STRATEGY FOR SURVIVAL

WILLIAM GUTTERIDGE ©

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THE POST-ELECTION AGENDA

THE COLLAPSE of the Portuguese Empire in Mozambique and Angola in the 1970s and the emergence last year of an independent Zimbabwe brought international Black Africa to the frontiers of the Republic. These events combined with internal Black aspirations, violently symbolised by the Soweto riots of 1976, brought home to South Africa's White leadership the need for a new strategy. The so-called 'total strategy' which has emerged rests on the twin pillars of maintaining security by conventional military means, and of social and political reform underpinned by rapid economic development.

The common-sense military view that a country cannot be defended unless most of the population are on its side has prevailed. In the process, the political emphasis has shifted perceptibly from White supremacy to White survival and identity.

The object of this study is to examine, as Mr P W Botha begins what at his age of 66 is likely to be a final five-year term as Prime Minister, the prospects for avoiding an ultimate escalation of a conflict which is already in progress at a number of levels internally and to an extent externally. The probability that the Parliament elected on 29 April is the last exclusively White South African Parliament, whatever the developments in the course of it, is also a factor to be taken into account. Whatever the intermediate steps, proof of success can only lie in the enactment of measures which are overtly recognised by the bulk of the population as meeting Black aspirations. If this were to happen, in due course the international pressures against South Africa would be defused. Failure would mean an escalation of violence and presumably a revolution. At present it seems unlikely that a final concession of power by the White minority would precede such a deterioration.

To a considerable extent the South African Government is now hung on its own rhetoric. For years its anti-terrorist and other legislation has tended to equate what many would crudely term 'the Red menace' with 'the Black menace' (Swart gevaar in Afrikaans). Internal dissidence and subversion has been regarded as inevitably and closely linked with direct Soviet intervention. The labelling of the opponents of the regime generically as 'communists' has not only made the creed seem attractive, it has masked the genuine nationalist — even the Black-consciousness — content, in the anti-apartheid protest. The blanket condemnation by the Prime Minister in at least one major election speech of 'Communism, Marxism and Radicalism' could not do other than continue to compound the confusion.

The failure to distinguish between African socialism, or Marxism, and close practical dedication to Moscow's cause distorted judgments in South Africa on Robert Mugabe's accession to power in Zimbabwe in March 1980 and still seriously affects relations between the two countries. The same probable misperception is an important inhibition on a Namibian settlement. South Africa fears the impact of a Swapo-dominated government in Windhoek, providing another chance for Soviet interference in her affairs. The euphoria generated in South Africa by the prospect of conservative governments in power in Washington and London simultaneously is another indication of the undue tendency there to see external relations primarily as a response to the Soviet threat. Sir David Scott, until 1979 British Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa, in his recently published reminiscences sums up this aspect in a single sentence: **'Communists did not invent discrimination, they merely capitalised on it.'** In the same book he confirms the view, comprehension of which still seems to elude South Africans, that the manoeuvrings of successive British Foreign Secretaries, including Dr David Owen, on the subject of the UN plan for Namibia and of South Africa generally have been designed primarily to avert mandatory sanctions against the Republic. The failure to date to implement the generally agreed proposition of independence for Namibia, accepted in principle by Mr Vorster in 1975, is an albatross round Mr P W Botha's neck which he will have to remove before he ventures far along the road to reform in the Republic.

NAMIBIA: SOUTH AFRICA'S FRONT-LINE?

Though the UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978 has been described in some quarters as

a dead-letter, it is likely that any settlement of the Namibian question in the near future will be based on a modified version of it. Essentially this resolution providing for a UN-supervised election aimed originally at independence for the territory by the end of 1981. The abruptly abortive Geneva Conference in January 1981 more or less terminated that prospect for the time being.

Earlier difficulties over the UN plan related to the proposed Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) in northern Namibia, the size and composition of the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) and in particular the number and location of South African and Swapo bases. The least of the problems seemed to lie directly in reaching agreement on practical arrangements between the designated UNTAG commander and the South African military authorities. A first-hand view of the terrain is sufficient to bring home the virtual impossibility of effective control by a UN force of only 7 500 men, not all of them to be deployed in the DMZ.

Whatever the technicalities, however, it is clear that the essential problem is one of mistrust and fear: fear on the part of South Africa, as has been indicated, of a Soviet-influenced government in Namibia, and mistrust on the part of Swapo that the Republic will effectively implement any agreement which is reached, short of their own preference essentially for a direct transfer of power to them. Thus, in spite of all the manoeuvrings, and the establishment of an internal political administration under a directly appointed South African Administrator-General in 1977, the central issue is still what it was when the Western contact group — USA, Canada, Britain, West Germany and France — was established in that year.

The capacity to apply pressures on Swapo, which in the last resort would be deprived of its bases and supply lines, is considerable. The major missing link is South Africa's political will to run the risk of genuine independence for Namibia and thus end the war. The question is whether in the aftermath of the election, P W Botha's Government feels that it can reach a firm decision. In this calculation not only military factors but military advice, and even pressure, will play an important part.

Namibia: the military aspect

The guerilla or 'border' war in what is now termed the operational area in northern Namibia, has now become what seems a permanent feature of the South African scene. Today a political settlement in Namibia, with independence resolving the long-standing dispute between the UN and South Africa over the Republic's claim to administer the territory, partly, **but only partly,** depends on the urgency of the need from a number of points of view to end the war.

