

**CHANGE AND CONTINUITY
IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF SOUTH AFRICA
IN THE POST-APARTHEID PERIOD**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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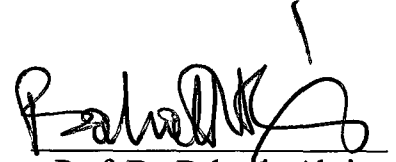
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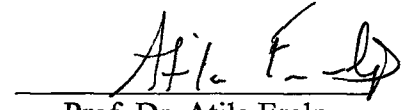
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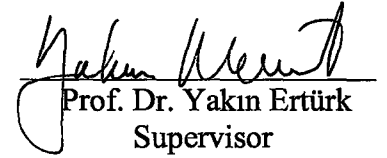
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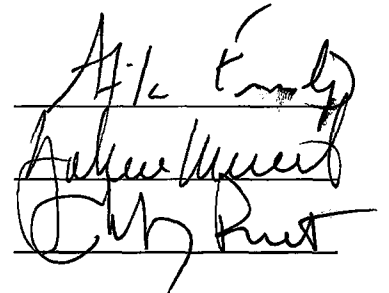

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ABSTRACT

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE POST-APARTHEID PERIOD

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It cannot be disputed that South Africa's transition from white minority rule to multiracial democracy is one of the great turning points in recent history. With the first all-races elections of 1994 and the negotiation process that led up to it, the people of South Africa demonstrated to the international community the possibility of bringing about a win-win situation for a conflict which had until then seemed impossible to resolve by peaceful means. At the end of this experience, South Africa emerged as a model democracy both for Africa and for the world at large.

This thesis is a study of South Africa's foreign policy in the post-apartheid era. It argues that any study of South Africa's foreign policy is incomplete if the continuities from the apartheid regime to the existing democratic system are not located and analyzed. This is especially true for the five foreign policy areas that the thesis identifies to discuss in detail, namely, South Africa's place in the international political economy, arms manufacturing and sales, South Africa's

perception of and relations with the West, migration and South Africa's regional hegemony.

Through its study of change and continuity, the thesis establishes the new patterns to South Africa's foreign policy and concludes that certain similarities are visible when it comes to why certain aspects of South Africa's foreign policy have or have not undergone significant change. The thesis argues that both the changes and the continuities have been caused mainly by practical and economic concerns.

Keywords: South Africa, apartheid, democratization, foreign policy, change, continuity.



ÖZ

APARTHEID SONRASI DÖNEMDE GÜNEY AFRIKA'NIN DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA DEĞİŞİM VE DEVAMLILIK

Şahin, Hasan Anka

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Yakın Ertürk

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Güney Afrika'nın beyaz azınlık yönetiminden çokırklı demokrasiye geçişinin yakın tarihin en önemli dönüm noktalarından biri olduğu tartışılmaz. 1994'te tüm ırkların katılımıyla yapılan ilk seçimler ve bu seçimlere gelene kadar yaşanan müzakere süreciyle Güney Afrika halkı uluslararası topluma barışçıl yollardan çözümünü o güne kadar imkansız gibi görünen bir ihtilafın her iki tarafın da lehine olacak şekilde sonuca bağlanabileceğini göstermiştir. Bu deneyim sonucunda Güney Afrika hem Afrika hem de tüm dünya için örnek bir demokrasi olarak ortaya çıktı.

Bu tez Güney Afrika'nın apartheid sonrası dönemdeki dış politikasını incelemektedir. Apartheid rejimiyle mevcut demokratik system arasındaki devamlılıklar incelenmeden Güney Afrika'nın dış politikasının tam olarak anlaşılamayacağını savunmaktadır. Bu belirlenmiş olan beş dış politika konusu için özellikle geçerlidir. Bunlar; Güney Afrika'nın uluslararası siyasi ekonomideki yeri, silah üretimi ve satışı, Güney Afrika'nın Batı'ya bakışı ve Batı'yla ilişkileri, göç ve Güney Afrika'nın bölgesel hegemonyasıdır.

Tez deęişim ve devamlılıęa eęilerek Gney Afrika'nın dıő politikasının yeni izgilerini ortaya koymakta ve Gney Afrika'nın dıő politikasının bazı alanlarının niin deęişim geirdięi veya geirmedięi noktasında benzerlikler grlebileceęi sonucuna varmaktadır. Tez hem deęişimlerin hem de devamlılıkların oęunlukla ekonomik ve pratik nedenlerden kaynakladığını savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gney Afrika, apartheid, demokratikleőme, dıő politika, deęişim, devamlılık.



**To Nelson Mandela
and all those involved in the bringing about of the rainbow nation**

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I have been fortunate enough to work on this thesis under the supervision of a knowledgeable, understanding, patient and resourceful teacher, Prof. Dr. Yakın Ertürk. I would like to thank her for her time and energy. I was also lucky to have Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever, both as a teacher and as a friend, who was always there to provide intelligent and creative solutions to my problems. Prof. Dr. Atila Eralp showed his consideration to find the time from his many responsibilities to be on the examination committee for this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It would be interesting to see how the 20th century would be remembered in 200-300 years' time. It was a century that saw great breakthroughs in science and human endeavor in general and, at the same time, it was a period of never-before-seen atrocities, bloodshed and human suffering. One can imagine that the 20th century will also be remembered for the diversity of political transformations that it witnessed. When one considers the fall of the great empires (British, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, Japanese etc.), the experience of socialism, the bipolar world in the post-World War II era, the decolonization in what emerged as the Third World and "democratization" in Eastern Europe, the extent to which the political as well as the economic world has been shaped and reshaped in the last century becomes all the more clear. Within this context, it would not be so inaccurate to suggest that the transformation of South Africa was one of the most surprising and none-the-less glorious of these experiences.

