his message was: 'It used to be that when US policymakers thought of Africa -- if they thought of Africa -- they said "What can we do for Africa or about Africa?" They were the wrong questions. The right question today is what can we do *with* Africa.'<sup>38</sup> The answer, he maintained, was in Africans and Americans establishing a base of reciprocal respect, a partnership, and to 'build on it with trade and investment'. However, in line with the empathy he wanted to project, Clinton did concede that 'trade cannot replace aid', and he promised to work with Congress 'to restore (US) development assistance to Africa to its historic high', and to ask 'for enough debt relief this year to wipe out all bi-lateral concessional debt...' Of course the offer was a catch-22 for most African leaders. Clinton noted, in this case in the same sentence as the debt relief offer, that his efforts would only be on behalf of 'the fastest reforming poor nations', and it would only be leaders of reforming nations who would be invited to a summit meeting in Washington 'so that we can lay specific

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<sup>36</sup> The *Africa News Service* noted that the entourage 'was comprised of advance people, security specialists, stenographers, telephone operators, pilots, diplomats, co-ordinators, facilitators, cooks, assistants to the president, deputy assistants to the president, special assistants to the president, reporters and technicians, 10 spin doctors, 16 members of Congress (12 of whom were African Americans and 2 Republicans), 3 Cabinet members, business executives (one of them Nigerian-born), labour leaders, mayors, church leaders, Clinton pals, and his special envoy for democratising Africa, the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr... (all on, or in,) four Boeing 747s, four helicopters, and four armoured limousines'. (Source: 'Reflecting on Clinton's Africa Safari', *Africa News Service, Inc.*, 14 July 1998.)

<sup>37</sup> 'An Arkansan in Africa', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 March 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Author's italics. Source: 'Africa Dreams', *Newsweek*, 6 April 1998, p.28.

plans to follow up on this trip and the announcements I have made on it.'<sup>39</sup>

While Clinton wanted his economic reform and increased trade message to be one heard throughout the continent, where he chose to deliver the message made another statement. Out of 11 days in Africa, only four hours were spent in Rwanda, for example, and these were in an aircraft hanger at the airport. Five days, however, were spent in southern Africa, with four of those in South Africa. Southern Africa generally, and South Africa especially, had Clinton's attention in regard to the future. Stating that Americans knew South Africa to be the political and economic anchor of the 'African Renaissance', Clinton told nearly 500 South African parliamentarians: 'America wants a strong South Africa. America needs a strong South Africa. We are determined to work with you as you build a strong South Africa.'<sup>40</sup> One columnist commented that Clinton's words were not only a goal, but a realisation that 'there is no 20th-century Africa, but South Africa'.<sup>41</sup>

It was more than a little worrisome to Clinton and other US foreign policy makers, then, when President Mandela said: 'Our people have welcomed President Clinton with open arms. This is one of our proudest moments... I hold him in high respect. (But) the fact that

<sup>39</sup> 'March 28 Remarks by President Clinton at the Opening of the Ron Brown Centre', a transcript released by the White House Press Office, 28 March 1998. In fairness, it should be noted that Clinton did make some 'non-concessional concessions' during his visit. These varied from the rhetorical -- that 'democracy takes many shapes and may take time to evolve', for example -- to the tangible, like US aid in the form of: 1) US\$120 million for education; 2) US\$75 million for malaria research; 3) US\$1.2 million for improving airport standards and security; 4) US\$2 million for a Rwandan genocide survivors' fund; and 5) US\$42 million to add to the total US bi-lateral aid given to Africa (Source: 'Clinton's African Tour', *Jakarta Post*, 27 March 1998).

<sup>40</sup> 'Clinton Praises Role Played by Mandela', *Irish Times*, 27 March 1998, p.10.

<sup>41</sup> Quote is from Thomas O'Dwyer's 'It Takes a Tour', *Jerusalem Post*, 27 March 1998, p.6.

we have respect for him does not mean we have no differences.' The bone of contention to which Mandela was referring was the very thing US officials were hoping would be at the heart of US engagement with Africa: the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, itself a reflection of the priority being given to economic reform and trade. 'This is a matter over which we have serious reservations,' Mandela said. 'To us it is not acceptable.'<sup>42</sup>

Exactly what was unacceptable was laid out by Deputy President Mbeki in an interview with the French quarterly *Politique Internationale*, some of which was broadcast on South African radio during Clinton's visit. During the interview, Mbeki insisted that Africa and South Africa alike needed trade *and* aid, not trade *instead* of aid, as the AGOA emphasised. 'It (the AGOA) is wrong,' Mbeki said bluntly. 'Africa needs both.'<sup>43</sup> Mbeki argued that if the South African 'economy today cannot generate the resources that are required to address all these urgent problems of poverty which face us', South African businesses could not be expected to compete against American producers, with infinitely more resources, in American markets. It stood to reason, Mbeki then added, that if this was the case with South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa's largest and most advanced economy, then it would also be true for other African countries.<sup>44</sup> When confronted with such South African concerns, some White House staffers' reactions were out of step with the empathetic tone Clinton's visit was meant to have; 'You gotta be kidding', reportedly, was one reaction.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> 'Warm Words from Clinton and Mandela -- But the Differences Show', *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 27 March 1998.

<sup>43</sup> 'It Takes a Tour', *Jerusalem Post*, 27 March 1998, p.6.

<sup>44</sup> 'Mbeki Challenges US Emphasis on Trade Rather Than Aid', *Irish Times*, 27 March 1998, p.10.

<sup>45</sup> 'Mandela Wary of Africa Bill', in *Journal of Commerce* (6 April 1998): p.4.

But for his part, at least publicly, Clinton tried to shrug off the differences, stating: ‘Like all partners, we cannot agree on everything. Sometimes our interests diverge, but that is the case even in family partnerships.’<sup>46</sup>

Given, Clinton’s nonchalance could have been in the name of diplomacy, but it also might have been due to confidence. In spite of the points of contention raised by both Mandela and Mbeki in regard to his PEGOA and the AGOA, indications were that they were not that at odds with the over all thrust of what was being proposed. Indeed, in terms of action, South African policy makers had begun to advocate and follow much of what the PEGOA and AGOA outlined long before either had been drafted, and irrespective of Clinton’s visit.

At the heart of this congruence was the South African government’s Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, unveiled in June 1996.<sup>47</sup> GEAR was the realisation by the South African government that though the 3 percent growth the economy had experienced in 1995 was an improvement over the past, it was inadequate for overcoming the disparities of apartheid. For example, with an economy growing at only 3 percent, the South African government estimated that unemployment would rise by an additional 5 percentage points by the year 2000, to 37 percent.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, when the rand tumbled in value against the US dollar by over 20 percent in 1996, some South African

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<sup>46</sup> ‘Clinton Tributes Fail to Win Over S. African MPs’, *Daily Telegraph*, 27 March 1998, p.18.

<sup>47</sup> The *Growth, Employment, and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy* (GEAR) document can be found in its entirety at <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/policy/growth.html>.

<sup>48</sup> Figures quoted are directly from the *Growth, Employment, and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy* (GEAR) document, which can be found in its entirety at <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/policy/growth.html>.

officials were made painfully aware that investors had doubts regarding the underlying fundamentals of the South African economy. GEAR was to address both.

GEAR set a target of achieving 6 percent real GDP growth and an increase in new job creation to an annual rate of 400,000 by the year 2000. The document's targets included the achievement of 3.8 percent growth in 1998/1999, 4.9 percent in 1999/2000, and 6.1 percent in 2000/2001, and keeping the national spending deficit under 4 percent of GDP in 1997/1998, and 3 percent in 1999/2000 and 2000/2001, respectively. These targets were to be met through privatisation, increased competitiveness, fiscal prudence, and the corresponding enticement of foreign investment. As a measure of the government's intentions associated with GEAR, within the first year officials rejected the introduction of a national minimum wage, and legislation that would have increased government spending in the hope of expanding the economy (both of which, government officials feared, would have led to undue inflationary pressures). Then, in early 1997, the South African government began to auction off to the private sector a long list of state-owned industries, including the national airline, airports, radio stations, the telecommunications utility, mines, and forestry operations.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of how moves associated with GEAR were to manifest themselves, here too South African and American policy makers shared a common view. The belief was that good-faith efforts to follow the prevailing principles of liberal economics would increase trade, and from trade, a better future could be achieved. One of the earliest and most adamant advocates in favour of trade was, unsurprisingly, Minister of Trade and Industry Alec Erwin, who made the claim that South Africa 'must engage... with these forces of

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'Buoyant Market Belie Challenges', *Financial Times*, 24 March 1998.

globalisation' in order to take advantage of 'new markets that did not exist before to our economy'.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, when South Africa took over the four-year Chairmanship of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in May 1996, Erwin was of the opinion that South Africa had been afforded a unique opportunity. 'The recent UNCTAD meeting (confirming South Africa's chairmanship) further exposed and consolidated our relationship with the developing and newly industrialised economies, whose markets we are now eyeing,' he said. 'We are elaborating appropriate strategies so that we can access their markets.'<sup>51</sup>

While the South African government looked for appropriate strategies, debating whether foreign policy should be 'up for sale'<sup>52</sup> -- that is, whether economics should figure prominently in South African foreign policy -- South African business interests formulated and implemented their own trade agendas quite successfully. Illustrating this success, in 1994 South Africa's total trade had consisted of R75,601 billion in imports and R90,133 billion in exports; only a year later, these figures had increased to R97,285 billion in imports and R102,323 billion in exports.<sup>53</sup> Though much of the total growth was from increased trade flows with the European Union, the United States, and Japan resulting from the dropping of sanctions, not all of it can be attributed to the normalisation of trade. South

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<sup>50</sup> *South African Senate Debates*, 4 June 1996, p.1769.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1790.

<sup>52</sup> J. Diescho, *The Limits of Foreign Policy Making in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1996), p.13.

<sup>53</sup> G. Mills, 'Leaning All Over the Place? The Not-So-New South Africa's Foreign Policy', a draft article intended to be published in *The South African Yearbook of International Affairs, 1997* (Johannesburg: The South African Institute of International Affairs, 1997).

African business interests had made real headway in penetrating markets where commercial links had been minimal or tenuous in the past. For example, between 1995 and 1996 South Africa's total trade with Latin America had increased by 26 percent, and non-military exports to the Middle East had grown by 88 percent between January and October of 1996 alone.<sup>54</sup> Yet even these numbers, at least in relative terms, were dwarfed by those evident in southern Africa.