Though the South African Defence Force (SADF), along with the newly designated South West African Territorial Force, has probably about 20 000 men in the border areas, the guerilla war with Swapo has never remotely approached the scale of the operations in Zimbabwe or even earlier in Mozambique. The position at the moment seems to be ehat, on the Swapo side, there are around Lubango, south of Benguela in Angola, 6 000 or 7 000 young men from Namibia or with Ovambo tribal affiliations either in training or in waiting for it. This reservoir is supplemented by recruits and what are regarded as refugees from Namibia whose flow is somewhat spasmodic.

'We Blacks do not quite grasp what this general election is about. We do not know what Whites are really voting for.' — Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

For the time being, however, the operational Swapo guerilla forces amount to no more than about 2 000 men located some 50 km inside Angola in the area north of the Cunene River opposite Ovamboland. They too, especially since the South African 'Operation Smokeshell' in July 1980, have scattered and are generally in small defended localities.

The South Africans for their part claim, probably accurately, that the direct operation of guerilla parties has in the last six or eight months been progressively confined to a relatively narrow strip from the Etosha Pan northwards through to the frontier but embracing Oshakati and Ondangwa. In the past there have been incidents further south in the farming and mining areas down to Otavi and beyond. Lately these have recurred on a small scale around Tsumeb. The South African attribute their relative and perhaps temporary success at least in part to their 'hearts and minds' community action programme, whereby medical aid, education and village development are a primary role of the armed forces. **It is, judging by experience in other places, likely that these civil aid programmes, while having some beneficial practical results, make little political impact.**

The admittedly sharp rise in land-mine casualties in recent months and the precautions which consequently have to be taken, including sweeping the roads even in the main administrative area each morning, suggests a high level of guerrilla infiltration of central Ovamboland. This impression is reinforced by the fact that incidents still take place within a few hundred yards of the military airfield and base at Ondangwa and close to the perimeter fences at Oshakati. On the other hand, guerrillas killed in action or captured are reported to be getting younger and to be less experienced.

There has been some success by the authorities in creating what may be conveniently termed

ethnic battalions. Ovambo, Bushman and Kavango men have been recruited into special units and are involved in operations. These with a small number, as yet, of non-Whites from the Republic validate the claim now made that 28 per cent of the operational force is non-White and that racial integration is taking place in some circumstances; 38 per cent of the forces of all races serving in the border area are now drawn from Namibia.

What could have been an important development in social, as well as military, terms has been somewhat vitiated by an ill-advised attempt at the end of 1980 to introduce compulsory military service in Namibia, to coincide with the designation of the South West African Territorial Force. The introduction of compulsory military service seemed to ignore not only the lessons of colonial experience, especially in French-speaking Africa where pressures for full franchise quickly arose, but obvious sensitivities of minorities. It is understood that the provisions will be dropped or substantially modified by the end of the year.

The relatively small population base of Swapo — about a million in all on either side of the frontier — and apparent military success, encourage in some quarters an illusion that such a war can

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be won by other than political means. Military opinion in South Africa is divided between this, apparently minority, view and those who realistically would prefer, if they have to, to defend South Africa on the line of the Orange River to the south. This latter calculation takes into account the probable attrition of White morale by the indefinite continuance of military service, the cost of the war, **now running at R700 000 a day** and the relative ease with which southern Namibia could be kept under surveillance because of its desert and semi-arid landscape. **There is little doubt that contingency planning already takes account of such a possibility which would, whatever happened to the government in Windhoek, not bring a hostile border too dangerously near to the Republic's industrial heartland, which is, of course, much closer to Mozambique.**

Namibia: economic and political factors

Pending a political settlement the economy of Namibia is stagnant. In the face of uncertainty about the outcome, and probably of fear of the consequences of of a Swapo victory for Nujoma in a UN-supervised election, there has actually been some disinvestment by South African interests and certainly over a period of years transfer of profits to the Republic. The claim that Namibia is financially dependent on South Africa and, therefore, could not afford to break the political connection is regarded, in many quarters in the territory, as not only irksome but a distortion of the truth.

Though there is a substantial White element in Namibia, who regard themselves as being in a position analogous to Protestant Unionists in Ulster, there is also, among some longstanding White residents with a real stake in the commercial *viability of the country, a conviction that South* Africa has at one and the same time underdeveloped and, to a degree, exploited it. They are generally critical of the failure of South Africa, whatever the legal rights and wrongs of her administration of South West, properly to honour her assumed responsibilities as a colonial power. A greater commitment to economic development could have helped, they argue, to offset the political reluctance to devolve power. They are not disposed to accept the excuse that, throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, while the price of gold remained static and costs of extraction rose, the South African economy was not strong enough to help.

The Namib desert is undoubtedly rich in minerals which European and North American firms are anxious to exploit once political stability has been achieved. At least one French mining company interested in uranium has shown itself willing even to anticipate a settlement. Already nearly 50 per cent of the country's revenue comes from De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines of South West Africa, the headquarters of which has tactfully been moved from South Africa to Windhoek. Another chunk of income comes from Rossing Uranium Limited, an associate of the British mining company Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), which produces from the moon landscape of the desert, 19 per cent of the world's current uranium needs, and is a principal source of supply for British Nuclear Fuels and the Atomic Energy Authority.

An independent government of Namibia would be able to maximise the benefits from mineral extraction and ensure that the whole population, rather than the employees of particular companies, benefited. Rossing Uranium employs people of all races, and its provision of medical services and housing is something of a model.