Indeed, if anyone was to suggest in the 1970's (or indeed the 1980's) that South Africa could become a democratic country through peaceful means, they would be judged at best a poor political analyst and at worst a hopeless well-wisher. If the same person were to say that South Africa would one day come to have one of the most liberal constitutions in the world, they would probably be advised to seek professional help! To most people, the situation in South Africa was one of binary opposites. Depending on where one stood, it was either the

British Whites oppressing the impoverished Blacks or the uncivilized Blacks threatening the well-meaning Whites and their modern, 'European' way of life. The sides were chosen and, up until the end of the 1980's, most who looked at the situation in South Africa thought that it could only be resolved by a violent conflict between these binary opposites.

Alas, the developments in South Africa would prove all such individuals wrong. Not only did a violent confrontation not take place, but also the ruling elite (White, mainly Afrikaner) accepted willingly to negotiate with the Black opposition for a peaceful transition eventually to full democracy. On 2 February 1990, De Klerk made his historic speech announcing his decision to free Mandela, to unban the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and spearheaded the transformation that culminated in the first all-races election of 1994.

Barber and Barratt identify the priority of the foreign policy of the South African state between 1945 and 1988 as one of a "search for status and security"¹. This search became an important and perhaps the defining factor in the country's foreign policy, especially after the 1970's, as a result of its progressively growing alienation from the global community. It is remarkable how South Africa's status in the eyes of the world (read the Western world) changed so dramatically from the immediate post-war years to the 1960's. South Africa's decision to take part in the Second World War on the side of the allies² indicated a willingness to become part of the new world order and the Western world whose basic principles would be redefined as from the immediate post-war years. However, as decolonization gained momentum in Africa and Asia, it quickly became clear that South Africa would not follow the West's lead in granting political rights to its Black majority³. This determination on the part of South Africa was the main

¹ James Barber and John Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security 1945-1988*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

² The white elite was deeply divided on the issue of whether or not to join the war and if so, on whose side. For more information, see Chapter II.

³ Nevertheless, one should not make the mistake of drawing a straight analogy between the granting of independence to the colonies by European powers and South Africa's Whites' refusal

reason for the country's gradual isolation from the Western world of which it desperately wanted to become a part. Even when the Western world shunned South Africa as a pariah state, an aberration amongst nations, the country never severed its relations with the Western camp and continued its policy of cooperation with these countries.

However, starting from the 1960's, it became more and more difficult for the Western world to treat South Africa as 'just another country' and the emergence of newly independent states in the 'Third World' with their firm stance against the apartheid regime only weakened the hand of the White minority. The non-aligned movement led the way in condemning the exclusion of the country's African majority from decision-making capacities. According to Ali A. Mazrui, the consensus on the part of the international community regarding the apartheid regime was one of the first and most important contributions of non-Western countries to international morality⁴.

The security aspect that came to define South Africa's foreign policy, especially from the 1970's onwards, owed a great deal to the reality of decolonization and South Africa's dogged determination to resist this process at all costs. As more and more countries that served as buffer zones in the eyes of the South African military 'fell'⁵, South Africa found itself surrounded by 'hostile' regimes. In response to what it saw as a 'total onslaught', South Africa launched the 'total strategy'. Total strategy involved 'destabilization' attempts on neighboring countries, thought to harbor African 'terrorists' in addition to a visible militarization of South African state and society. This included an increase in the production of weapons, mandatory military service for all adult

to share their hegemony with the country's African majority. When decolonization started in Africa, South Africa had already been an independent state since 1910 and was itself a former colony rather than a colonizing country such as Britain, France or Portugal.

⁴ Ali A. Mazrui, "Independent African States and the Struggle for Southern Africa" in The Unesco Press, *The Decolonization of Africa: Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa*, Paris: The United Nations, 1981, p. 23.

⁵ The Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique gained their independence in 1974 and Rhodesia became independent in 1980 as Zimbabwe after a prolonged guerilla war by ZANU. All three countries were white-ruled before their independence and closely allied with South Africa's apartheid government.

Whites, the establishment of the State Security Council and the training of a significant portion of the White population in the use of arms⁶. Starting from the end of the 1970's, and especially with the Mandatory Arms Embargo imposed on South Africa by the United Nations in 1977, more emphasis was put on the production of arms in South Africa itself through the promotion of a local arms industry.

Today, South Africa is an active member of the international community and an enthusiastic champion of human rights. It claims to have redefined its foreign policy goals and projects the image of a country that has long been isolated from the international arena and that now desires to be a part of the global community as fully as it can. The 'new' South Africa takes part in peacekeeping initiatives in Africa, seeks further integration with its fellow SADC (Southern African Development Community)⁷ countries in the region and supports radical states such as Cuba, Libya and Syria in international fora, both through its close ties and solidarity with these countries within the Non-Aligned Movement with these countries and defending these countries in their relations with the United States⁸.

One of the reasons why South Africa's peaceful transition came as a surprise to most was the fact that by the end of the 1980's (indeed, even much before), South Africa was something of an aberration in the family of nations. No other country in the world had such a clear-cut racially based rule. That this aberration had been allowed to exist thus far could only mean that it would take a violent confrontation to settle the matter once and for all. As history has shown,

⁶ Neta C. Crawford, "South Africa's New Foreign and Military Policy: Opportunities and Constraints", *Africa Today*, Vol. 42, Issue 1 / 2, 1995 1st / 2nd Quarter, p. 94.

⁷ The forerunner of SADC was SADCC, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference established by Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe in 1980. The aim of the first SADCC was to break the economic dominance of South Africa in the region. Today, South Africa is the biggest (in economic and military terms) member of SADC, having joined in 1994, and the aim of the Council is further economic cooperation and integration among the member states.

⁸ There have been several instances of American officials' negative statements concerning these countries being criticized by South African diplomats and statesmen.

this did not happen. However, apartheid policies meant that South Africa was, especially in the post-WWII era, an isolated state in the diplomatic world.

1.2 The Research Problem and Justification

There is no doubt that South Africa's transition from white minority rule to multiracial democracy is one of the great turning points in recent history. In 1994, the previously disenfranchised black majority was able to voice their choice in their country's leadership for the first time in 84 years of independence. The resulting transfer of power from the De Klerk government to the Mandela government meant substantial changes in terms of who governs South Africa although how this governance would be exercised remained dominated by the state structures that had been in place for nearly a century. At the same time, this was accompanied by a change in the perception of this 'new' country by the global community. Today, South Africa is once again a 'respected' member of the international community⁹ and an active participant in a number of international organizations¹⁰.