It took seven years, from 1990 to 1997, for South Africa's annual trade volume with the southern African region to double.<sup>55</sup> However, in the year from the start of 1997 to the start of 1998, South Africa's annual trade volume with the region exploded, trebling from R2.1 billion to more than R6.5 billion.<sup>56</sup> Hand-in-hand with this exponential trade growth came a corresponding South African business presence that extended beyond product names and services. Between 1995 and 1997 some thirty South African firms invested over US\$2 billion in neighbouring countries,<sup>57</sup> and South Africa's top eight banks had come to represent

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<sup>54</sup> A. Cooper, 'The Multiple Faces of South African Foreign Policy', *International Journal* (Autumn 1998): p.716.

<sup>55</sup> 'South Africa to Benefit from Africa Trade Growth', *Xinhua News Agency*, 16 July 1997.

<sup>56</sup> 'Foreign Affairs Spending Slashed', *Business Day* (South Africa), 18 February 1998. Trade volume (while indicative of economic ties and production) is not always in and of itself a telling statistic. There is much to be learned, however, when trade volume is combined with a country's trade balance. South Africa in the twentieth century has consistently had a positive trade balance with southern Africa. Additionally, as noted in the paragraph corresponding to footnote #53, post-apartheid South Africa has managed an overall positive trade balance as well. Many South Africans considered their country's exponential growth in trade volume coupled with its positive trade balance desirable, and some reason for optimism.

<sup>57</sup> 'South Africa Invests 2 Billion US Dollars in Neighbouring States', *Xinhua News Agency*, 6 January 1997.

US\$6 billion of the total US\$8 billion of the capital in sub-Saharan African banks.<sup>58</sup> Whether they liked it or not, South African foreign policy makers had to acknowledge that economics was a major force. However, for reasons outlined in previous chapters, the evolution of South African foreign policy had not yet reached a point where all segments of the government could, or were willing, to show overt support for the primacy of economic issues.

One major constraint on South African policy makers was, unsurprisingly, the past. Not so many years before, in 1990, Mandela had said: 'The nationalisation of the mines, banks, and monopoly industries is the policy of the ANC and a change or modification of our views... is inconceivable.'<sup>59</sup> How things had changed by 1997. As the head of Mercedes-Benz South Africa remarked: 'Despite its socialist background, the ANC very quickly noticed that (nationalisation) was doomed to failure.'<sup>60</sup> Yet, there were still influential political movements -- namely, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) -- which continued to advocate interventionist government practises. In fact, in August 1997 COSATU leaders released their 'Programme for the Alliance', stating that the government needed to engineer directly 'employment, social transformation, and the delivery of services'.<sup>61</sup> Though obviously dedicated to GEAR, which

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<sup>58</sup> G. Mills, 'Leaning All Over the Place? The Not-So-New South Africa's Foreign Policy', a draft article intended to be published in *The South African Yearbook of International Affairs, 1997* (Johannesburg: The South African Institute of International Affairs, 1997).

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Ronaldo Munck, 'South Africa: The Great Economic Debate', *Third World Quarterly* (June 1994): p.205.

<sup>60</sup> 'Buoyant Markets Belie Challenges', *Financial Times*, 24 March 1998.

<sup>61</sup> 'Close the Wealth Gap, Warns Cosatu', *Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 8-14 August 1997.

embodied facilitative approaches to economic growth and job creation rather than outright interventionist redistribution, government officials were inclined to pay attention to these demands. COSATU and the SACP, after all, represented a significant and highly-active electoral base, and their respective leaders had been anti-apartheid allies with the ANC. Thus, while ANC government officials continued to make calls for a competitive economy, fiscal reform, and public sector restructuring, for example, they sought to balance these aims with remarks meant to assuage old friends who thought such aims ill-conceived. Summarising how the government was endeavouring to bridge the divide between pragmatic reform and 'struggle economics',<sup>62</sup> one ANC official said: 'The basic starting point of government policy has been that we must engage with these complex forces of globalisation. We cannot try and isolate ourselves from them... what our policies are trying to do is to minimise the impact of dangers in this system, and maximise the opportunities that may now open to us.'<sup>63</sup>

Yet subtle assurances were not often enough to soothe some of the government's more fiery critics -- critics who had begun to call for 'a people's budget', or for a break-up of the COSATU-SACP-ANC 'tripartite alliance'. As a result, dramatic gestures became a regular, and some would say necessary, feature in the political landscape. Some of the more prominent ones to emerge included a 'Labour Relations Act', the 'Basic Conditions of Employment Act', an 'Employment Equity' bill (proposing more extensive affirmative

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<sup>62</sup> 'Mandela Soft Pedals on Economic Policy', *Financial Times*, 17 September 1997.

<sup>63</sup> Quote is from Senator H.J.P. Lebona in *South African Senate Debates*, 4 June 1996, p.1769-1770.

action), and a 'jobs summit'.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, Mandela took it upon himself to affirm regularly and publicly that the government was not looking to privatise the bettering of South Africans' lives. For example, it was not solely because he wanted to boast, but because he wanted to calm acrimonious 'internal' forces like COSATU and the SACP (with the added goal of quieting 'external' political opposition like the National and Inkatha Freedom Parties) that in his opening address to Parliament in February 1997, Mandela pointed out that government programmes had provided, and were providing, school lunches for some 3 million children; 700,000 people had gained access to potable water, with another 6 million expected to do so by the end of the 1997; and more houses had been built than at any time in the country's history.<sup>65</sup>

Yet sometimes the South African government's dramatic gestures in response to domestic pressures were not so benign, at least to those outside looking in. Due to the scarcity of jobs in South Africa, a seething resentment of illegal migrants had grown.<sup>66</sup> As one South African street vendor was quoted as saying at a rally against foreigners: 'There's

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<sup>64</sup> 'Mandela Soft Pedals on Economic Policy', *Financial Times*, 17 September 1997.

<sup>65</sup> From a confidential personal interview with a Department of Foreign Affairs Desk Officer, conducted 25 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa. Specific quotes and figures are from 'Nelson Mandela: Opening Address to Fourth Session of Parliament, Cape Town, 7 February 1997', found in its entirety at <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/speeches/1997/sp0207.html>

<sup>66</sup> Indicative of how many illegal immigrants had probably made their way to South Africa, in the first nine months of 1998 the Consular Office of the High Commission in Harare, South Africa's busiest worldwide, issued a total of 136,400 visas to Zimbabwean citizens. Estimates put the level of Zimbabweans who entered South Africa between 1996 and 1997 on supposed trading missions and never returned to Zimbabwe at around 200,000 (Source: 'Zimbabwe: The Tragedy of Border Jumpers', *Inter Press Service*, 16 November 1998).

no jobs... These foreigners are still coming, putting pressure on us;’ a pamphlet echoed this sentiment by stating: ‘Do not buy from a foreigner as they take our money to their country. Foreigners must go.’<sup>67</sup> Acknowledging the proliferation of xenophobia, Mandela, at a September 1997 SADC summit, remarked that the issue of illegal migration ‘needs to be tackled with caution to avoid rebellion by irate unemployed South Africans’.<sup>68</sup> Soon after, the government redoubled its efforts to catch illegal aliens. By the end of 1997, 30,000 illegal Zimbabwean immigrants alone had been deported, and 15,000 more were to be ‘force marched’ home.<sup>69</sup> Needless to say, these tactics were not always well-received by South Africa’s neighbours who, facing their own, often worse, challenges, quietly supported citizens finding economic opportunity in South Africa.

Ironically, if South Africa’s neighbours viewed the Republic as a source of economic opportunity, that economic opportunity was also a familiar source of concern because it accentuated South African hegemony. To recant the level of South African economic dominance, in 1995 the Republic accounted for roughly 84 percent of southern Africa’s gross domestic product, and 76 percent of the region’s exports.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, in 1997 South African exports accounted for anywhere from 34 percent of Zambia’s total imports, to 36

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<sup>67</sup> “‘Foreigners’ Not Welcome on Pavements’, *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 21 November 1997. For more views on illegal migrants, see ‘SA is No “El Dorado” for Africa’, *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 15 September 1997.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in P. McGowan and F. Ahwireng-Obeng, ‘Partner or Hegemon? South Africa in Africa: Part Two’, in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (16 July 1998): pp.187-188.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Zimbabwe: The Tragedy of Border Jumpers’, *Inter Press Service*, 16 November 1998

<sup>70</sup> The World Bank, *World Development Report 1996* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1996), pp.202-219.

percent of Malawi's, and 52 percent of Zimbabwe's, with similar figures for other countries in the region. Conversely, only 2 percent of Zambia's exports, 9 percent of Malawi's, and 13 percent of Zimbabwe's exports made it to South Africa.<sup>71</sup> Historically, some of the disparities and associated fears of South African economic hegemony had been offset by the existence of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), itself an agreement between South Africa and Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Namibia (BLSN).

In brief, SACU was created in 1969 as a political tool meant to ensure formal links between South Africa and the region. While its purported goal was to facilitate the duty-free movement of goods and services between member states and a common external tariff against non-member states, its true purpose when founded was to buy political dividends for apartheid South Africa through generous compensatory mechanisms. At the heart of these compensatory mechanisms was a 'stabilisation clause' which, due to the trade disparities between South Africa and BLSN, guaranteed that BLSN were to receive between 17 and 23 percent of the value of their imports, dutiable goods, and duties paid from pooled SACU revenue.<sup>72</sup> All told, the formula had resulted in an estimated 77 percent 'loading factor' in favour of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Namibia.<sup>73</sup> Put another way, about one-third of the revenue generated by SACU went to BLSN, states that collectively generated only 7 percent of SACU's combined GNP and whose contributions equated into a mere 10 percent

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<sup>71</sup> International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1997* (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1997).

<sup>72</sup> For a more in-depth look at SACU, see John Burton's 'Short paper on the Renegotiation of SACU and the Free Trade Area between RSA and the EU' (Pretoria: Overseas Development Agency, 1995).

<sup>73</sup> E. Leistner, 'Renegotiating the South(ern) African Customs Union (SACU)', *Africa Institute Bulletin*, 30, 2 (1992), pp.211-232.

of SACU's pooled revenue.<sup>74</sup>

While BLSN governments had enjoyed the benefits of SACU's 'loading factor', they had simultaneously become quite dependent on the arrangement. By 1996, percentages of BLSN central government revenue from SACU were: Botswana, 16.3 percent; Lesotho, 50.6 percent; Namibia, 30.1 percent; and Swaziland, 50.1 percent.<sup>75</sup> Thus, when South African policy makers began to lean towards economic liberalism, embracing strategies like GEAR, there was a corresponding increase in SACU states' collective anxiety. Might South Africa unilaterally impose new conditions on SACU, some asked? In reality, the question was somewhat misdirected. Even as South African policy makers themselves tried to grapple with domestic economic priorities, they were being swept along by international economic developments, and it was these developments which most likely posed a greater threat to the SACU arrangement.