In these circumstances, where the proportion of resources known, and as yet undiscovered, to population is so high that all Namibians could be relatively rich, the prospect of economic sanctions applied by the UN against South Africa to achieve the country's freedom is all the more frustrating. This applies also to the particular campaign to cancel the uranium contracts, which, even if it

were felt necessary for them to be renegotiated, would probably be vital for the effectiveness of any legitimate Namibian government.

The obstacles to a settlement, certainly one based on UN Resolution 435, are the official commitment of the UN to Swapo, South Africa's corresponding fear of a Marxist Moscow-oriented regime and the pressures for an internal settlement — what has been termed creeping UDI. On 1 April 1981 South West Africa — Namibia became, as far as the machinery of government is concerned, an independent state with Pretoria holding a veto. Nominally the administration of the Defence Act was transferred on that date to the South African appointed Administrator-General, while the Government Service Act was amended so as to establish a South West African police force. At the same time the railways remained fully under South African control and it was reported that Namib and Caprivi Airways had both been denied, by the National Transport Commission in Pretoria, licences to operate scheduled services in the northern part of Namibia. Services to South Africa are in any case restricted in order to safeguard the privileged rights of South African Airways.

Such administrative provisions illustrate very well the ambivalence which has created increasing tensions even in so far as a so-called, and probably as a result progressively futile, internal settlement is concerned.

During the past three years the legal framework of 'petty' apartheid has been demolished. But this has not been accompanied by the dramatic expansion of opportunities for Blacks and 'Coloureds' for even by effective implementation of the repeal of discriminatory legislation. The swimming pool and even the public library in Windhoek remain segregated. Black leaders can now dine with Whites in the Moringa room of the Kalahari Sands Hotel, but the training college for non-White teachers is grossly overcrowded, while White trainees have a palatial underused campus on the outskirts of the town and a virtual one-to-one tutor to student ratio. Higher professional education is dependent on the securing of places, for example at medical school in South Africa, and no attempt has been made to provide national university or polytechnic facilities. Rates of pay may have been equalised but the opportunities to qualify for higher level posts are negligible.

Surprisingly, it is by no means only non-White leaders who attribute this failure to implement reform to the continuance of the South African connection especially via the bureaucracy. White businessmen and professionals, even some of those of South African origin, but with a genuine, if self-interested, dedication to a new Namibia, resent the starving of investment by the transfer of funds to the Republic and see the old colonial-style administration of medicre middle-rank White civil servants as the main retarding factor.

The process of retardation results from a combination of incompetent inertia with political conservatism. The three-tiered system of administration recently introduced in Namibia has not only generated a numerically top-heavy and expensive bureaucracy for the size of the country's population, but it has features which are uncomfortably reminiscent of the Republic's homeland policy — education, for example, is administered by 11 different, essentially ethnic, authorities. In short, whatever the prospects for an internationally agreed settlement of the Namibian question, the internal administration has not, for a variety of reasons, succeeded in consolidating its political support.

The prospects for a Namibian settlement

UN Resolution 435, while currently described in some quarters as a deadletter, is at the same time treated by the five-nation Western Contact Group as the only basis for negotiation. Swapo, and its key supporters, regard it officially as non-negotiable while at the same time privately showing some willingness to accept modifications or provisos.

Practical acceptance of the plan is now dependent on safeguards and on the clear demonstration that South Africa will honour the agreement reached. The safeguards will be essentially constitutional and aimed not only at the White minority. Though a constitutional conference before an election seems to have been decisively rejected on the grounds that the conditions for effective chairmanship, for example, which applied over Zimbabwe, do not exist, an entrenched bill of rights, guarantees for private property and the preservation of multi-party democracy, including White parliamentary representation with regular elections, seem to be essential conditions — so do undertakings from a Namibian government not to harbour groups hostile to neighbouring states such as the ANC and Unita. There might even be requirements about the new Namibia's international affiliations — the UN (obviously), the OAU and the Commonwealth are mentioned as desirable. Attempts are also being made to influence a future Namibian government against the CMEA — once known as the Lomé Convention. A principal obstacle to Swapo's acceptance will be the status of the former British territory, now South African, of Walvis Bay which is, in fact, a tiny enclave halfway up the long Atlantic coast of Namibia.

On the evidence of a recent visit, it is not only historical precedent which suggests that something more than paper guarantees will be required. The question may be whether members of the Western Contact Group, especially perhaps Britain and West Germany, plus one or two African states, including Nigeria, will be willing to commit themselves to providing a presence. The offer of technical assistance and even the provision of places for higher education overseas, along with investments and development aid, could be a critical element in any package agreement. It might not

be too farfetched to suppose that, at any rate initially, international status for Walvis Bay could provide at one and the same time a base for an international military presence to guarantee the demilitarisation of the frontier area, support for constitutional guarantees and a channel for assistance to meet the challenge of the probably inevitable exodus of uncommitted Afrikaners.

Prime Minister P W Botha not only needs to be able to weather the immediate political consequences amongst his own National Party's right wing of an independent Namibia, probably under Swapo domination, but to make a virtue of necessity by somehow creating a climate conducive to the Republic's own reform. **Without an early resolution of the Namibian question, whether economic sanctions are eventually applied or not, the illusion that there is a military security solution to essentially political problems will stand increasingly in the way of his testing the feasibility of constructive peaceful change.**

CHANGE IN THE REPUBLIC: *THE MILITARY DIMENSION*

On 30 January 1981 the Republic of South Africa launched its first direct commando assault on the ANC headquarters at Matola, near Maputo, Mozambique. That attack apparently marked a new phase in the South African approach to defence against subversion and guerrilla attack. It could in the official view of the Republic be justified on the military grounds that the Silverton bank raid and the surprisingly successful attack on the Sasol-II oil-from-coal refinery as well as less spectacular activities in 1980 appeared to have links with the exile movement in Mozambique.