It would appear that change has been radical and immediately noticeable. However, changes in the internal structure of the country and in the way the country is perceived by the world at large may not always be reflected in all spheres of foreign policy. This thesis aims to pinpoint the extent to which South Africa's foreign policy exhibits aspects of change and continuity. The question to be answered in this context, around which this thesis will be built, is the following: As a result of the transition to multiracial democracy, to what extent and in what areas has the foreign policy of South Africa changed or remained constant?

⁹'Just another country' to borrow the term from Peter Vale and Ian Taylor who discuss in their essay entitled "South Africa's Post-Apartheid Foreign Policy Five Years On-From Pariah State to 'Just Another Country'?" published in *Round Table*, Issue 352, October 1999, pp. 629-634, whether South Africa can be seen as 'something special' in terms of international relations or whether it has indeed become, after its democratization, 'just another country'.

As from 1994, the world began to see a new South Africa. This 'new' country was one that was wholeheartedly embraced by the global community whereas the old regime was burdened by the country's pariah status. This was not all. The ruling White elite was replaced by the ANC, the most organized Black political grouping that had almost single-handedly coordinated the struggle against apartheid. It would seem as though nothing was and would be the same anymore.

To some extent, the validity of the claim that a 'new' South Africa had been created cannot be challenged. South Africa did indeed undergo a remarkable transformation. Its political system was fully revamped; its army, police and civil service were opened to all races; and democracy became the system in which the old along with the new political actors would henceforth function. It would be impossible to deny the magnitude of the change that has taken place in South Africa as a result of the transition to democracy. Furthermore, any student of South African politics would at once see that this transition has resulted in radical changes within the country's political and social structure.

Because of the historical significance of the transformation, it is commonly assumed that the changes in South Africa permeated all spheres of the State's existence. While it is true that South Africa's political structure was irrevocably changed in terms of equal rights to all and the embracing of a true Western-style democracy and that there have been important changes in certain spheres of foreign policy, there are areas in which change has been scant or non-existent. This is an interesting aspect of the South African reality in the post-1994 era and deserves more attention. This thesis will concern itself with the question of to what extent the foreign policy of the governments of the 'new' South Africa diverged from and converged with its apartheid predecessors. In seeking the answer to this question, it will give an overview of the foreign policy of apartheid South Africa, discuss the changes that have taken place in the country's foreign

¹⁰ Amongst others, South Africa chaired the Non-Aligned Movement between 1998 and 2003 and is now chairing the newly-established African Union.

policy since 1994 and then identify a number of issue areas in which evidence suggests a visible degree of continuity rather than radical change.

1.3 The Research Thesis

This thesis will argue that, while much has changed in South Africa following the dismantling of apartheid including changes in foreign policy, certain aspects of the latter have remained visibly similar to those of the apartheid era. This is especially true for the 5 issue areas that this thesis identifies in which continuities with the *ancien regime* are remarkable.

Despite all the ‘changes’, for all its talk of belonging to the ‘south’, the country continues to privilege its diplomatic relations with the West rather than with the Third World. South Africa claims to put great emphasis on human rights and appears to be a keen supporter of these in the international arena. However, the country has no qualms about continuing the sale of weapons to regimes with highly questionable human rights records. The migration policy is a true remnant of the apartheid era with its deep distrust of fellow Africans and neither the government nor the public wants it changed. Despite the once-socialist credentials of the ANC, South Africa is today as much a part of the capitalist political economy as it was during the apartheid era. It would not be unrealistic to state that the ANC is as much economically conservative as the NP. Finally, South Africa is now a part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and purports to play a more constructive regional role. With an economy that is 4 times bigger than all of the other SADC members combined, South Africa is clearly a hegemon in its region. In addition, South Africa’s economic dominance in the region continues, exemplified among others by the fact that the countries that were economically dependent on South Africa during the apartheid years, such as Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia, continue to be firmly linked to the South African economy.

There are varying reasons behind these aspects of continuity. A closer look reveals practical and economic reasons. South Africa's privileging of its diplomatic relations with the West is a result of the fact that most of South Africa's trade is still with these countries. The economic ties that bind South Africa to the West have not been loosened as a result of democratization. These very ties are also behind the neo-liberal economic policies implemented by the two ANC administrations thus far. The relatively high levels of military spending and arms sales are a result of the integrity of these pursuits to the South African economy. The military industry employs a significant number of people and the sale of weaponry is a big source of foreign currency for South Africa. South Africa's regional dominance is a direct consequence of the size and scope of its economy vis-à-vis the other countries in the region. South Africa can truly be called a 'natural hegemon'. This hegemony does not hide the fact that the country faces considerable economic problems with unemployment being a major source of concern. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that the migration policy of the country continues to be strict.

In addition to these reasons behind the continuities visible in South Africa's foreign policy, one other aspect needs to be underlined. The process of negotiations in South Africa led to a win-win situation for all sections of society. A difficult and complex political conundrum was settled in a relatively peaceful manner. Nevertheless, the transformation of South Africa was not a revolution. The South African state was not destroyed and a new state built. The existing state was transformed with its institutions and structure intact. For these reasons, any study analyzing the continuities in South Africa today must take into account the country's institutional heritage which is a direct continuation, however transformed, of the apartheid era.

In short, this thesis will aim to show that democratization, the participation of all individuals in political life regardless of race and the change of government from the National Party to the African National Congress have not automatically translated into changes in the entire foreign policy of the country. The thesis will

argue that continuities are visible in a number of significant foreign policy areas and this phenomenon should be taken into consideration in any study of the 'new' South Africa.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

Jo-Ansie van Wyk defines foreign policy as “the sum total of all activities by which international actors act, react and interact with the environment beyond their national borders”¹¹. According to Graham Evans, foreign policy is “the substance, aims and attitudes of a state’s relations with others”¹². In the past, foreign policy was understood to involve ‘high’ politics, understood to be diplomacy and military affairs. However, this understanding has gradually given way to a more holistic view of foreign policy, one in which economy, culture and internal politics all play their part. As Rosenau also points out, the modern understanding of foreign policy is that it is a boundless realm¹³.