With the emergence of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) had come twenty-eight separate accords which had extended economically liberal rules of trade globally.<sup>76</sup> As a signatory to the accords, South Africa was obliged to: 1) rationalise and simplify its tariff structure from 10,000 to 6,000 categories; 2) increase the number of tariffs included in WTO negotiations from 58 percent to 98 percent of all tariffs; 3) replace all remaining quantitative controls with more universal duties; 4) reduce its maximum tariff levy from 100 percent to

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<sup>74</sup> John Burton, 'Short paper on the Renegotiation of SACU and the Free Trade Area between RSA and the EU' (Pretoria: Overseas Development Agency, 1995).

<sup>75</sup> *Business Day*, 9 September 1996.

<sup>76</sup> V. Cable, 'GATT and After', in *The World Today*, 50, 2 (1994): pp.26-28; also, see the World Trade Organisation's *The WTO Agreement: Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organi(s)ation* (15 April 1994).

30 percent (with the exception of those on motor vehicles and textiles); and 5) to end its general export incentive scheme (GEIS), which had provided subsidies to South African exporters.<sup>77</sup> These obligations were directly at odds with many SACU arrangements.<sup>78</sup>

Consequently, in 1997 South African foreign policy makers entered into negotiations with BLSN to see how SACU might be restructured.<sup>79</sup> From these negotiations emerged a 'subset arrangement' where it was envisioned that SACU might 'harmonise' its structures, mechanisms, and actions under a broader regional entity. Under Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), this would enable some SACU arrangements to continue -- most notably, a version of the all-important revenue sharing arrangement -- because SACU could then be classified, technically, as regional integration scheme and not as a discriminatory club.<sup>80</sup> As South African foreign policy makers and their BLSN

<sup>77</sup> R. Gibb, 'Southern Africa in Transition: Prospects and Problems Facing Regional Integration', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36, 2, (1998): p.297.

<sup>78</sup> R. Davies, 'The South(ern) African Customs Union (SACU): Background and Possible Negotiating Issues Facing a Democratic Government', a working paper from the Centre for Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

<sup>79</sup> Original negotiations for a reconstituted SACU had taken place in November 1994 when a 'Customs Union Task Team' had been formed. However, any tangible progress from the Task Team had been minimal because, in the words one member of the South African negotiating team: 'They (the other SACU members) have the world of time... They are dragging their feet because the old formula is advantageous to them.' (Source: 'SADC, COMESA, SACU: Contradictory Formats for Regional "Integration"', an article by J. Sidaway and R. Gibb in *South Africa in Southern Africa: Reconfiguring the Region* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 1998), pp.177-178.

<sup>80</sup> For further detail as to how a 'regional integration scheme' is defined under GATT, see Robert Davies' 'Promoting Regional Integration in Southern Africa: An Analysis of Prospects and Problems from a South African Perspective', in *Bridging the Rift: The New South Africa in Africa*, eds. L. Swatuk and D. Black (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), pp.109-126.

counterparts looked around the region, the most logical entity they identified under which SACU could fall was the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

On the face of it, the collective thinking of SADC, of which South Africa had been the chair since 1996, appeared to be very much in step with the liberal economic thought prevailing in the international order, as well as in South Africa. In August 1996, SADC leaders had signed a *Protocol on Trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region*.<sup>81</sup> The *Protocol* was supposed to commit SADC countries to undertaking a phased reduction, and an eventual elimination, of import duties and other charges by no later than 2005.<sup>82</sup> To some extent, it was the capstone on a long list of integration and/or liberalisation protocols covering everything from monetary and fiscal policies, to energy and mining. Conceptually, these measures should have enabled SACU to be integrated into the SADC order relatively easily. However, a distinction has to be made between the signing of an impressive list of protocols and turning them into reality.

Under SADC rules, a protocol only comes into effect once three-quarters of the member states give their consent. The list of protocols signed at SADC meetings and summits far exceeded the number that had ever received a three-quarters endorsement. Knowing this, it is not surprising, then, that a year after southern African leaders had signed the *Protocol on Trade* of 1996, only two states had given their approval, Mauritius and Tanzania.<sup>83</sup> Commenting on this state of affairs, James Sidaway observed that SADC

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<sup>81</sup> *Protocol on Trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region*, 9 September 1996.

<sup>82</sup> 'Mandela's Nearest Not The Dearest', *Scotland on Sunday*, 14 July 1997, p.16.

<sup>83</sup> 'South African Unveils Proposals for Southern Africa Free Trade Protocol', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 16 June 1998.

leaders' 'positions on a theme are often coded, unsaid, or expressed as much through later non-compliance with a decision taken'.<sup>84</sup> South Africa, even as chair of SADC from 1996, and perhaps more so because of it, was hesitant to appear too eager to push the *Protocol on Trade* for fear of arousing undue concern among SADC member states and leaders about South African hegemony.<sup>85</sup> After all, South Africa imported just 5 percent of the value of its exports to SADC states,<sup>86</sup> and therefore, the claim could be made that in pushing for a free trade area, South Africa might not have the interests of SADC at heart; indeed, one commentator alluded to the fact that South Africa might be placing its priorities before those of SADC, and in endorsing a free trade area, was looking to turn SADC countries in to 'a warehouse or sales post' for South African goods at best, and at worst, wanting to see South African businesses 'swallow up' other countries' industries.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> J. Sidaway, 'The Forward March of SADC', *International Update* 13, 96 (1996), p.3. In addition to political reasons, some cause for the backlog of un-endorsed protocols can be attributed to the bureaucracy of SADC. The SADC system of 'sectoral co-ordinating units' gives each SADC country control over a functional activity (for example: Angola, energy; Lesotho, tourism; Zambia, mining; etcetera...). So while leaders might agree on something at a summit, due to varying levels of efficiency and experience, and even unclear understandings as to which 'sectoral co-ordinating unit' a protocol should fall under, there is often a 'lead/lag' time before protocols make their way to individual governments for approval, if they ever do.

<sup>85</sup> Indeed, when the South African Parliament did eventually give its endorsement in June 1998, it did so with an understanding that its SADC representatives would grant generous concessions as a way of assuaging fears of hegemony. For more details on South Africa's concessions, see 'South African Unveils Proposals for Southern Africa Free Trade Protocol', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 16 June 1998.

<sup>86</sup> 'The SADC Has to Learn from Mercosar', *Business Day* (South Africa), 2 June 1998.

<sup>87</sup> 'Industrialists Weary of Free Trade Zone', *Inter Press Service*, 30 November 1998. Though South African foreign policy makers were treading lightly in regard to leading SADC in order to allay regional fears of South African

The concern South African foreign policy makers had regarding the projection of South African hegemony abroad meant that, even as of late 1997, many were unwilling to articulate strongly their commitment to economic liberalism -- even though GEAR and GEAR-related policies were a clear indication that they wanted and/or needed to do otherwise. But then, in December 1997, the *Medium Term Budget Policy Statement* was released. The *Statement* projected that, at best, the economy would be growing by only 5 percent by the year 2000, and a more likely figure was no more than 3 percent.<sup>88</sup> This downward revision was the result of a number of variables, including the effect of drought on the agricultural sector, a plummeting price of gold, and a slower-than-expected restructuring of parastatals like Eskom, the electric utility. With such unglamorous levels of growth, it was obvious that there would be many domestic expectations that simply would not, and could not, be met. This, naturally, placed government officials at a juncture: they either had to affirm fully their dedication to the principles and mind set of GEAR, or they had to find another strategy.

The course to be taken became obvious when Deputy President Mbeki said that in spite of the revised figures in the *Medium Term Budget Policy Statement*, his commitment to the fundamentals of economic liberalism and the parameters of fiscal prudence set out in

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hegemony, Mbeki brought up the point that this tactic could actually have the opposite effect. Mbeki said: 'I discussed the issue (of South African foreign policy activity) with Nyerere. He said to me "South Africa is too hesitant, too shy. You know what is going to result from your shyness? Since you are not doing what you have to, we (SADC countries) will come to the conclusion that you have a secret agenda..."' (Source: 'The "African Renaissance" Will be a Central Pillar of Thabo Mbeki's Presidency', *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 2 October 1998).

<sup>88</sup> See *The Medium Term Budget Policy Statement 1997*, found in its entirety at <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/policy/medium.html>.

GEAR were 'set in stone'.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, he stated that his convictions were such that he would be willing to sacrifice political support in order to see these fundamentals and parameters furthered and met respectively -- a highly charged claim given the displeasure of the COSATU and SACP leaderships regarding GEAR.<sup>90</sup> Yet what was astonishing about Mbeki's statements was not so much their blunt content -- Mbeki, after all, had been the most visible and consistent policy maker advocating liberal economics as a part of his 'African Renaissance' vision -- instead, it was their timing. Mbeki made the statements immediately before the ANC's 50th national conference, a conference where Mandela was to step down as party leader so that Mbeki could stand to take his place. Though running unopposed for the ANC's leadership, in making the statements before the vote, Mbeki, in essence, was saying to the party faithful: 'If you endorse my leadership, you also endorse GEAR and what it enshrines.' It was no small gamble, considering that a conference 'policy commission' was to discuss a document called 'Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy' which said:

...in globalisation, the monopoly companies of the advanced capitalist countries, particularly the trans-national corporations, set most of the agenda. As such, the real danger exists that political and economic policy of governments throughout the world can be dictated by those corporations. Already the content and form of globalisation of trade, investment, and capital flows, and the operation of some of the most important multi-lateral organisations (the World Bank and IMF) largely reflects the wishes of these corporations... GEAR will have to be evaluated within the globalisation context.<sup>91</sup>

In the end, the gamble did pay off and Mbeki was elected the ANC's leader, all but

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<sup>89</sup> 'Who is Thabo Mbeki?', *The Economist*, 1 November 1997, p.72.

<sup>90</sup> 'The End of the Miracle?', *The Economist*, 13 December 1997, p.20.

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in 'ANC Conference to Debate Foreign and Financial Policies', *Business Day* (South Africa), 9 December 1997, p.2.

assuring that he would be elected the next President of South Africa in 1999. Accordingly, the future course of South African foreign policy was set: from December 1997, South African foreign policy was to be as much about foreign *economic* policy as traditional diplomacy.