Other factors may, however, have determined the timing of such a raid which was in itself not obviously helpful in promoting the longer-term policies of internal reform and improved inter-state relations in Southern Africa. The apparent shift to the right and at least covert growth of sympathy for the Republic's position in some Western countries could be regarded as making the decision easier. It could also be regarded, happening as it did within three days of the announcement of a forthcoming election, as a gesture underlining the continuing determination of the National government and party to defend by every means the South African 'laager', while at the same time strengthening the political base for internal reform.

In the terms of a wider and longer-term concept of South African security, trans-border military expeditions, especially into Mozambique, are likely to prove counterproductive. The economic ties between South Africa and Mozambique are strong and not diminishing, and there was a risk that even the raid in question might have disrupted important communication and electric power links. More generally there were the possible repercussions on political attitudes at a time when the so-called front-line states, even Angola, seemed increasingly anxious to establish some sort of peaceful co-existence with South Africa, at least for the time being.

Developments in Zimbabwe and the apparently 'liberalising' tendencies of the South African Prime Minister and some other members of his government have, however, served to focus attention on what seems to be a more general shift over the last two or three years in South Africa's defence policy. There has even been the suggestion that in the aftermath of the Muldergate affair the commanders of the armed forces have to all intents and purposes seized power in the fields of foreign policy and defence and are profoundly influencing domestic developments on the basis of a new concept of security. To emphasise the role of military personnel in this way is probably to underestimate the importance of Mr Botha's 12 years as Minister of Defence before he became Prime Minister. His experience at the policy-making level in this field is, therefore, exceptionally for a politician, far greater than that of any of the generals who are now supposed to be so influential. The significance of his initial retention, as Prime Minister, of the defence portfolio should not be missed.

During Mr Botha's period of office as Defence Minister the defence forces of the Republic of South Africa were rapidly built up. **By 1977-78 defence expenditure amounted to at least 19 per cent of government spending and 5,1 per cent of GNP.**

The Republic of South Africa is the only country in Africa south of the Mediterranean littoral which has a military potential comparable to that of a medium-sized power in Europe or North America. Though Nigeria has in a sense a larger military establishment, its strength lies more in standing manpower than in the sophistication and versatility of its equipment and training.

In one sense at least geography is very much militarily on the side of South Africa because she is at the tip of a large continent and any attempted invasion would have to be mounted at a considerable distance through ports and airfields with, at present, limited facilities. The prospect of a major insurrection would probably be a precondition of any attempt from outside at direct military confrontation.

It would be very surprising if the possibility of an ultimate defence of the 'laager' of SA were not being urgently considered.

Successive Defence White Papers in 1977, 1978 and 1979 have demonstrated that planning is being based on the 'worst case', in which the Republic would be subjected to a violent assault from inside and outside at the same time. Some years ago Mr P W Botha, as Defence Minister, announced the intention to build a new army base at Phalaborwa in the north-eastern Transvaal, 50 km from the Mozambique border and a new air base, now complete, with underground hangers at Hoedspruit 40 km further south on the edge of the Kruger National Park — an indication of the potential threat to the industrial heartland of the Rand which would be posed by an invasion from that direction. At the same time a new combat training school was proposed for Sishen in the north of Cape Province not far from the Namibian and Botswana borders.

In terms of territorial defence as conventionally conceived the Republic of South Africa certainly means business. Confidence in her ability to handle a violent situation over an indefinite period is, however, less than total. The weaknesses are perceived to be the growing burden of defence expenditure; the probable difficulty in renewing and repairing sophisticated equipment, some of which still has to be imported; fuel supplies, especially diesel oil, even though temporarily secured by stockpiling; and, perhaps, surprisingly, the continued morale of White conscripts. Service on the northern Namibian border has not in the long run much more appeal for South Africans than Vietnam had for Americans.

There are also manpower problems of a different nature. To quote the 1979 Defence White Paper 'although the Permanent Force cadres of the Army . . . are manned to 80 per cent a real shortage exists in the leader element . . . and amongst the ranks of instructors.' In short, the armed forces are not immune from the problems consequent upon trying to run a large country with a substantial population on the basis of limited White manpower. These factors, along with the geographical and other disadvantages of distant frontiers, have, as already indicated, even caused some influential military opinion to think in terms of the abandonment of Namibia, when the Orange River would be a more easily defensible frontier.

The logic of what the 1977 Defence White Paper called a 'total national strategy' for defence is, therefore, clear. At that time General Magnus Malan, Chief of the Defence Force, referred to 'a national reorientation aimed at survival, while at the same time ensuring the continued advancement of the well being of all South Africans'.

The assumptions behind this pattern of strategic thinking are that Black leaders in the homelands are as vulnerable to terrorism as Whites and that economic sanctions, which are no longer ruled out as impracticable, would force the affected countries of southern Africa to make common cause. A region with a population of 40 million people and huge natural resources and reserves of labour would, it is argued, be capable of survival against almost any threat. Its protagonists feel that Namibia has demonstrated the possibilities of legally eliminating race discrimination and of a joint multiracial defence; they see recent moves in the Republic as being in the same direction. It is doubtful, however, whether they have yet explicitly identified fully the implications of such a concept for the future control and composition of the armed forces of the area.