In the light of this approach, this thesis will be a study of South Africa’s foreign policy in the post-apartheid era comparing the current trends in foreign policy with those of the days of minority rule. The study will aim to draw attention to those areas in South Africa’s foreign policy that have not undergone significant changes despite the experience of democratization and the change of government. Within this context, five foreign policy areas have been identified. These areas are:

- a) South Africa’s place in the international political economy
- b) The manufacturing and selling of arms
- c) South Africa’s perception of and relations with the West
- d) The issue of migration

¹¹ Jo-Ansie van Wyk, *South Africa in International Politics*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2002, p. 112.

¹² Graham Evans, “Myths and Realities in South Africa’s Future Foreign Policy”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 4, October 1991, p. 712.

¹³ James N. Rosenau, “Introduction: New Directions and Recurrent Questions in the Comparative Study of Foreign Policy” in Charles F. Hermann, Charles W. Kegley Jr. and James N. Rosenau (eds.), *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1987, p. 2.

e) South Africa's regional hegemony

Each of these issue areas will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV with parallels being drawn with the foreign policy trends in the apartheid state. As each of these issue areas are dealt with, it is hoped that a clearer picture of what South African foreign policy involves today shall emerge in relation to the foreign policy objectives of South Africa under minority rule.

It can be seen that each of the five areas chosen is representative of a broader picture. In addition, these five areas are interlinked in that each leads to and complements the others. For instance, the manufacturing and selling of arms relates to the military aspect of South Africa's foreign policy, an aspect that is also dealt with in analyzing the country's role as regional hegemon. This in turn is linked to the issue of migration as South Africa's relatively rich economy draws illegal migrants to the country. Finally, the study of South Africa's relations with the West serves to situate the country in global politics with the country's place in the world global economy used to trace the genesis of these relations.

In addition to these issue areas, the thesis also puts forward a set of questions around which the substance of the essay is built. The scope of the study is both determined and limited by this set of questions. These are:

- What were the main tenets of South Africa's foreign policy between the years of 1946 and 1989? How were these tenets affected by the process of reform that led to the dismantling of apartheid?
- What are the main changes and continuities visible in South Africa's foreign policy in the post-apartheid period? How do these compare with the foreign policy of apartheid South Africa?
- What were the internal and external factors that contributed to the monumental transformation in South Africa? How do these factors relate to foreign policy?

As can be seen, the thesis will focus primarily on foreign policy. This will mean that the factors underlying the transformation of South Africa from minority to majority rule will not be discussed in detail. The process of transformation will be dealt with only insofar as it relates to the formation of the country's foreign policy. In the same way, a full account of developments in South Africa after 1994, including those pertaining to the process of transformation itself, is also outside the scope of this thesis. Such developments will be referred to in connection to their relevance to the formation of foreign policy but will not be treated as subjects on their own right.

The research that has led to the production of this thesis was primarily a text-based one. The relevant literature was referred to and made use of in the building of the research body. As such, this thesis is mostly the result of research based on secondary sources. However, I should also add that my trip to South Africa in the first half of February 2003 provided me with a personal insight into life in South Africa and contributed to the authenticity of this thesis.

1.5 The Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in the form of five chapters. Chapter I constitutes an Introduction presenting the subject under investigation. The research problem is presented along with background information on the study and a justification for the argument of the thesis. Finally issues of methodology and organization are addressed.

Chapter II aims to provide a historical background to the study. The main tenets of South Africa's foreign policy in the post-World War II era are examined in order to establish parallels between foreign policy in the apartheid state and today. A chronological approach is adopted with the historical period under study being divided into 3 sub-sections comprising respectively the years between 1948 and 1960, 1960 and 1977 and finally 1977 and 1989.

Chapter III functions as a bridge between the historical part of the thesis and the study of current tendencies in foreign policy. It considers the process of democratization in South Africa and tries to pinpoint the internal and external factors at work in the coming about of such monumental change in addition to situating the transformation in its historical context. The chapter also provides an overview of the debate on South Africa's foreign policy since 1994.

Chapter IV includes the main arguments of the thesis. In this chapter, first, the changes that have taken place in South Africa's foreign policy are analyzed. Following this analysis, the five issue areas identified previously are elaborated on and the continuities visible in South Africa's current foreign policy are underlined. Each of these five issue areas is linked to the study in Chapter II in order to illustrate the said continuities between the apartheid regime and democratic South Africa today.

Chapter V forms the Conclusion of the thesis. It sums up the account given in the thesis in addition to the arguments presented in the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF APARTHEID: THE SEEDS OF CHANGE AND THE INEVITABLE TRANSFORMATION

2.1 Introduction

Having had a brief look at the basic layout and arguments of this thesis, it would be useful at this point to outline what the foreign policy of South Africa under the apartheid system consisted of and how and to what extent this relates to the patterns that one can observe in foreign policy today.

This chapter will deal with the foreign policy of South Africa between 1948 and 1989. The year 1948 has been chosen as the starting date for the analysis at hand since that is the year in which the National Party gained power, albeit by a small margin, in South Africa for the first time, a mandate that it would hold for 46 years. While South Africa was already a racially divided, White-supremacist country before this election, apartheid was not yet the official 'ideology' of the State. In fact, apartheid was the very ticket on which the National Party ran and won against the United Party in the 1948 elections.

The focus of this chapter shall range from this significant year up to 1989. It can be demanded why the analysis is not extended up to the official demise of the apartheid regime through the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994. The reason for opting to conclude the analysis in this chapter in 1989 as opposed to 1994 is twofold:

- a) In 1989, Frederick W. De Klerk succeeded P.W. Botha as the President of South Africa. His assumption of the presidency heralded a rapid phase of transformation. On 2 February 1990, De Klerk made his historic speech in the South African parliament indicating for the first time that Nelson Mandela would be released from prison, the ANC and the PAC would be legalized and that he was ready to negotiate with the Black opposition concerning the future of the country.