Only two weeks after Mbeki's ascension to the leadership of the ANC, Mandela gave further affirmation to the economic underpinnings South African foreign policy was to have. On 31 December 1997 he made the announcement that South Africa would normalise relations with mainland China (at the diplomatic expense of South Africa's long-time ally, Taiwan). The move proved Aziz Pahad prophetic because he had said: 'Why do we establish relations?... To protect our interests and our views, and in that context to establish a political relationship. However, more importantly, or as importantly, we want to open up more trade and investment possibilities and establish joint co-operation agreements.'<sup>92</sup> The implied promise in recognising the People's Republic of China was that untold economic benefits would result for South Africa, mostly through trade, due to China's market of more than one billion potential consumers.

Thus, when Clinton conducted his tour of Africa at the end of March/beginning of April 1998 in order to stress the American mantra as to the benefits of economic reform and trade, indications were that South African foreign policy makers were of a like mind. At the very least, they were of like enough mind that by the beginning of 1998 the US was South Africa's leading overall trading partner, and South Africa was the United States' leading

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<sup>92</sup> *South African House of Assembly Debates*, 16 May 1996, p.1123.

trading partner on the African continent.<sup>93</sup> So why did Mandela and Mbeki raise points of contention in regard to the AGOA so overtly during Clinton's visit? In a word: politics. In committing South Africa to a course of economic liberalism, Mandela and Mbeki had provided domestic and regional political forces, already suspicious of the South African leadership's motives, the opportunity to voice criticisms that they were merely 'pushing an American agenda on the continent'.<sup>94</sup> By showing publicly points of contention, Mandela and Mbeki were proving they were not willing to compromise South African, and indeed African, interests. But all rhetoric aside, the evidence was that key South African policy makers (Mandela and Mbeki included) were convinced that the best way to serve South African interests specifically, and African interests generally, was to participate fully in the 'international economic order'<sup>95</sup> -- which was exactly what key US officials were advocating.

Hardly had the vapour from Air Force One dissipated before Mbeki departed on a far eastern tour of China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan. His message while in Asia was simple: 'We are determined,' Mbeki said, 'to end the situation according to which, for many years, Africa recorded the slowest rates of economic growth and, in many instances, experienced economic decline.'<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, it was no coincidence that even as he was

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<sup>93</sup> 'Government Remains Eager to Attract Investment', *Hilfe Country Report* (Quest Economics Database), December 1998. Through 1997, total two-way trade between the US and South Africa equalled US\$5.5 billion (South Africa exporting US\$2.5 billion in goods to the US and importing US\$3 billion from the US).

<sup>94</sup> 'Africa Awaits Concrete Returns on Clinton Visit', *Agence France Presse*, 3 April 1998.

<sup>95</sup> 'China Gives SA Business Food for Thought', *Business Day* (South Africa), 14 April 1998.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

making his vision for an economically vital Africa known, he was meeting with an assortment of trade and industry ministers, and business leaders ranging from restaurant managers who might be interested in South African fare, to defence officials considering the merits of being equipped with South African-made weaponry. Thus, while one aspect of Mbeki's message was that South Africans had to be cautious to 'guard against us being identified with one or the other country',<sup>97</sup> the larger message was that they had to exploit economic opportunities to the fullest. Again, this was very much in line with American policy makers' message. Any doubts to the contrary were put to rest shortly after Mbeki returned from the far east. It was then that a letter from South African Ambassador Franklin Sonn dated 30 April 1998 and addressed to all 100 US Senators emerged. In the letter, Sonn wrote:

South Africa supports passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (HR 1432), particularly the provisions relating to duty free treatment for textiles and apparel, and further extension of the General(ised) System of Preferences (GSP), debt relief initiatives, and the provision of Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) funds.

For the first time, there has been a real attempt by the US Congress to bring legislative focus onto Africa and to recognise Africa as an important part of the global economy. This is significant and it is appreciated.<sup>98</sup>

If US foreign policy makers were pleased with the words of Ambassador Sonn's letter, then they most certainly felt heartened by developments that were to follow. On 6 June 1998, Mandela and his Mozambican presidential counterpart, Joaquim Chissano, launched construction of the 'Maputo Development Corridor' at an elaborate ceremony

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<sup>97</sup> 'Africa Awaits Concrete Returns on Clinton Visit', *Agence France Presse*, 3 April 1998.

<sup>98</sup> 'Statement Regarding South Africa's Position on the African Growth and Opportunity Act', released by the Embassy of South Africa, 8 May 1998.

attended by 10,000 in the small Mozambican bordertown of Ressano Garcia. Unveiled as the largest development initiative on the African continent at US\$400 million, the project was to connect the economic heartland of South Africa around Johannesburg to the port of Maputo by 2001 via a double-lane toll road and restored rail link. At the ceremony, Mandela showed a great deal of optimism, noting: 'The rebirth of our country, our region, and our continent is in our hands.'<sup>99</sup> He then added: 'It (the Maputo Corridor) has helped set a trend that is changing the face of our region and making a concrete reality of our dream of development through co-operation.'<sup>100</sup> The trend, Mandela pointed out, was being manifested in a number of discussions throughout southern Africa regarding other cross-border projects — projects like the South African-Lesotho 'Highlands Water Project'<sup>101</sup>, a 'Benguela Corridor' through Angola to give the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia sea access, and similarly, a 'Beira Corridor' from the coast of northern Mozambique to land-locked Zimbabwe. South African Transport Minister Mac Maharaj remarked that the proposed projects had already attracted investment commitments worth more than R35

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<sup>99</sup> 'Construction Begins on 2bn-rand Road Linking Mozambique and South Africa', *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 16 June 1998.

<sup>100</sup> 'Maputo Corridor Shows Way for African Rebirth', *Xinhua News Agency*, 8 June 1998.

<sup>101</sup> The 'Highlands Water Project' proposed to build at two sites in central Lesotho a 145 metre dam and 15 metre weir, and water tunnels from both to transfer water to the Vaal River system in South Africa. In return for supplying its water, South Africa would give Lesotho 'royalty payments' estimated to average around US\$40 million per year for at least 50 years, of which 40 percent was to go towards 'social funds' supporting poor communities in Lesotho. In part because of the positive developments surrounding the Maputo Corridor project, the World Bank in June 1998 approved a US\$45 million loan to move the South Africa-Lesotho water project forward. For more information regarding the Highlands Water Project, see 'US\$45 Million for Lesotho Highlands Water', *Africa News*, 5 June 1998.

billion (US\$5 billion), largely because investors were encouraged by the progress being witnessed in the Maputo Corridor Project.<sup>102</sup> The implication was not lost on Mandela. He said: ‘These big investments create many opportunities for new enterprises to grow up around them. If local people seize these openings, the benefits... will multiply many times.’<sup>103</sup>

In sum, the Maputo Corridor Project was a concrete expression -- literally -- of the type of partnership the South African government envisioned between the public and private sectors. South African policy makers had set out to build a ‘platform of infrastructure’ -- by offering government grants equalling no more than approximately 10 percent of the total cost of the project -- while up to 90 percent of the project’s costs were to be met through private capital. In order to facilitate the minimisation of public finances and the maximisation of private ones committed, a 30-year concessional contract had been granted to Trans-African Concessions (TRAC), a binational company who, for the length of the contract after the corridor was completed, was to be responsible for upgrading, maintaining, patrolling, and operating the road. In return, TRAC was to have the right to collect tolls at five toll plazas spread along the length of the corridor.<sup>104</sup> As for how the Maputo Corridor related to the South African government’s larger economic aims, a report from the South African Department of Trade and Industry said it best when it summarised that the project was a ‘practical implementation of the government’s economic strategy as set out in its growth,

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<sup>102</sup> ‘Construction Begins on 2bn-rand Road Linking Mozambique and South Africa’, *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 16 June 1998.

<sup>103</sup> ‘Maputo Corridor Shows Way for African Rebirth’, *Xinhua News Agency*, 8 June 1998.

<sup>104</sup> *Op.cit.*

employment, and redistribution (GEAR) policy'.<sup>105</sup> In other words, it was at once a product of, and a testament to, the South African government's commitment to an economically liberal agenda.

The South African columnist Howard Barrell made a valid point when he said: 'We can set out to improve the conditions for economic and cultural revival, yes; but we cannot order renaissance into being.'<sup>106</sup> By mid-1998, US and South African foreign policy makers had laid the groundwork for what they thought would make an African renaissance a reality. Significantly, their respective foreign policies, driven by fundamentals found in the AGOA and GEAR, had coalesced to the point that they were more alike than different. Irrespective of the odd apparently conflicting comment, US and South African foreign policy makers had moved economically liberal issues to the fore, and had adopted strikingly similar strategies with regard to Africa to achieve objectives. Clinton and Mandela, Mbeki and Gore, Rice and Pahad -- all desired increased trade and commercial links, and relatedly, wanted Africa to accelerate its integration into the 'global economy'. The only way this could be done, came the message from Washington and Pretoria, was through privatisation, increased competitiveness, sound fiscal and monetary policies, and the corresponding enticement of foreign investment. In so doing, it was promised, the lives of Americans, South Africans, and Africans stood to benefit.

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<sup>105</sup> 'A Trade Strategy that Dreams of Jobs', *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 18 September 1998.

<sup>106</sup> 'Keep Thabo's Big Idea Small', *Weekly Mail & Guardian* (South Africa), 21 August 1998.

## Coalescence Summary

At the beginning of the coalescence period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa, US officials often couched their African initiatives in empathetic and collaborative tones. While they still conveyed American goals and ideas, it was done in such a way so as to stress that African input was being sought at every possible opportunity. Whether it was an inter-agency working group reviewing the African Crisis Response Initiative, the First Lady's Africa visit, or State Department 'Town Meetings' regarding US foreign policy, African consultation and inclusion were the words of the day. In fact, when most African leaders sided with the rebel leader Laurent Kabilas as he marched across Zaire, American officials opted not to help their long-time Cold War ally Mobutu, who, as Zairean President, had pillaged and plundered his country -- and American aid -- for 32 years.

Ultimately, though, it was not events on the ground in Africa which most animated US foreign policy towards the continent during the coalescence period. Rather, it was developments within the United States. In April 1997, a piece of legislation emerged in Congress called the 'Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)'. True to the prevailing tone in US foreign policy towards Africa, the act had a rather enabling sounding title, and when its supporters spoke of it, they often spoke of how it would benefit Africans *and* Americans. However, in the AGOA buzzwords like 'economic reform', 'freer trade', and 'growth oriented strategies' featured prominently. It was these buzzwords -- and the concepts they encompassed -- which were key. The AGOA proposed that these liberal economic concepts be prerequisites for US engagement with Africa.