Over the last two years, non-White recruitment to the SADF has taken place in the Republic and there are already convincing reports of successful integration and of the possibility of Blacks exercising authority over Whites. 'But how even so', said Chief Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu, in a conversation on this topic, 'can I recommend my people, who would make good soldiers, to join a force over which we have no political control?' This is a view parallelled by the attitude of the 'Coloured' leadership towards conscription.

In adopting a new kind of 'Fortress' strategy, the South African attitude to the West is ambivalent. On the one hand, the emphasis of policy is being switched from Europe and America to the local region where the drive for self-sufficiency will be stepped up; on the other hand, it is clearly expected that a successful consolidation of Southern African power would rally Western support against Soviet and other incursions in the area, which would be in any case for geographical reasons militarily much more vulnerable than a 'laager' based on the Republic alone.

A great deal depends on the projected and feasible level of guerrilla activities primarily by the ANC. The Sasol-II attack demonstrated one type of possibility which would be enhanced by the acquisition of new weapons, especially portable rocket launchers with guidance or homing devices. There have, however, been recent changes in the direction of the ANC's military operation into the hands of younger, more militant and aggressive leaders. Longstanding key figures like Joe Slovo appear to have been displaced by the new generation stemming from the Soweto violence of 1976. They may put the emphasis on intimidating potential Black collaborators, not only in the police and army but more generally. This could be seen as their response to the official 'total strategy' aimed at winning African acquiescence in or support for White reformist measures and would seem to suggest that the 'ethnic' battalions are seen as a serious threat to Black nationalist aspirations.

Internally a greater threat may well stem from the activities of Black trades unions who are increasingly effective in mobilising protest: the response of the South African authorities in particular to disciplined non-violence, if it becomes an established method of civil resistance in the next year or two, could be crucial and, in those circumstances, inflexible police methods would be particularly counterproductive. Externally the equipment of guerrillas with new generations of port-

able, precision-guided missiles is likely to make strategic industrial and other targets difficult to defend by normal methods. More seriously still, as a result of South African incursions, Mozambique may resort increasingly to Soviet assistance. There is thus little alternative for South Africa to a 'total strategy' which is aimed optimistically at releasing the external pressures by achieving real internal stability. Attempts to destabilise the apparently hostile governments of neighbouring states by, for example, backing Unita in Angola or anti-government guerrilla forces in Mozambique, are more likely to consolidate their authority by making them turn to external powers for military assistance, whereas economic circumstances are increasingly likely to cause them to seek a peaceful **modus vivendi** with the Republic.

This is an example of the way in which obsessions with an aspect of the Soviet threat may distort judgements and divert attention from the economic and political realities and trends which may actually be to the advantage of the Republic in terms of peace and stability.

INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE: THE THREAT OF SANCTIONS

Though sabotage may well, for the time being, become a regular feature of South African life, it is unlikely on its own to pose a crippling direct threat to the economy. Withdrawal of labour or protests in places of work, if well co-ordinated, clearly have a greater potential. Economic sanctions, however, in the South African context might conceivably have a serious impact. To be effective they would need to be more or less universally agreed and backed by enforcement measures. In terms of the implementation of sanctions, South Africa's relatively isolated geographical position could now work to her disadvantage. Satellite surveillance has reduced the scale of dependence on a naval presence for the enforcement of a blockade ,and though neighbouring countries are frequently forced to rely on South Africa for communications and even grain supply, their willingness, at least nominally, to support sanctions is no longer in doubt.

The approval and implementation of any UN resolutions on sanctions now depends on the co-operation of major Western countries, notably the USA, Britain, France and West Germany. France, under President Mitterand's guidance, may be in the process of shifting her position, but on the face of it neither the USA nor Britain is likely to allow a resolution to take effect.

The question arises, however, whether in the long run the repeated resistance by the West to popular Third World pressures exploited by the Soviet bloc will not itself work counter to the achievement or maintenance of stability in South Africa. The probable effect of sanctions on the Black work force in South Africa, on the inhabitants of the 'homelands' and of neighbouring independent states is not in serious dispute. If they really worked then unemployment within the geographical limits of the Republic would sharply rise, while outside those boundaries there would be food shortages and the export of Zambian copper andZimbabwean chrome would be disrupted. Chief Buthelezi, while refusing 'independent' status for Kwa-Zulu and supporting specific pressures especially by Western economic interest against South Africa, opposes 'blanket' sanctions and disinvestment on the grounds that the welfare of his people would be the first to suffer. Increasingly neighbouring Black states like Zambia and Zimbabwe openly recognise the potentially destructive effect of sanctions on their own economies, while endorsing the principle. This may well be in the expectation that because of the veto, they will both avoid the consequences of sanctions and, at the same time, be seen to be sustaining pressures against 'apartheid', even if those pressures are relieved by the action of one or more Western countries.

In the short term the consequences for themselves of the full observation of agreed sanctions by NATO countries would probably not be great, particularly if there had been some stockpiling of essential minarl raw materials. Apart from the scarce commodities like vanadium, titanium and platinum which are required in relatively small quantities, the essentials to industrial survival are chrome and manganese. In both cases Southern Africa is a principal supplier and for chrome the West is almost wholly dependent on South Africa and Zimbabwe, though West German interests are now involved in developing chromite mining in the Soviet Union. Correspondingly the loss of shipping and naval facilities in South Africa is much more putative than real except in the event of war. Some Western countries, notably Britain, have large investments in South Africa and there would be job losses, in the event of effective sanctions, arising from the presumed closing of South African markets.