- b) As will be detailed in Chapter III, some of the changes that have taken place in South Africa's foreign policy have their roots in the reform process that can be dated back to the 1980's. After 1989, this process became much more pronounced as the country inched closer to a negotiated end to the apartheid regime. In fact, it is the contention of this thesis that some of the 'changes' that took place in South Africa's foreign policy have their origins in the post-1989 period in the country's history. These include, among others, a gradual return to the global stage, the termination of the nuclear programme and the granting of independence to Namibia.

Having set the time frame within which present analysis will take place, let us now turn to the rise to power of the National Party in 1948 and the changes this brought for South Africa in terms of politics and foreign policy. One of the most important tenets of South Africa's foreign relations, which is particularly relevant to this chapter, has been the degree to which domestic politics have traditionally impacted on foreign policy. This was especially evident in the apartheid years when the repressive policies of the South African state earned it widespread disapproval from a large and constantly growing number of countries and international organizations. As a consequence, South African foreign policy was and still is to some extent influenced by the perception of the country by the West. Indeed, there was very little in terms of difference between South African foreign policy in the immediate post-war era and in the 1970's; however, the changing conjecture and geopolitical outlook of the world meant that the West's

view of South Africa underwent a significant transformation. Similarly, the perception of South Africa today is radically different from ten years ago. However, as will be demonstrated within the course of this thesis, there are also a number of significant continuities in the country's foreign policy.

As indicated in the introduction of this thesis, five issue areas have been identified as exemplifying the aspect of continuity in South Africa's foreign policy from the apartheid regime to the current democratic political structure. These are:

- a) South Africa's place in the international political economy
- b) The manufacturing and selling of arms
- c) South Africa's perception of and relations with the West
- d) The issue of migration
- e) South Africa's regional hegemony

As this chapter covers a considerable span of time, namely the years between 1948 and 1989, certain benchmarks in South Africa's history will be used to divide the analysis into 3 time periods: The first time period covers the years from 1948 to 1960, the latter being the year of independence for several African countries, a development which necessitated a revision in South Africa's foreign policy. From 1960, the analysis ranges to 1977. This is the year following the Soweto uprisings in 1976 culminating in the government's launching of a 'total strategy'. Finally, the developments between 1977 and 1989, the year in which De Klerk assumed the presidency of South Africa, are highlighted.

In each of these sub-sections, the developments in the foreign policy of South Africa under apartheid will be elaborated. It is hoped that this account will serve as a basis to locate the changes and continuities visible in South Africa's foreign policy today.

2.2 1948-1960: The Institutionalization of Apartheid against the Winds of Change in Africa

As mentioned before, 1948 is the year in which the National Party came to power in South Africa for the first time. The promise of separate development (or apartheid, as it came to be known) for the different racial groups in South Africa was the creation of the National Party and was indeed one of the factors, which won it the election of 1948. It could be important to note that the initial understanding of the concept of apartheid was rather different in the beginning. When the concept was first publicized by the National Party and throughout the 1950's, 'apartheid' was understood to be a 'progressive' move rather than the oppressive State ideology that it came to represent. According to one supporter, apartheid would involve the "maintenance and protection of the indigenous racial groups as separate communities within their own areas, and the stimulation of national pride, self-respect and mutual respect among the various races"¹. In any case, these were the years when there were only four independent African countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and South Africa) and that the racial policies of many of the colonizing countries were even further behind the actual practice in the apartheid state².

In the interwar years, South Africa was a member of the international community as any other. The Second World War was viewed with some caution in the country as public opinion (read White opinion) and political actors were divided on the issue, firstly on whether or not to join the war and secondly on whose side. While South Africa was independent, and had been since 1910, it was a Commonwealth member and, given the fact that nearly all the other Commonwealth countries supported the United Kingdom in its war effort, the answer to the question of on which side to position the country appeared easy to

¹ As a first-hand account from the period, see the discussion of the South Africa's political system in R. De Villiers, "Political Parties and Trends" in George H. Calpin, *The South African Way of Life: Values and Ideals of a Multi-racial Society*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1953, p. 144.

answer. This appearance was deceptive however as Afrikaners and South Africans of British descent had different viewpoints. Where exactly did the division in political will come from?

The answer to this question was closely linked to the overt and covert Nazi sympathies within the South African elite and the behind-the-scenes relations with the Nazi Germany³. It would not be wrong to suggest that the kind of racist thought that came to characterize the political landscape of South Africa owed part of its existence in some part to the education that some of its formulators in the National Party received in the Nazi Germany⁴. Furthermore, there were two parties in South Africa in the years of World War II with pronounced Nazi sympathies (Afrikaner Party and the South African National Socialist Party⁵), both established and subscribed to by Afrikaners. This would also suggest that Nazi ideology held a certain degree of interest especially for those Afrikaners brought up with the stories of the Great Trek and the memories of the Anglo-Boer Wars.

It is nevertheless widely accepted that South Africa was a respected member of the world political community up until the end of the Second World War. This was still a period in which the greater part of Asia and Africa was still under the control of the European colonial powers, where racist policies were almost uniformly implemented. From this angle, South Africa was a 'White, Western' power like any other and its practices were more or less in line with the standards of the time.

² The engineers of apartheid for instance foresaw eventual African rule in designated areas within South Africa. This was at a time when such a provision would be unthinkable in many of the European colonies on the African continent.

³ For more detail on the relations between Germany and South Africa during the Second World War, see Robert M. Citino, *Germany and the Union of South Africa in the Nazi Period*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1991 and Dean Geldenhuys, "The Head of Government and South Africa's Foreign Relations" in Robert Schrire (ed.), *Malan to De Klerk: Leadership in the Apartheid State*, London: C. Hurst and Co. Ltd., 1994.

⁴ The Transvaal branch of the National Party barred Jews from party membership up until 1950. See H. Giliomee, "The Leader and the Citizenry" in Robert Schrire, (ed.), *Malan to De Klerk: Leadership in the Apartheid State*, London: C. Hurst and Co. Ltd., 1994, p. 110.

⁵ For more on these parties, see R. De Villiers in George H. Calpin, op. cit., p. 140.