Whereas the AGOA's drafters saw the prerequisites of 'economic reform', 'freer trade', and 'growth oriented strategies' as necessary, in order to appease neo-realists, the Clinton administration saw them as opportunity. Taking the AGOA's contents largely for

their own, administration officials formed an initiative called the 'Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa (PEGOA)'. As a part of the PEGOA, Clinton announced that he proposed to give African nations greater access to US markets through tariff and quota reductions, and to boost US investment in African infrastructure and private enterprise through the establishment of two funds. He then added that high-level bi- and multi-lateral meetings, trade preferences, and debt elimination were possibilities for select countries. There was a condition, however: African nations were expected to undertake 'economic reform' where necessary, and to pursue 'freer trade' and 'growth oriented strategies'.

Focussing on liberal economic issues offered a number of advantages for US foreign policy makers with regard to Africa. First, it was much easier to speak of how trade could benefit an African leader's countrymen, for example, than of how his political departure could do so. Second, trade offered US foreign policymakers both a 'carrot' and a 'stick' -- in the first instance by allowing them to refer to specific benefits the US would extend when reforms were undertaken, and in the second, by suggesting exclusion and/or marginalisation if not. Finally, trade could even be used in US foreign policy makers' commitment to the format of conveying American goals and ideas, but then underscoring how these had been, or would be, shaped by Africans themselves. Simply put, it offered them a 'selective strategy': the African leaders to whom US foreign policy makers would listen most closely, and from whom in-put would be sought, would be the ones pursuing 'growth-oriented economic policies'.

Rallied around trade and its related issues -- heartened that it offered them a diplomatically viable topic, incentives and leverage, and parameters for seeking and obtaining acceptable consultation -- in the second half of 1997 US foreign policy makers felt

they had an African agenda of unmatched maturity in the 1990s. From this arose an unprecedented, almost proselytising confidence. In fact, so confident were US foreign policy makers that their two highest officials personally carried the American liberal economic mantra to Africa: first, Secretary of State Madeline Albright in December 1997, and then President Clinton himself in late March/early April 1998. The message from both was clear: US engagement was not a given, and specific American benefits like high-level ministerial meetings and unilateral debt forgiveness were not entitlements; all depended upon African countries translating 'economic reform', 'freer trade', and 'growth oriented strategies' into matching policies.

At first glance, the South African government's 'Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR)' strategy, unveiled in June 1996, appeared to be just such a policy. It set a target of ambitious economic growth and job creation through privatisation, increased competitiveness, fiscal prudence, and the corresponding enticement of foreign investment. But early on in the coalescence period, many government officials showed only lukewarm enthusiasm for GEAR. This was because a divide existed between the relatively new ideas and demands of the strategy, and persistent domestic and regional concerns.

In South Africa, many understood how GEAR could facilitate economic growth and job creation. Certain sectors of South African business, after all, had benefited from GEAR and 'GEAR-like' policies, reflected in part by the fact that since 1994, South Africa's trade volume had grown exponentially, and its trade balance had consistently been positive. Still, influential movements like the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party continued to advocate familiar aspects of 'struggle economics' (e.g., direct government intervention to engineer employment and social transformation).

These demands resonated with some quarters of the government -- an expected proclivity, perhaps, given the ANC's socialist roots, historical political alliances, and its need to remedy pressing disparities in South African society. As a result, even as officials moved aspects of GEAR tentatively forward, these moves were often overshadowed by announcements meant to appease the most acrimonious of domestic forces. For example, early in 1997 the South African government very quietly rejected (because of inflationary fears) legislation for a national minimum wage and increased government spending; by contrast, in his opening address to Parliament in February 1997, Mandela emphasised how the government had provided hundreds-of-thousands of South Africans with access to potable water and homes. These examples typified the South African government's attitude early in the coalescence period: in the former example -- very much in sync with the austere demands of GEAR -- the government as a whole was happy to see events come to pass with hardly a murmur; in the latter example -- extremely populist in nature -- the more who knew, the better.

While in a slightly different vein, the South African government's dampened ardour for GEAR, and therefore the liberally economic principles it encompassed, was just as apparent regionally. Well aware of the past, South African policy makers were very conscientious about not appearing to be a strong-arming regional hegemon. However, no amount of carefully-chosen words or deeds could hide the fact that South Africa was the goliath in the region, as attested to, in part, by its overwhelming trade surplus with surrounding countries. Naturally, many governments were extremely sensitive when it came to matters of how they 'measured up' to South Africa, and the extent of their dependence on the Republic. Thus, when World Trade Organisation accords signed by the South African government demanded a re-think as to how South Africa dispensed revenue to other

countries in the Southern African Customs Union, and when as Chair of the Southern African Development Community South African officials were compelled to inquire about other governments' non-compliance with SADC protocols meant to reduce, and eventually eliminate, import duties, cries of South African bullying resulted. Rather than press these matters -- which in the broader picture were matters of liberal economics -- South African policy makers largely acquiesced.

The turning point in the South African policy makers' commitment to GEAR and economic liberalism came in December 1997. It was then that a *Medium Term Budget Policy Statement* was released projecting unglamorous levels of South African growth. Rallying to the challenge, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki made support of GEAR a central feature in his (ultimately successful) bid for the ANC leadership, in essence saying: 'If you endorse my leadership, you also endorse GEAR and what it enshrines.' For his part, Mandela announced that South Africa would normalise relations with mainland China (at the diplomatic expense of South Africa's long-time ally, Taiwan); the implied promise was that untold economic benefits would result for South Africa, mostly through trade, due to China's market of more than one billion potential consumers. Not to be outdone, in mid-April 1998, Mbeki conducted a far eastern tour in order to pitch the merits of buying South African-made goods and services to an assortment of trade and industry ministers, business leaders, and defence officials. Then, on 30 April 1998, the South African Ambassador to the United States released a letter addressed to all 100 Senators in the US Congress pronouncing South Africa's support of the 'Africa Growth and Opportunity Act' -- particularly, the letter noted, the AGOA's provisions relating to the duty-free treatment of African textiles and apparel, and the extension of trade preferences and debt relief to African countries. Collectively,

these actions affirmed and bolstered South African policy makers' confidence in GEAR, and in economic liberalism as well.

In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, one of the most significant manifestations of the new-found enthusiasm for economic liberalism was 'The Maputo Corridor Project' connecting South Africa's economic heartland to the port of Maputo in Mozambique. At an elaborate unveiling ceremony in June 1998, Mandela hailed the Project as the largest development initiative on the African continent. But it wasn't the Project's size which gave cause for optimism. What excited him most, Mandela said during a speech at the ceremony, was that the Project was emblematic of how African governments could collaborate on, and benefit from, increased trade and commercial links. Furthermore, the Project demonstrated how African governments could find the means for beneficial collaboration: South African officials had provided a 'platform of infrastructure' in the form of government grants equalling no more than 10 percent of the total cost of the Maputo Corridor Project, but up to 90 percent of the project's costs had been met through private capital. The private capital had had to be enticed, it was pointed out. And enticement was best done with policies that supported privatisation, increased competitiveness, and fiscal prudence -- in other words, through GEAR-like policies.

During the coalescence period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa, the prominence of each country with the other's policy makers was not as apparent as it had been at other times in the 1990s. This was a factor of the foreign policies becoming more alike than different in regard to Africa, with each centred on a version of an economically liberal agenda. Given, the American version was driven less out of need than the South African one, South African officials were not near as proselytising as their

American counterparts, and political manoeuvring and debate did occur between Washington and Pretoria -- in particular, about levels of trade as they related to foreign aid. But differences in motivation, tone, and even opinion on some matters should not be mistaken for the absence of broad consensus. For the most part, policy makers in Washington and Pretoria regarded each other as individuals with whom they could 'do business'. Indeed, what might have been mistaken as a lack of prominence of one country with the other's policy makers was more indicative of healthy relations, and of complimentary foreign policies.

To summarise, the coalescence period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa was one where the grand aims of each country's foreign policy makers became strikingly similar. In Washington and Pretoria, an intense desire prevailed to increase trade and commercial links, and to integrate better Africa into the global economy. It was a period when liberal economics were preponderate.

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## Conclusion: Of Grand Aims and Modest Means

One of the findings of this study is that the numerous grand aims present in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s were manifestations or extensions of what came before. In other words, they evolved. But not only did US and South African grand aims evolve, they evolved through four comparable periods -- an obsolescence period, a flux period, a focus period, and finally, a coalescence period -- ultimately becoming strikingly similar by mid-1998. Accordingly, it is possible to trace how US 'downgrading' and South African 're-engagement' in the obsolescence period at the start of the 1990s resulted in 'economic liberalism' in the coalescence period near the end of the decade.

However, similar patterns in the evolution of US and South African foreign policies should not be mistaken for coinciding dynamism. The United States, after all, is a superpower at the heart of the international system; South Africa, by contrast, is a regional hegemon on a peripheral continent. As has been shown, each country has been subject to its own unique demands, concerns, influential personalities, and political processes. And herein resides a second finding relating to the first: that US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s evolved in parallel fashion.

Parallelism was evident when President Bush signed an executive order initiating the unilateral repeal of American sanctions against South Africa. To the casual observer, the dropping of American sanctions was very complimentary to the South African government's grand aim of 'universality', or the overarching objective of re-establishing normalised relations with as many countries as possible. In actuality, Bush's major motivation for dropping sanctions was to expedite a resolution of the volatile and highly-public 'South African Question' in the US, and subsequently, to lower Africa's profile in order to further

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the grand aim of 'triage' -- that is, the re-evaluation of all American resources Africa-related, and where possible, redirecting them to places like eastern Europe. In this sense, the dropping of sanctions was a topic common to Washington and Pretoria, but the motivations, actions, and ends of each country's policy makers were very different.

In addition to the findings relating, first, to the evolutionary aspects of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s, and second, to its parallelism, this study also found a third: *the theme of modest means*. This theme is most significant because in each of the four periods, modest means had a definitive influence on the grand aims emanating from Washington and Pretoria.

After Nelson Mandela was sworn in as President in May 1994, for example, there was a crush of well-wishers inviting South Africa to once again take its place amongst the community of nations. South African officials responded with zest, establishing full diplomatic relations with 163 countries within a year of Mandela's inauguration.<sup>1</sup> Yet even as South African policy makers rushed back into the international fold, the reality was that South Africa was in the throws of its longest recession in recorded history, and the government was saddled with immense domestic challenges: disparities in education, health care, and housing; matters of reconciliation; population growth; and the restructuring of the government, military, and police... Needless to say, there were hardly enough resources to go around, and for those that were available, the priority was to direct them towards domestic imperatives. Thus, whereas initially there had been accolades from abroad for South African foreign policy, strapped for resources and stretched by seemingly endless demands, South African foreign policy makers came to be criticised as 'incoherent' and

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<sup>1</sup> *Department of Foreign Affairs List* (Pretoria: Department of Foreign Affairs, October 1995).