The related questions of access to raw materials and market raise the fundamental issue of the essential interest of the West in South Africa. The initial euphoria about the prospect of a Reagan administration in the USA on top of a Conservative government in Britain was beginning to wear thin by the time of the South African election. The realisation that in the end they are both likely to want to get off the horns of a dilemma which could damage their immediate economic prospects was dawning. **Looked at from the standpoint of stark Western self-interest — which is perhaps the most realistic way, even for South Africa, to look at the situation — the Republic in its present form is not indispensable to the West.** In the end too, though this often seems to White South Africans cynical, they are beginning to appreciate that the particular form of government or social system which South Africa chooses or manages to evolve will be judged largely by the extent to which it endangers stability in the region. The West's interest lies not

so much in idealist objectives but simply in avoiding disruptive chaos.

In general the impact of economic sanctions on the South African socio-political system would be less practical and financial and more in terms of political attitudes and morale. While Black resistance would certainly be encouraged, the 'laager' mentality of hard-core White opinion would be reinforced by the determination to resist and survive. It is certainly arguable in the light of historical precedent that even if sanctions did not prove, because of elaborate evasions, an international farce, they would be, for too long a period, counter-productive in terms of inducing radical reform.

THE POLITICAL WILL TO REFORM

The result of South Africa's election on 29 April 1981 was in hard factual terms predictable. Objectively and in his own terms P W Botha's political judgement in calling the election was proved right. Any further delay accompanied by more speculation about the character of intended reform would inevitably have hardened the resistance. Though the HNP popular vote increased from 34 000 in 1977 to 192 000, they failed to get a foothold in Parliament which, as Mrs Helen Suzman, the veteran PFP MP, predicted, could have provided a critical rallying point for right-wing militancy.

The growth of the PFP's parliamentary membership from 17 to 26 may not be quite the set-back for the Prime Minister which conventionally it might seem. That and the decline of the New Republic Party (NRP), symbolises the emergence — especially among the young Whites to whom Dr Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, the PFP leader particularly appeals — of fundamental dissatisfaction with the government's approach to the political and social status of the Black population seen in terms of White survival. It remains to be seen whether this undoubted success at the polls will increasingly attract young Afrikaners with genuinely **verligte** leanings. It is they, rather than the current generation of National Party politicians, even the Prime Minister and his small group of 'reformist' colleagues in the Cabinet, who will, in the end, determine whether a **rapprochement,** acceptable to their Black opposite numbers, is feasible.

There is no doubt, however, that in the face of political tensions within the White community it is going to be difficult for the 'reformist' momentum, slow as it is, to be kept up. For that momentum depends first not on legislation, which in theory at least could be imposed, but on a widespread conviction that, in terms of White self-interest and survival, radical change is essential. Recent visits to South Africa have reinforced the impression that this could be achieved quickly enough only by a strong lead from the top of the Afrikaner hierarchy. But **that leadership is inhibited by the fear, characteristic especially of Afrikanerdom, that a change of stance would be interpreted as weakness and a betrayal of the national heritage.** In these terms P W Botha had no alternative to holding an election, even though his eventual overwhelming majority of 131 seats out of 166 in Parliament was less than that which he inherited from Mr Vorster in 1978. Mr P W Botha, Dr Koornhof and others, including senior defence force officers who recognise reform as essential for the survival of White identity, have clearly not yet reached any firm conclusions about the scale and range of change which will be necessary and prove feasible. More significantly they have not yet, as the election campaign demonstrated, succeeded in securing an easy acceptance of what they have already done across the White electorate.

Though P W Botha called the election to obtain a mandate for reform, most of the campaign, especially in Afrikaner-dominated or marginal constituencies, was taken up with reassuring the voters that change was not as fundamental as it might seem. The question is whether the new government will have the nerve to repeal laws which would imply the death of 'apartheid' and thus resist the charge that only cosmetic change to 'petty' regulations is allowable.

The real trends in policy in South Africa today are unusually difficult to interpret. Measures introduced by P W Botha's government, and tentatively proposed for the future are capable of contrary interpretations — they can be seen either as a projection of historical evolution or an attempt to reverse it. Right-wing Whites fear an eradication of their established social order, while the best for which P W Botha can possibly hope is the acquiescence of the majority of the population of all races who appear at least to be committed to a non-violent solution, even though there is, at present, little other common ground between them.

The majority in South Africa does, however, already recognise that change of some kind is bound to come, but the acceptance in non-White quarters of the genuineness of White intentions was undoubtedly not assisted by the recent election campaign. While Dr van Zyl Slabbert, PFP leader of the official opposition, incurred criticism by asserting

Underpaid, undereducated White public servants already have a record of obstruction to reform at the point where government administration and the man-in-the-street come face-to-face.

that there was no reason why there should not be a Black Prime Minister in a federal South Africa, provided that one race did not dominate the rest, government supporters were asking why Blacks should have social facilities comparable to those for Whites.

It was not surprising that in a speech at Vereeniging, the Prime Minister should refer to the dangerous effect of 'damaging campaigns', but **he put the blame on the White opposition for their outspoken criticisms of the government rather than on his own party for further alienating the non-White communities.** Though it is difficult to calculate the actual effect, it can be assumed that abuse from the hustings will not be forgotten and will take a long time to live down.