This was to change with the end of the War. The establishment of the United Nations (UN) signaled the coming changes in the political climate. Equality was becoming the new catchphrase and South Africa found itself in a position where adapting would also mean political realignment. This was the norm that the Western family of nations was imposing. The first sign of division between the agenda of the UN and the policies of South Africa came when the newly founded UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948. South Africa was one of the eight countries to abstain. This was only the beginning; over the years, South Africa's internal policies would increasingly be made into international issues. These developments were as difficult to comprehend for the newly elected National government as they were for the outgoing United one. To South Africa, it was quite clear from the outset that the United Nations would never evolve into a body where 'South African' interests could conceivably be appreciated. From the white South African point of view, the UN was seen as "a cockpit of emotion, passion and ignorance"⁶.

One should not forget though that this is still a time when independence in the colonies did not look so imminent. In addition, South Africa was still a member of the Commonwealth, which was seen by the South African policymakers as being a forum where South African concerns could be raised at a broader level. While South Africa had its reservations regarding the equal membership of India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka today) to the Commonwealth, it did realize that the organization would constitute a better platform compared to the United Nations with respect to South Africa's relations with the world.

These two examples show how South Africa's dilemma of belonging (to the West) was already becoming problematic. On the one hand, South Africa considered itself a 'White' country and a part of the Western family of nations. However, this brought with it a new set of standards and rules that countries would have to abide by. South Africa's standing as a minority-run state when the

⁶ Quoted in James Barber and John Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status*

rest of Africa was moving towards majority rule would soon cause problems between the country and the much-idealized West. On the other hand, the division of the world in the post-war era into socialist and capitalist camps presented an opportunity for South Africa. Equating the 'black' threat with the threat of Communism (on the pretext that Communist countries- i.e. the USSR- was scheming to take over Africa), South Africa quickly aligned itself with the capitalist cause and even declared that it was 'waiting for an invitation to join NATO'⁷. Although this appeal would never be fully reciprocated in the form of membership, South Africa would come to establish military ties with several NATO members (Portugal, France, Britain⁸) and some left-wing analysts would in time call South Africa 'the frontline station' of NATO⁹.

The African Charter drafted by Prime Minister D.F. Malan in 1949 is the first major foreign policy document in post-war South African history. However, it should be noted that the Charter was by and large Malan's own production and was never adopted as an official document¹⁰. Five principal aims were set out in the Charter:

- 1) To protect Africa against Asian domination;
- 2) To preserve Africa for the Africans;
- 3) To ensure that Africa developed along Western Christian lines;
- 4) To keep communism out of Africa;
- 5) To make Africa non-militarized.

and Security 1945-1988, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 21.

⁷ Quoted in Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 252.

⁸ It can be said that the Simonstown Agreement concluded in 1955 between Britain and South Africa represented the furthest degree of military cooperation between South Africa and a foreign power. However, South Africa would also procure arms from France and cooperate militarily with Portugal in the first half of the 1970's against the liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique.

⁹ In his book *Güney Afrika Cumhuriyeti: Çağdaş Sömürgecilik ve Emperyalist Yayılma Örneği* (Istanbul: Yarm Yayınları, 1986), Gürhan Uçkan discusses the growing importance of South Africa in the 1970's and especially 80's for the United States in the struggle against 'communism' and retains that coupled with South Africa's military relations with Britain and France (despite the UN imposed arms embargo) it can easily be claimed that South Africa acted as the frontline station of NATO in the region.

¹⁰ James Barber and John Barratt, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

As can be appreciated, the document is rather unrealistic in the goals that it has set¹¹. The South African Department of Foreign Affairs quickly realized that there was “no prospect of it going anywhere” and formulated its own objectives¹². These were:

- 1) Maintenance and development of economic links with Britain and Western Europe;
- 2) Retention of the defense ties established during the war with Britain and other Allied powers;
- 3) Avoidance of any kind of break with the United Nations that could lead to the imposition of sanctions;
- 4) Promotion of South Africa’s ability to assume a leading role in the scientific and technological development of sub-Saharan Africa.

Donald Sole, himself a South African diplomat who was involved in the development of these objective, admits that only the first objective was ever realized¹³. Nevertheless, these objectives indicate a clear direction in terms of foreign policy goals and display remarkable foresight regarding South Africa’s eventual falling out with the world community considering the fact that sanctions would not come about for another 20 years. This is not to say that they were no signs regarding what Geldenhuys refers to as “the rising tide of international adversity”¹⁴. In 1955, South Africa recalled its mission from the UN, withdrew from UNESCO and decided to retain symbolic representation at the UN until 1958. On another front, in 1957, Ghana gained its independence from Britain as the first sub-Saharan independent black state. Decolonization had officially started.

¹¹ Nevertheless, the second objective of ‘preserving Africa for Africans’ is noteworthy. It signals a clear African dimension to foreign policy, at least in theory, and is strikingly similar to the current ANC government’s pronouncements relating to Africa.

¹² Donald Sole, “South African Foreign Policy Assumptions from Hertzog to De Klerk”, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1994, p. 107.

¹³ Donald Sole, *ibid.*

¹⁴ Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 256.

2.3 1960-1977: Economic Development and International Isolation

There can be no doubt that 1960 was a turning point in African history. The decolonization process that started in sub-Saharan Africa in 1957 with the independence of Ghana culminated in a historic year in which 17 African states became independent. Taking its cue from British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan¹⁵, the *National Geographic* magazine¹⁶ proclaimed that the winds of freedom were stirring the continent.

While the entry into the world community of 17 new 'black' states is a revolutionary development in African history; for South Africa, the year 1960 is remembered for a more sobering historical event, namely the Sharpsville shootings. A call made by the Pan-African Congress (PAC) to defy the pass laws, which required every African to carry a passbook on his/her person or risk arrest resulted in mass protests. Police fired on a crowd that had gathered outside a police station in Sharpsville killing 67 Africans and wounding another 186. To many in the world, this was seen as proof that the world was going in one direction and South Africa in another. In the words of the South African Prime Minister Verwoerd, the aim was "to maintain white supremacy for all time to come over our own people and our own country, by force if necessary"¹⁷. The Sharpsville shootings are also important in that they represent a breaking point for the African liberation movements in South Africa¹⁸. Up until that time, the movements had by and large employed non-violent means of resistance. Sharpsville served as an indication that the White government would go to any lengths to prolong its illegitimate cling to power. It was in this vein that the ANC and the PAC were outlawed shortly after the Sharpsville shootings. In reply to these measures, the ANC decided to give up its policy of non-violence and

¹⁵ Macmillan made his famous 'wind of change' speech in the South African Parliament in Cape Town in February 1960. This was considered to be a clear sign of the widening gulf between Pretoria and the rest of the world at the time.