‘lacking in direction’.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, even though the United States, comparatively, had far more resources than South Africa, modest means were also a constraint on US foreign policy makers. For example, in the wake of Somalia, an overwhelming majority of US policy makers were hesitant about, if not opposed to, committing US personnel, equipment, or funds to Africa (as proved during the Rwandan genocide). Still, during the focus period, the Clinton administration was adamant that conflict had to be minimised in Africa in order for its enlargement agenda to be furthered. Faced with such a dilemma, administration officials unveiled an initiative calling for the creation of an African Crisis Response Force (ACRF). The ACRF proposed that the US play the limited role of ‘technical advisor and honest broker... (in supporting) the nascent effort of Africans to take the lead in resolving conflicts and peacekeeping efforts’ in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Yet, in spite of the Clinton administration’s efforts, little support was ever generated in Africa. In fact, no South African approval was ever gained for the ACRF initiative, and therefore, neither was a South African commitment of money, men, or material. Without South Africa, the most powerful democratic state in sub-Saharan Africa, and the one best suited to mobilise, project, and sustain forces necessary for extensive peacekeeping, the Clinton administration’s ACRF initiative was stillborn. Consequently, while the constraints of modest means were behind the ACRF’s inception, ironically, they were also behind its ultimate demise.

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<sup>2</sup> From a confidential personal interview with a Department of Foreign Affairs staff member, conducted 18 March 1997 at the Department of Foreign Affairs (Union Buildings), Pretoria, South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> From ‘The Prepared Testimony of Steven Mertz before the House International Relations Committee, Africa Subcommittee’ (Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, 1 October 1997).

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Having given a few examples as to the evolutionary and parallel aspects of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s, as well as touched upon the correlation between grand aims and modest means in the decade, perhaps all can be underscored if, briefly, we revisit each of the four periods.

### **The Parallel Evolution of US and South African Foreign Policies Towards Africa, 1990-1998**

<b>Evolutionary Period</b>	<b>Grand Aim(s)</b>	<b>Years</b>
Obsolescence	United States * Downgrading	1990-1991
	South Africa * Re-engagement (ruling minority government) * Maintenance of sanctions and isolation (ANC 'shadow government', until assured democratic elections)	1990-1994
Flux	United States * Triage then 'new world order' (Bush administration) * Withdrawal (neo-realists) * Engagement (Clinton administration)	1991-1995
	South Africa * Universality	1994-1996
Focus	United States * Enlargement	1995-1997
	South Africa * African renaissance	1996-1997
Coalescence	United States and South Africa * Economic liberalism	1997-1998

#### **Period One: Obsolescence** (United States, 1990-1991/South Africa, 1990-1994)

The obsolescence period in the parallel evolution of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s commenced with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the freeing of Nelson Mandela. These two events confirmed that the grand aims of old pursued for more than four decades -- containment of Soviet influence and the security of the white minority by US and South African policy makers respectively -- were largely inapplicable or unnecessary.

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The view from Washington was that with no overt Soviet threat in Africa, none of the traditional Cold War reasons, and only marginal existing ones, justified US involvement with the continent. Accordingly, the Bush administration set about trying to downgrade Africa so as to focus more effectively on regions where there were overt American interests. Yet, at the beginning of 1990, one significant vestige of the past remained: apartheid. Because the South African government had continued to maintain exclusive minority rule, strong emotions and strict constraints (e.g., in the form of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act) continued to influence US foreign policy towards the continent. Consequently, the Bush administration committed itself to a low-key, non-confrontational approach in regard to Africa generally, and South Africa specifically. Ultimately, this bought White House officials time until they were able to make a case as to the ‘irreversibility of change’ in South Africa, and therefore the inapplicability of the CAAA. Subsequently, the CAAA was revoked through an executive order. What was left was an ambiguous, and not at all undesired (at least by the Bush administration) US foreign policy towards Africa.

In South Africa, foreign policy obsolescence had very different effects on the government and the leading anti-apartheid movement, the African National Congress. Once government officials had been assured that much more was to be gained than lost in moving away from the policies of the past, and did so by dismantling some of the legislative pillars of apartheid, unbanning the ANC, and freeing political prisoners like Nelson Mandela, they were quite pleased to have the dilemma of needing new parameters and means for interacting with the world; after being isolated for so long, the demands of engagement were not a burden, but an emancipation. By contrast, rather than innovating to meet changes in the international order, the ANC’s leadership fell back on tenets that ran counter to current

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events, such as calls for the South African government's unconditional isolation even as it was decreasing, or socialist principles even as socialism as an ideology was collapsing. This said, from the time Mandela was freed it was pretty clear that it was the ANC which was negotiating itself into political power. Therefore, though it was the government which initially experienced the greatest number of breakthroughs abroad, nearly all viewed the ANC as the next government-in-waiting. In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, this meant that ANC views were not to be discounted, and at worst were considered only ineffective given the regional hegemony of the minority government. In this sense, South African foreign policy towards Africa from early 1990 possessed duality, reflecting the policy pursuits and preferences of both the government and the ANC to varying degrees right up until Nelson Mandela was sworn in as President on 10 May 1994.

In the obsolescence period, the Bush administration's focus on South Africa as a part of its African downgrading efforts and the South African government's efforts to encourage re-engagement with the international community were congruent: both wanted normalisation as quickly as possible for the sake of realising greater goals. At the same time, influential forces ran contrary to this congruence. The US Congress was able to impede the implementation of the Bush administration's agenda, most directly through the CAAA, but also by forcing the administration to make only the most measured political moves due to the volatility of South African issues. The ANC was able to impede the South African government's free pursuit of its agenda because there was a good chance the ANC would assume full government control; therefore, ANC priorities could not be disregarded. After the CAAA was revoked and South African elections were held, it would be natural to think that US and South African foreign policies might have become less complicated, and perhaps

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even compliment one another. In actuality, as US policy makers struggled to find their way in the changed and changing international order, and as South African policy makers turned to the task of internal reconciliation and reconstruction, US and South African relations -- and more broadly, the foreign policies of each towards Africa -- entered into a period of flux.

### **Period Two: Flux** (United States, 1991-1995/ South Africa, 1994-1996)

The flux period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa started very differently for each country's policy makers. In Washington, the period commenced with the Bush administration practising foreign policy *triage* -- that is, re-evaluating all American resources committed to Africa, and where possible, re-allocating them to places like eastern Europe. The thought behind *triage* was twofold: first, to give greater attention to areas where there were overt US interests while minimising US involvement in areas where there were not; and second, to direct finite resources to areas perceived to have great potential and away from areas where it was felt there was little hope for making a significant difference. As one might assume, the Bush administration considered Africa in the latter category on both accounts.

What kept the Bush administration from pushing Africa to farthest reaches of foreign policy obscurity was Bush's own new world order vision. As the sole superpower, Bush believed the US had an unprecedented opportunity, as well as a responsibility, to consolidate democratic trends and the rule of international law. What was not publically stated was that, preferably, this was to be done selectively (e.g., in Europe or the Middle East rather than in Africa). Yet when famine wrought by war in Somalia was made a national issue, the administration was forced to include the Horn of Africa in its new world order calculations. At first US policy makers tried to bridge the divide between minimal American involvement

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in Somalia (*triage*) with maximum American leadership (the new world order). To these ends, multi-lateralism became the optimal concept, justified on humanitarian and human rights grounds. The concept was first applied unsuccessfully in Somalia through food-relief airlifts, but eventually culminated in the commitment of over 28,000 US ground troops as a part of UN-sanctioned intervention force.

When Bill Clinton replaced Bush in the White House in 1993, it was made clear that he was uncomfortable with his Somalia inheritance. Thus, when eighteen US soldiers were killed in a Mogadishu fire-fight, Clinton ordered all US troops out of the Horn of Africa by April 1994; his order not only ended US involvement in the Somalia intervention, it also ended America's commitment to the new world order. Furthermore, when the American military pulled-out of Somalia it proved to be the harbinger of a haemorrhaging African withdrawal of American resources continent-wide. In a neo-realist backlash, the Bureau of African Affairs, African aid programmes, US missions on the continent -- all became marked for 'restructuring' or even elimination. Indeed, so reticent did US foreign policy become in regard to Africa after Somalia that even when faced with the genocidal murder of 800,000 Rwandans in 1994, virtually no desire to intercede was shown.

Eventually, however, the Clinton administration steeled itself and began to battle to keep the US involved with Africa. Given, the administration's stand was more reactive (against isolationist forces in Washington, and in response to African-American voters' demands) than inspired, but it nonetheless slowed and/or checked policy makers' complete handwashing of the continent. Ultimately, in 1995, US foreign policy towards Africa swung back in the direction of engagement. It was then that the White House began to make the case that emerging markets were the key to American prosperity, security, and influence. As a

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continent of 700 million potential consumers, White House officials argued, the national interest demanded that Africa not be ignored.

Whereas US foreign policy towards Africa during the flux period had started with a systematic effort to disengage from the continent, for South African foreign policy towards Africa the flux period started with indiscriminate re-engagement. Following the April 1994 elections, South Africa was the darling of the international scene and unrestricted in terms of with whom its government could establish official relations. Moreover, because of its miracle transition to majority rule, combined with its regional economic hegemony, the country was perceived to have unmatched moral and political clout in Africa. As a result, the international community placed high hopes on the Republic, desiring for it, say, to be an example of multiethnic reconciliation and democratic governance to neighbouring countries. These hopes were only heightened early on when President Nelson Mandela undertook a personal diplomatic initiative to persuade the Angolan government and UNITA, and the Mozambican government and RENAMO, to end their long-running civil wars and to settle their differences via the ballot box. Though undoubtably noble, and arguably even in South Africa's long-term interests, Mandela's efforts in Angola and Mozambique did little in the near-term to remedy South Africa's own daunting challenges.