Unfortunately the installation of the Reagan administration in the USA seemed to suggest to many White politicians that there was more than electoral advantage to be gained from adopting an uncompromising stance. The notion of the Republic as a bulwark against communism, approved by the West, was reinforced. The point was missed that after some initial encouragement to South Africa, the United States, even more than Britain under a Conservative government, would put its own **realpolitik** and economic interests first. In these circumstances the willingness to listen to the American equivalent of the siren voices of the small 'unrepresentative clique of back-room Tory figures in Britain' who, not only according to Sir David Scott, have continually misled White politicians in Southern Africa about the support in Conservative circles for their policies, was in evidence. **The danger of encouraging the preservation of a society which even its leaders want to reform cannot easily be overemphasised.**

Though it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the election campaign not only exacerbated Black-White relations, but revived the old Anglo-Boer tensions, the credit for avoiding that lies essentially with the PFP for, primarily through its leadership, building a bridge between the two White communities. Moreover, the election has done nothing to diminish the gradually increasing militancy of the post-Soweto generation of young Blacks, with whom progressively for the sake of ultimate survival their Indian and 'Coloured' opposite numbers feel bound to identify. In spite of a new willingness of ministers, from the Prime Minister downwards, to listen to Black community leaders over the telephone or face-to-face the government seems as yet remarkably insensitive to their problems.

In this context the enhanced determination and efficiency of the exiled African National Congress, backed by members of the South African Communist Party, cannot be a matter for surprise. Recent events, including attacks on railway-lines, police stations, an electricity sub-station and a defence force recruiting office probably indicate that a positive decision has been taken to escalate urban guerrilla activity, even though some incidents *have been specifically associated with the Repub*lic's twentieth-anniversary celebrations. The object of these operations is evidently to disrupt and keep up pressure on the population while apparently not running the risk of the kind of counterproductive alienation which might be the result of large-scale indiscriminate killings.

The anniversary celebrations and the events surrounding them neatly but alarmingly sum up the dilemma into which White South Africa has got itself. The obvious attempt to foster White morale overrode any attempt to understand the potential reaction of other communities. The apparent failure to appreciate that the mass of the population feel that there is little to celebrate and possibly nothing worth defending clearly demonstrates the gulf which exists. The reported ritual burning of the national flag by demonstrators and the indignant reactions to the act as a form of sacrilege symbolised the divide.

More significant in some senses, however, were other incidents at the end of May and the beginning of June 1981 whether they were directly related or not to the Republic's national celebrations.

The US, even more than Britain under a Conservative government, would put its own realpolitik and economic interests first.

The heavy-handed response to student demonstrations on the campus of the University of the Witwatersrand and the removal of Mr Allister Sparks, the editor of the Raid Daily Mail, confirmed the continuing official disinclination to allow the dialogue and debate, which as Bishop Tutu said in an interview on BBC TV, is the only way forward. Coming on top of the banning of five Black journalists earlier in the year and the closure of two Black newspapers, whatever the exact circumstances of the termination of Mr Sparks's appointment, it is bound to appear sinister in terms of relatively peaceful evolution in South Africa.

Whatever the precise details, there is no sign of an attempt to prepare the White electorate for what in the interests of survival will almost certainly have to come — a dialogue, whether in the form of a national convention or not, about the future of South Africa involving all races, including probably exiled or imprisoned leaders like Nelson Mandela. **Indeed a decision on the part of the government**

to release him and others might be seen as a gesture of confidence rather than capitulation: but it seems to have been ruled out.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

There are a number of reasons why detailed speculation about the legal and constitutional steps to be taken during the life of the newly-elected White Parliament is likely to be futile. The main one is that the government itself seems set on exploration to find out what is feasible rather than on following a blueprint. It is probable that changes in the law covering the daily lives of the different races will prove practically, but not symbolically, more important than the constitutional framework. It is just as likely that the approach of the bureaucracy, especially the police, towards the implementation of the changes will prove a major difficulty. **Underpaid, undereducated White public servants already have a record of obstruction to reform** at the point where government administration and the man-in-the-street come face-to-face.

In a number of areas the Botha government has already modified the position of its predecessors. Its motivation has been primarily the development of a much larger non-White bourgeoisie with a stake in the country. It has certainly softened the labour laws and facilitated the rise of black trades unions, partly to allow for the necessary increase in the country's skilled and semi-skilled labour.

The general effect has been what the right wing verkramptes obviously predicted. **The belief that by creating a middle class and extending trades could be met to the point where support for the ANC, (PAC) and the Black consciousness movement would be eroded, has been predictably proved wrong.** A strengthened Black middle class and an entrenched and unionised labour force will demand more political rights and a more radical approach to segregation.

It seems unlikely that however fast the country moves in spreading real prosperity through the population and towards, for example, equal pay for all races, the steam will be sufficiently taken out of the situation in this way. It might, if in the process the Group Areas Act were to be repealed or seriously modified and fully integrated educational opportunities were to be provided, but these are precisely the areas in which, according to authoritative sources, the government is most reluctant to move for fear of the White back-lash. The question too of the homelands and their implications for any common South African nationality or citizenship is also critical, though a form of dual citizenship might just work.

At present too much is being made in some quarters of the President's Council of Whites, 'Coloureds' and Indians, with one Chinese — but no Blacks who are still officially regarded as having political rights in their homelands. **But, like most proposals issuing from the South African government today, it should be seen as a part of a process rather than an end in itself.** It does, however, appear that P W Botha is prepared, if necessary, to use a referendum of the White community to implement what he sees as his mandate for reform, using the probable support of the opposition to offset National Party dissidence. He might have to run the risk of splitting his party in the process and it seems unlikely that he will do this. If so his options are very restricted and the 'total strategy' unrealisable.

However, whether through the President's Council or otherwise, one or more of the confederal or consociational proposals for the future government of South Africa will probably be officially tested towards the end of this Parliament's life. The core of any new proposal, consonant with the wider concept of a 'constellation of states', is likely to be a tiered system of government. This would attempt to recognise racial and community autonomy, whether on a geographical basis or otherwise, and any power sharing would only be in the top tier where the representation would not necessarily be proportionate to population size.