¹⁶ *National Geographic*, Vol. 118, No. 3, September 1960.

¹⁷ Quoted by Donald Sole, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁸ James Barber and John Barratt, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

embraced violence as a means of combat through the establishment of its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK-Spear of the Nation).

The shootings had come right on the eve of the Commonwealth Conference of May 1960 and caused much backlash against South Africa. British Prime Minister Macmillan noted that the feeling against South Africa was “swelling to really dangerous proportions”¹⁹. Amid these feelings, South Africa applied for continued membership after the country’s scheduled declaration of a republic on 31 May 1961. This was technically possible as exemplified by India and Pakistan among others. However, a similar debate on South Africa quickly turned into a heated condemnation of apartheid. To avoid the possible humiliation of having its application rejected, South Africa withdrew its request²⁰. South Africa was left with no option but to leave the Commonwealth.

It is in this same year that South Africa first initiated what would come to be called its ‘Bantustans’ policy. This was a practice whereby the Blacks in South Africa would have gradual self-government in the areas designated for them for this specific purpose. To this end, the White government allocated 15 % of the country’s land for self-government by 85 % of the population. The argument was that, in line with the basic characteristic of apartheid, Whites and Africans should have separately governed homelands. While Africans would never be allowed to take part in the political life of the White republic, neither would the Whites ever rule in the African homelands. In practice, however, self-government was not a realistic target since all of these territories were economically dependent on South Africa and many of them did not have strictly defined outer boundaries. While a homeland such as Transkei was more or less territorially unified, Bophuthatswana, Kwazulu and Ciskei were composed of small plots of land spread out with large White areas in between that did not come under their jurisdiction.

¹⁹ Quoted by Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 262.

²⁰ Quoted by Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 263.

All the same, as far as the South African government was concerned, the policy was progressive and more importantly in line with the developments in Africa at the time. However, this turned out to be a grave miscalculation as the Western world made it clear that it was African self-determination in the whole of South Africa that they desired. Despite this radically different interpretation, South Africa would persist in its Bantustans policy and even grant 'independence' to some of these 'states' at the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's.

It is this radical break with the common perspectives of the Western world at the time that led the United Nations in 1962 to call on its member states to sever diplomatic links and restrict economic relations with South Africa. This was the first sanctions resolution passed concerning and against South Africa but it would certainly not be the last. An international arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council followed in 1963²¹. Also in that year, South Africa was excluded from the Economic Commission for Africa and, in 1964; the country withdrew from the ILO, the FAO and the WHO, all bodies of the UN. These developments coupled with the categorical rejection of the newly independent African states to establish diplomatic links with the apartheid regime, it could be argued that the diplomatic isolation of South Africa was fully underway.

It is however important to distinguish between the calls made by the United Nations and actual practice. The above call to sever diplomatic links with South Africa would be repeated several times but in reality no major Western power ever broke off its diplomatic ties with South Africa. The reverse is also true; South Africa retained diplomatic representation in all the major Western countries throughout the lifetime of the apartheid state. A look at economic sanctions also tells a similar story. South Africa's economic relations with the countries most interested in its raw materials and natural resources (notably USA, UK and France) were never completely frozen. Indeed, these countries, especially

²¹ The embargo was in practice not very efficient as South Africa continued to buy military equipment from countries like the USA, the UK, France, West Germany, Italy and Japan. For a more detailed study on the effect (or lack thereof) of the arms sanctions on South Africa, see Signe Landgren, *Embargo Disimplemented: South Africa's Military Industry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1989.

the USA and the UK used their vetoes in the UN as much as possible in support of the apartheid regime and in order to delay, if not prevent, the imposition of sanctions against South Africa²².

In 1965, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) declared its unilateral independence from Britain and was threatened with sanctions in the same way as South Africa was. In reply to this development, South Africa chose to ignore the call for sanctions and gave its support to the White-minority regime in Rhodesia headed by the government of Ian Smith. The UN sanction resolutions was adhered to in the case of Rhodesia and without the Republic's support, Rhodesia would not be able to withstand the pressure for as long as it did²³.

On another front, the issue of the three High Commission Territories of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland was not yet resolved. South Africa had been asking Britain for the incorporation of these territories into the Union since the beginning of the century. It was Smuts in the 1940's that made the greatest push towards trying to convince Britain to hand the territories over to South Africa but it had not worked. By the 1960's, it was clear that such a handover would never take place. Instead South Africa started arguing for the guardianship of these territories to lead them, in Prime Minister Verwoerd's words, into "independence and economic prosperity"²⁴. This was seen as the first step towards the establishment of a common regional market/security zone comprising such countries as Rhodesia, Malawi, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, the three High Commission Territories and South Africa's own homelands in which South Africa would be the leading power. Such a grand union would never be achieved and the greatest success of the Republic in this regard would be the creation of the Rand zone with the inclusion of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.

²² Concerning the voting record of these two countries in the UN, see *New African*, "South Africa: Voting for Apartheid at the UN", No. 415, February 2003, p. 32-35.

²³ Rhodesia would become independent under majority rule in 1980 following a negotiations process in which South Africa talked the White-minority government into accepting majority rule. As we will see in the next section, the circumstances were rather different then thus accounting for South Africa's change of policy.

It is widely accepted that it was under the Premierships of H.F. Verwoerd and B.J. Vorster that South African foreign policy started to have 'Africa' as a separate dimension. In addition to its desire to play a bigger role in the region, as exemplified in Verwoerd's dream of setting up a Constellation of States (CONSAS) around South Africa, the country also considered providing bilateral aid to black African countries on the condition that they muted their criticisms of the White-minority regime in the international arena²⁵.