When South Africa's first fully-democratic government took office in May 1994, its policy makers were confronted with harsh realities like reversing the nation's longest-running recession, restructuring the military, police, and government at all levels, and meeting the majority's needs by providing electrification, sanitation, clean water, and housing. South African foreign policy makers were expected to ground international initiatives (above and beyond taking South Africa back into the international fold by hosting visitors, sending

emissaries, and establishing new consulates and high commissions) with domestic imperatives; for example, foreign investment was to be enticed in order to help fund the government's national Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP). To complicate matters, government leaders gave mixed signals as to the tone South African foreign policy should have -- as demonstrated when the ANC leadership said that human rights was to be one of pillars on which South African foreign policy was to stand, yet one of the first countries Mandela visited as president was Indonesia, whose commitment to human rights was abysmal, particularly in regard to East Timor. And all the while, the foreign policy establishment was having to deal with its own structural, personnel, and budgetary challenges. With no one clear foreign policy path to follow and countless constraints, South African re-engagement turned into an unofficial foreign policy of universality.

Under universality, South African foreign policy makers sought to retain official diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, for example, while simultaneously looking to establish relations with the People's Republic of China. In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, an 'Afro-centric' orientation under universality meant that precious South African resources were dispersed widely and sometimes impractically: continent-wide through the Organisation of African Unity, and also regionally through the Southern Africa Development Community. A discussion document in June 1996 was supposed to clarify South African foreign policy and eliminate contradictions. If anything, the document only perpetuated universality. It presented a myriad of 'pillars', 'cornerstones', 'principles', and 'priorities' for South African foreign policy, and painted each as equally meritorious. As a result, few were willing to sacrifice the agendas they thought most important when faced with competing agendas because a balanced case had been made for all.

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During the flux period in both Washington and Pretoria, changes in national leadership and government coupled with domestic challenges and constraints meant that government officials were pre-occupied with what was going on at home. From this flowed very fluid African foreign policies. Indeed, the aims of each country's policy makers in regard to Africa varied and/or vacillated tremendously. In international affairs, the existence of such states of foreign policy flux are rarely desired and often unsustainable. Consequently, US and South African foreign policies towards Africa had to gain a focus, and did, albeit the associated focus period was to present its own inherent difficulties and dilemmas.

### **Period Three: Focus** (United States, 1995-1997/South Africa, 1996-1997)

The focus period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa was one where key officials in Washington and Pretoria were able to move beyond merely reacting to events, and instead, began to formulate clearer goals for the future. For the Clinton administration, nearly all goals were tied to its enlargement doctrine -- a doctrine which maintained that the US had an obligation, and indeed an inherent national interest, in broadening and deepening democratic and economic liberalism. Moreover, because it could become a major emerging market, enlargement was to be pursued even in places like Africa, a continent historically considered (at least by most Americans) at the fringes of international affairs. Yet, administration officials realised that any of their grand enlargement aims in regard to Africa would be in vain unless they could change the enduring perception most Americans had of Africa as a 'bad neighbourhood'.

In broad strokes terms, administration officials strived to paint Africa as a continent that had turned the corner; figures highlighted included that by 1995 two-thirds of African states were engaged in democratic reform, that the continent as a whole was posting

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economic growth above 4 percent, and that American business interests on the continent were yielding an average return of 30 percent, versus the worldwide average of 11 percent. More specifically, US foreign policy makers emphasised that one African country was a star amongst stars when it came to what was 'right' and 'good' with Africa: South Africa. South Africa was held up as an exemplary example of democratic and economic practise in Africa. It was also identified as a 'Big Emerging Market' (though less emphasis was given to the fact that it was the *only* African country designated as such) in no small part, administration officials were quick to point out, because of its commitment to democratic and economic liberalism (i.e., enlargement).

So convinced were US foreign policy makers that South Africa embodied much of what was positive, and could be, with Africa, a US-South African Binational Commission (BNC) was founded in March 1995, the only high-level binational entity of its kind between the US and a sub-Saharan country. Furthermore, when US Secretary of State Warren Christopher conducted a five-nation African tour in October 1996, he spent much of his time in South Africa, and it was there where he unveiled hopes for the creation of an 'African Crisis Response Force (ACRF)'. Prior to its unveiling, it was generally assumed in Washington that Pretoria would be receptive to the ACRF. This was good, because it was also assumed that the idea would be overwhelmingly dependent upon South Africa, one of the few African countries US foreign policy makers perceived as possessing the necessary moral weight and resources to make the idea a viable reality. All of these assumptions boded well for enlargement, as one thought underpinning the doctrine was that democracy and economic prosperity best flourished in the absence of conflict; the ACRF, naturally, was to help end African conflicts, a goal with which US foreign policy makers could hardly imagine

their South African counterparts taking issue.

American officials were therefore taken aback when their South African counterparts expressed considerable reservations, and even outright criticisms, of the ACRF. While not opposed to some of the ACRF's principles in theory, South African officials resented that the ACRF-idea was being imposed *on* them, they felt, instead of being created *with* them. Consequently, South African support for the ACRF did not transpire and the idea was stillborn. But before US foreign policy makers could fully understand why their initiative failed, they found themselves engaged in a shouting match with Pretoria regarding the possible sale of South African weapons to Syria. Near the end of the focus period, the row overshadowed nearly all else in US foreign policy towards Africa. This left American policy makers wondering when, or even if, some significant successes might result from their toil.

Like their American counterparts, frustration was an emotion not at all unknown to South African officials at the start of the focus period. In 1996 alone they had endured criticism of South Africa's 'two Chinas' policy, faced bitter trade negotiations with the European Union, and been unable to respond effectively to crises in the Great Lakes area. Whereas the rest of the international community was beginning to treat South Africa more as 'just another country', many South African officials still believed that, having pulled off 'The South African Miracle' in April 1994, their country deserved a larger degree of latitude than most other countries for a longer period. This gap in perception had implications.

When Secretary of State Christopher unveiled the American ACRF idea unexpectedly during his visit to South Africa, South African officials, already emotionally charged, felt that a line had been crossed. To them, the American plan -- made without input from the very African government(s) on whose shoulders it was apparently to be born -- was the

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epitome of arrogance. Naturally, many South Africans felt that their policy makers' responses of thinly-veiled annoyance rather than support for the ACRF idea was justified -- even in light of the fact that in May 1996 a *Defence White Paper* had pointed out that peacekeeping and conflict resolution was crucial to South Africa's national security, and two-thirds of a national survey had favoured South Africa's direct participation in African peacekeeping operations. Likewise, when American officials expressed displeasure with a proposed (and not an actual) South African sale of military equipment to Syria, some officials in Pretoria, Mandela among them, made claims that the South African government's efficacy and sovereignty were being impugned. Whether it was coincidental or not, as voices rose in Washington and Pretoria, a corresponding drop occurred in the South African bond market. In turn, though, cooler heads did prevail: South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and US Vice President Al Gore were able to amicably resolve the row in the course of a February 1997 BNC meeting.

In the wake of the resolution of the Syrian arms row, South African foreign policy took on a sophistication of sorts. Deputy President Mbeki courted western involvement in South Africa and Africa, and reenforced his country's commitment to pursuing sound democratic practises and rational economic policies. President Mandela, on the other hand, made overtures of friendship abroad, including with the west when protocol demanded, but largely with fellow African states and states considered less than respectable to many in the international community (e.g., the Lybias, Cubas, and Irans of the world). Lastly, Mbeki and Mandela worked jointly on occasion, merging Mbeki's practicality with Mandela's stature on selected issues. Yet regardless of which aspect one looked at regarding the three-fold focus South African policy had assumed, one vision resonated throughout: an 'African

Renaissance'. Simply put, the renaissance vision was one where Africa, in Mandela's words, ceased to be a passive onlooker in a changing world. To these ends, in April 1997, South African policy makers attempted to mediate an end to a six-month-old rebellion in Zaire.

So committed did South African foreign policy makers become to ending the fighting in Zaire that when one initiative would fail, they would move on to another undeterred; for example, South African efforts progressed from correspondence and telephone calls with proposals for peace, to hosting discussions in South Africa, to Mandela and Mbeki actually going to the warring parties themselves. Ultimately, however, South African arbitration failed and the Zairean government was forcibly overthrown. Whereas what had been gained and what had been lost was obvious to the warring parties in Zaire, the same could not be said for the South African peace initiative. Clearly, South African policy makers had not been able to engender a negotiated settlement; still, a case could be made that they had fostered a 'soft landing' where Zairean government forces had not fought to the last, and rebel forces had shown some magnanimity in victory. In other words, South African foreign policy was in a state of illucidity.

It was the uncertainty as to the tenability of US and South African policy makers' aims in regard to Africa which brought the focus period to a close. In the place of uncertainty emerged an understanding that it was all well and good to formulate clear objectives for the future and to focus on them, yet it was pointless unless strategies necessary for their attainment were employed in the here-and-now. In the next period, aims and strategies coalesced, and US and South African foreign policies towards Africa became strikingly similar.

**Period Four: Coalescence**  
(United States and South Africa, 1997-1998)

At the beginning of the coalescence period in US and South African foreign policies towards Africa, US officials often couched their African initiatives in empathetic and collaborative tones. While they still conveyed American goals and ideas, it was done in such a way so as to stress that African input was being sought at every possible opportunity. Whether it was an inter-agency working group reviewing the African Crisis Response Initiative, the First Lady's Africa visit, or State Department 'Town Meetings' regarding US foreign policy, African consultation and inclusion were the words of the day. In fact, when most African leaders sided with the rebel leader Laurent Kabilas as he marched across Zaire, American officials opted not to help their long-time Cold War ally, President Mobutu.

Ultimately, though, it was not events on the ground in Africa which most animated US foreign policy towards the continent during the coalescence period. Rather, it was developments within the United States. In April 1997, a piece of legislation emerged in Congress called the 'Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)'. True to the prevailing tone in US foreign policy towards Africa, the act had a rather enabling sounding title, and when its supporters spoke of it, they often spoke of how it would benefit Africans *and* Americans. However, in the AGOA buzzwords like 'economic reform', 'freer trade', and 'growth oriented strategies' featured prominently. It was these buzzwords, and significantly the concepts they encompassed, which were key. The AGOA proposed that these liberal economic concepts be prerequisites for US engagement with Africa.

Whereas the AGOA's drafters saw the prerequisites of 'economic reform', 'freer trade', and 'growth oriented strategies' as necessary, in order to appease neo-realists, the Clinton administration saw them as opportunity. Taking the AGOA's contents largely for

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their own, administration officials formed an initiative called the 'Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa (PEGOA)'. As a part of the PEGOA, Clinton announced that he proposed to give African nations greater access to US markets through tariff and quota reductions, and to boost US investment in African infrastructure and private enterprise through the establishment of two funds. He then added that high-level bi- and multi-lateral meetings, trade preferences, and debt elimination were possibilities for select countries. There was a condition, however: African nations were expected to undertake the aforementioned 'economic reform' where necessary, and to pursue 'freer trade' and 'growth oriented strategies'.