Conclusion

The detailed elaboration of the formal changes in the South African socio-political system which may be attainable or desirable in the next few years is unnecessary at this stage. For them to be effective they will need to facilitate and reflect changing attitudes simultaneously. On the face of it the odds are against P W Botha's government bringing about successful reform to the extent that White opinion accepts measures which actually satisfy enough Blacks. But there is no final solution — no prescription from outside which could work — other than an unlikely total concession by one side or the other. In the peculiar situation of South Africa where the Whites have so much more strength than they have elsewhere, while, because of economic dynamics, they need more non-Whites to work alongside them, there is just a chance that the response on the part of the Black majority to reforming intentions may become positive.

On South Africa's prosperity and avoidance of chaos may depend the stability and livelihood of states to the north. Powerful international forces would welcome peaceful co-existence not only within South Africa but between the Republic and neighbouring states — not least because they would thereby be freed from diplomatic and even economic embarrassment.

Mr Botha's government has already introduced some changes: he now has authority, if he really needed that, to introduced more. He has to judge the pace of change. There is no question of an immediate radical stroke formally eliminating 'apartheid', but it is essential to press on as quickly as possible with some of the measures which have been hinted at. An obvious economic and social parity of treatment, even if legal separation remained, would, if it is not a contradiction in terms in South Africa, be a basis. The world outside must sustain credible pressures, economic and otherwise, which the political leadership can at least fall back upon in order to justify their in-

ternal actions. **Letting South Africa off the hook of sports boycotts or the EEC code of practice on wages may not in fact prove a friendly act.** Any signs of increased sensitivity and of the appreciation of the ultimate advantages of sharing power need to be encouraged. The welcome given in Pretoria initially to the Reagan administration provides the Conservative government in Washington — and in London — with a powerful opportunity for leverage, and therefore with a special responsibility to sustain pressures on the Republic's leadership.

But, in general, the world outside can do little but wait and refrain from military intervention. There is, however, no doubt that the continuance of racial tension and discrimination in South Africa provides the Soviet Union with a unique opportunity, not only for maintaining her credibility with Black Africa, but for embarrassing the West. This opportunity, if it continues, could well extend beyond the diplomatic field to the whole question of access, especially to mineral raw materials. The responsibility for initiatives lies clearly with the existing government of South Africa. It has to isolate the genuine internal causes of discontent and redress them fast enough to avoid a final flare-up. The success of P W Botha in laying at least the foundations of a new and generally acceptable order by 1985 is fervently to be hoped for The chances are objectively not good.

Love Your Neighbour?

PIETER DIRK UYS ©

SO IT didn't take that long for the Ugly Sister to throw off her sweet Cinderella facade. Barely four days after the Nationalist win in our snakes-and-ladders election, reality raised its arrogant head.

I suppose it was all too un-South African to be true — all the honest promise of reform. Maybe we ourselves are the ones to blame, like school-children, believing what our leaders say and feeling relieved at the promise of reform and a safer future.

We do pride ourselves in being a Christian nation with the Commandments at our fingertips — to love our neighbours and hold out the hand of compassion and care.

Somehow, with all the promise of change and the need for careful consideration of the past few weeks, one was lulled into believing that once P W Botha had his mandate he would rid himself of not only the irritating Right-wing extremist supporters of a 'Kaffirlose Vaderland', but would get rid of those passengers who have been clinging to his bandwagon for the ride and the thrill of being a little boss.

The Jimmy Krugers, the Lapa Munniks, the Arrie Paulus brigade and then, of course, the perpetuators of the obscenity of the laws of the Group Areas Act and the other little gems in our political heritage necklace.

And so it came to pass that, in keeping with what one expects of a Christian nation — the title with which we have endowed ourselves, while not having passed the audition — on Sunday morning two young and very confident policemen collared a young Black man who was watering a suburban garden and demanded his passbook.

The pass proved to be relatively up-to-date but further inquiry showed the man was in fact resident on the property — without permission.

'He can't stay here', the Dienaars said, 'We'll give you a warning and then we will come and raid you and it'll be a R500 fine for you. And for him? Well, he's not allowed to stay here. Let him stay in Soweto, there's lots of room there for him'.

The Black man watched and listened and if he had a tail should have wagged it, for the conversation was not about a person, but an animal. An animal who needed a collar and a licence and a permit — and firm instructions a la Woodhouse to 'walkies' and 'sit' and 'stay'! 'Stay' being the operative command — 'in your own area' (which this White suburb was not)!

It was getting on for winter. It was damp. Where would he find a place to stay?

'Listen, he hasn't got a permit to work here as a garden boy. You should get him a permit from Bantu Administration, although they won't give it to you, I can tell you now. He's already registered where he works — he can't be registered in two places'.

Suddenly their smiles faded and the interview was over.

'R500 hey, we're making a note of your name and address'.

They did and left — leaving the echo of P W Botha's voice repeating for the umpteenth time:

'The Afrikaner knows from his march through poverty and his determination to stand up and be himself how there was one attempt after the other to prevent him getting his freedom and therefore there isn't a nation in Africa better equipped to understand what is going on in the hearts of people who want to be free . . .' (Rustenburg, 1981).

I looked at the impassive Black face of the young man next to me, struggling through his poverty and trying to stand up and be himself, despite one attempt after the other to prevent him from getting his freedom — a face devoid of the