Focussing on liberal economic issues offered a number of advantages for US foreign policy makers with regard to Africa. First, it was much easier to speak of how trade could benefit an African leader's countrymen, for example, than of how his political departure could do so. Second, trade offered US foreign policymakers both a 'carrot' and a 'stick' -- in the first instance by allowing them to refer to specific benefits the US would extend when reforms were undertaken, and in the second, by suggesting exclusion and/or marginalisation if not. Finally, trade could even be used in US foreign policy makers' commitment to the format of conveying American goals and ideas, but then underscoring how these had been, or would be, shaped by Africans themselves. Simply put, it offered them a 'selective strategy': the African leaders to whom US foreign policy makers would listen most closely, and from whom in-put would be sought, would be the ones pursuing 'growth-oriented economic policies'.

Rallied around trade and its related issues -- heartened that it offered them a diplomatically viable topic, incentives and leverage, and parameters for seeking and

obtaining acceptable consultation -- in the second half of 1997 US foreign policy makers felt they had an African agenda of unmatched maturity in the 1990s. From this arose an unprecedented, almost proselytising confidence. In fact, so confident were US foreign policy makers that their two highest officials personally carried the American liberal economic mantra to Africa: first, Secretary of State Madeline Albright in December 1997, and then President Clinton himself in late March/early April 1998. The message from both was clear: US engagement was not a given, and specific American benefits like high-level ministerial meetings and unilateral debt forgiveness were not entitlements; all depended upon African countries translating 'economic reform', 'freer trade', and 'growth oriented strategies' into matching policies.

At first glance, the South African government's 'Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR)' strategy, unveiled in June 1996, appeared to be just such a policy. It set a target of ambitious economic growth and job creation through privatisation, increased competitiveness, fiscal prudence, and the corresponding enticement of foreign investment. But early on in the coalescence period, many government officials showed only lukewarm enthusiasm for GEAR. This was because a divide existed between the relatively new ideas and demands of the strategy, and persistent domestic and regional concerns.

In South Africa, many understood how GEAR could facilitate economic growth and job creation. Certain sectors of South African business, after all, had benefited from GEAR and 'GEAR-like' policies, reflected in part by the fact that since 1994, South Africa's trade volume had grown exponentially, and its trade balance had consistently been positive. Still, influential movements like the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party continued to advocate familiar aspects of 'struggle economics'

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(e.g., direct government intervention to engineer employment and social transformation). These demands resonated with some quarters of the government -- an expected partiality, perhaps, given the ANC's socialist roots, historical political alliances, and its need to remedy pressing disparities in South African society. As a result, even as officials moved aspects of GEAR tentatively forward, these moves were often overshadowed by announcements meant to appease the most acrimonious of domestic forces. For example, early in 1997 the South African government very quietly rejected (because of inflationary fears) legislation for a national minimum wage and increased government spending; by contrast, in his opening address to Parliament in February 1997, Mandela emphasised how the government had provided hundreds-of-thousands of South Africans with access to potable water and homes. These examples typified the South African government's attitude early in the coalescence period: in the former example, very much in sync with the austere demands of GEAR, the government as a whole was happy to see events come to pass with hardly a murmur; in the latter example, extremely populist in nature, the more who knew, the better.

While in a slightly different vein, the South African government's dampened ardour for GEAR, and therefore the liberally economic principles it encompassed, was just as apparent regionally. Well aware of the past, South African policy makers were very conscientious about not appearing to be a strong-arming regional hegemon. However, no amount of carefully-chosen words or deeds could hide the fact that South Africa was the goliath in the region, as attested to, in part, by its overwhelming trade surplus with surrounding countries. Naturally, many governments were extremely sensitive when it came to matters of how they 'measured up' to South Africa, and the extent of their dependence on the Republic. Thus, when World Trade Organisation accords signed by the South African

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government demanded a re-think as to how South Africa dispensed revenue to other countries in the Southern African Customs Union, and when as Chair of the Southern African Development Community South African officials were compelled to inquire about other governments' non-compliance with SADC protocols meant to reduce, and eventually eliminate, import duties, cries of South African bullying resulted. Rather than press these matters -- which in the broader picture were matters of liberal economics -- South African policy makers largely acquiesced.

The turning point in the South African policy makers' commitment to GEAR and economic liberalism came in December 1997. It was then that a *Medium Term Budget Policy Statement* was released projecting unglamorous levels of South African growth. Rallying to the challenge, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki made support of GEAR a central feature in his ultimately successful bid for the ANC leadership, in essence saying: 'If you endorse my leadership, you also endorse GEAR and what it enshrines.' For his part, Mandela announced that South Africa would normalise relations with mainland China (at the diplomatic expense of South Africa's long-time ally, Taiwan); the implied promise was that untold economic benefits would result for South Africa, mostly through trade, due to China's market of more than one billion potential consumers. Not to be outdone, in mid-April 1998 Mbeki conducted a far eastern tour in order to pitch the merits of buying South African-made goods and services to an assortment of trade and industry ministers, business leaders, and defence officials. Then, on 30 April 1998, the South African Ambassador to the United States released a letter addressed to all 100 Senators in the US Congress pronouncing South Africa's support of the 'Africa Growth and Opportunity Act' -- particularly, the letter noted, the AGOA's provisions relating to the duty-free treatment of African textiles and apparel,

and the extension of trade preferences and debt relief to African countries. Collectively, these actions affirmed and bolstered South African policy makers' confidence in GEAR, and in economic liberalism as well.

In terms of South African foreign policy towards Africa, one of the most significant manifestations of the new-found enthusiasm for economic liberalism was 'The Maputo Corridor Project' connecting South Africa's economic heartland to the port of Maputo in Mozambique. At an elaborate unveiling ceremony in June 1998, Mandela hailed the Project as the largest development initiative on the African continent. But it wasn't the Project's size which gave cause for optimism. What excited him most, Mandela said during a speech at the ceremony, was that the Project was emblematic of how African governments could collaborate on, and benefit from, increased trade and commercial links. Furthermore, the Project demonstrated how African governments could find the means for beneficial collaboration: South African officials had provided a 'platform of infrastructure' in the form of government grants equalling no more than 10 percent of the total cost of the Maputo Corridor Project, but up to 90 percent of the project's costs had been met through private capital. The private capital had had to be enticed, it was pointed out. And enticement was best done with policies that supported privatisation, increased competitiveness, and fiscal prudence -- in other words, through GEAR-like policies.

During the coalescence period, policy makers in both Washington and Pretoria sanctioned a relatively *laissez faire* approach to seeing their interests on the African continent furthered. The grand aim was simple: whenever necessary, the government was to intervene with a minimalist helping-hand, but wherever possible, the private sector and the workings of the free market were to run their course. Through increased trade and commercial links,

and ultimately Africa's better integration into the global economy, it was expounded, Americans, South Africans, and indeed Africans the continent over stood to benefit. In sum, the predominance of economic liberalism typified the belief in US and South African foreign policies that from little could come much.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has shown that numerous grand aims existed in the parallel evolution of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s. Significantly, it has also shown the correlation between grand aims and modest means. At times modest means were a constraint in, and on, US and South African foreign policies (as in the focus period). At other times they were a choice and even a desired agent (most notably during the coalescence period). Regardless, when modest means were *imposed* upon US and South African foreign policy makers, they were often *forced* to devise new grand aims. Yet even when modest means were *willingly* employed, this too resulted in the articulation of new grand aims, as actions and ends were *made* to correspond. In both cases, new foreign policy periods emerged as attention, efforts, and resources were re-prioritised. Modest means, therefore, were a force that not only shaped, but drove, the four-period parallel evolution of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa in the 1990s.

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## Epilogue: Evolution Unabated

*Where this study ends is by no means the end of the evolution of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa. On 18 May 2000, President Clinton signed into law the 'Trade and Development Act of 2000'. The act itself was a hybrid version of the 'Africa Growth and Opportunity Act' which had been shuffled from committee to committee only to die in one Congressional session after another since 1996, and one for which the Clinton administration had lobbied hard. Accordingly, it was in a triumphant mood that Clinton claimed the Act 'promotes the kinds of economic reform that will make sub-Saharan nations, on the long run, better allies, better trade partners, and stronger nations'. However, on the back of this bold statement came an intriguing observation. Clinton said: 'Trade can broaden the benefits of the global economy and lift the lives of people everywhere. But it is not enough, and our agenda for the developing world must be multifaceted, recognising that trade must work for all people, and that spirited competition should lift all nations.'*<sup>2</sup>

*Between 21-28 May 2000, Thabo Mbeki conducted his first state visit to the United States since his election as South Africa's President in June 1999. Though he stressed the many positive dimensions of US-South African bi-lateral relations, he lamented the absence of foreign investment in Africa, where 'wars, military coups, and instability within countries cannot but contribute to the dampening of investors' appetites'.<sup>3</sup> In particular, Mbeki stressed the failure of globalisation to address effectively the needs of developing countries. Indeed in one speech he noted that developing countries were always being told to undertake economic and trade reforms (read: the 'Trade and Development Act of 2000') to become more compatible with, and attractive to, the developed world. In South Africa, where the government has endorsed and pursued liberal economics aggressively, and where the country's political and economic fundamentals are stable and sound, Mbeki said, 'in spite of this, investment flows into South Africa have been disappointing, helping keep poverty and unemployment levels high'. 'Many of us (in Africa) are punished,' he continued, 'by the development and trade structures in place, which benefit the wealthy countries that wrote them and continue to impact negatively on us.'*<sup>4</sup>

*So what to make of Clinton and Mbeki's comments? What does the future hold for US and South African foreign policies towards Africa? In my opinion, US and South African foreign policy makers will continue to advocate the benefits of economic liberalism as a grand aim.*

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<sup>2</sup> Quotes are from 'President William J. Clinton: Remarks at Bill Signing of Trade and Development Act of 2000', a White House press release found in its entirety at [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/000518\\_clinton\\_agoa.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/000518_clinton_agoa.html).

<sup>3</sup> 'Mbeki Cautions West on Dangers of Poverty', *Business Day* (South Africa), 24 May 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Quotes are from 'Mbeki Lashes WTO, Globalisation For Fuelling SA's Woes', *Business Report* (South Africa), 25 May 2000.

*However, how and on whose terms such a grand aim is to be pursued will become an even greater cause of dialogue, and most certainly debate.*

*The evolution of US and South African foreign policies towards Africa continues unabated, leaving the way open for further analysis and commentary...*

— *Brian Hesse,*  
*London, England, 10 June 2000*

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