In 1963, Britain decided to comply with the UN Security Council's call and imposed a voluntary arms embargo on South Africa. A year later, the USA followed suit. It was clear that the military alliance (against the 'red' threat) with the West that South Africa so desired would never happen. This development is significant because it is after this realization that South Africa decided to create its own arms industry. Over the years and especially after the breaking out of the wars of liberation in the neighboring Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, one of the defining features of South Africa's foreign policy would become the manufacturing, using and selling of arms.

Increasingly isolated, South Africa adopted a new policy of détente. This involved a more moderate and constructive approach towards the problem of Namibia and attempts to seek closer relations with the black states on the continent. Its call for diplomatic ties to be established was only answered by Malawi and cannot be considered a great success. However, Prime Minister Vorster did succeed in maintaining contacts with the Presidents of Liberia, the Ivory Coast and Senegal and a number of African states such as Malawi and Zambia accepted South Africa's offers of aid. Vorster also collaborated with Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia to find a solution to the Rhodesian problem. This effort would however bear no fruit and contribute to the failure of South Africa's policy of détente. These overtures were partly the result of a growing fear on the part of South Africa that a Marxist revolution was at the door. Vorster made it

²⁴ Quoted by Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 266.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

clear when he stated in 1970 that South Africa would not tolerate communism even beyond its borders setting the tone for South Africa's future foreign policy²⁶.

The Portuguese coup of 1974 and the subsequent independence in 1975 of Angola and Mozambique under openly Marxist governments led respectively by the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) and FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) seemed to confirm South Africa's fears. The dominoes were beginning to fall one by one. Motivated by these fears, South Africa intervened in Angola in 1975 on the side of the pro-Western FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola) and UNITA (União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola) calculating that the West would be sympathetic to such an 'anti-communist' intervention. Apart from a paramilitary force sent to Rhodesia for assistance in 1967, this was South Africa's first military action beyond its borders. However, this first foray into uncharted territory would prove a failure too, as South Africa was left on its own when the Soviet Union and Cuba intervened in Angola on the side of the MPLA-led government. South African forces had to pull back. The Republic blamed the failure on the fact that the promised US aid had failed to materialize but it must be added that the recognition of the MPLA by the OAU and most of the world as the legitimate government of Angola did not help either. South Africa's isolation was not confined to the military arena. The United Nation's decision to formally suspend the credentials of the South African delegation in 1974 can be seen as yet another proof of South Africa's status as a pariah state.

Things were not going South Africa's way in the region. Internally, the situation was not much better. On 16 June 1976, secondary schools students organized a march to protest against the mandatory use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in their schools. The march ended with a clash with the police. This incident led to further rioting all over the Republic 'marking a revival of African political activity'²⁷ on a grand scale. The Soweto Uprisings ended the period of confidence and signaled the commencement of a new era in

²⁶ Quoted by Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 270.

which, in the words of the 1977 Defense White Paper, South Africa would utilize a ‘total strategy’ to counter the ‘total onslaught’²⁸.

2.4 1977-1989: Life Under Sanctions – The Death Throes of Apartheid

Internal discontent was growing. In September 1977, the famous Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko died under police custody as a result of brutal treatment. He was only one of the many who shared a similar fate. This did nothing to help South Africa’s already negative international standing. The United Nations’ reply came in the form of a mandatory arms embargo in November²⁹. From this point onwards, the local arms industry would thrive even more.

South Africa was now even more convinced that it was under a total onslaught and that the West, to which South African decision-makers thought the country belonged³⁰, had abandoned the Republic in its plight. It is in this atmosphere that South Africa made yet another call to its African neighbors to join hands with the Republic in its struggle against the ‘red menace’. The idea behind the call was to establish a Constellation of States (CONSAS) around South Africa that would provide the country with the desired security, boost its economic standing and contribute to the regime’s international legitimacy.

²⁷ James Barber and John Barratt, op. cit., p. 205.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ It is also maintained that this decision of the UN had to do with South Africa’s nuclear programme at the time. A few months before this decision, South Africa’s plan to conduct a full-scale nuclear test was thwarted by Western governments upon intelligence received to this end from the Soviet Union. Facing enormous pressure, South Africa had to call the test off but the continuation of the said nuclear programme did have an impact on the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations. For more details on South Africa’s nuclear policy, see Ruchita Beri, “South Africa’s Nuclear Policy”, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXII, No. 7, October 1998, pp. 975-992. Chapter III of this thesis also refers to South Africa’s nuclear past and its experience of disarmament.

³⁰ Even in the face of diplomatic isolation and the accordance to South Africa a pariah status, both Vorster and Botha made statements stressing that South Africa was part of the ‘free Western world’. See, for instance, Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), op. cit., p. 275 & 277.

As it turned out, the naïve call found no answer. On the contrary, it led to the organization of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) by the very same neighboring states. The SADCC was formed in 1980 by Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The aim was “to harmonize the economic policies of the southern African states and to reduce the region’s economic dependence upon apartheid South Africa”³¹.

South Africa’s answer to the international pressure was Prime Minister Botha’s 12-point plan. The main tenets of the plan were³²:

- 1) The Western world was engaged in a programme designed to force the South African government to abdicate;
- 2) The Soviet Union had a goal of securing control of South Africa’s strategic minerals, which would give the Soviets a quasi-world monopoly in respect of several of them. To this end, it was seeking to promote the establishment of a Communist bloc stretching across Southern Africa from Angola in the west through to Zimbabwe to Mozambique in the east;
- 3) The United States could also not be trusted, so South Africa should consider adopting an attitude of neutrality vis-à-vis the two superpowers;
- 4) SWAPO should not be allowed to take over Namibia;
- 5) In the run-up to Zimbabwean independence, Bishop Able Muzorewa and Mr. Joshua Nkomo should be supported against Mr. Robert Mugabe;
- 6) Coercion and pressure, both economic and where necessary military should be applied to South Africa’s immediate neighbors to ensure that they were not used as bases for guerilla infiltration – a policy which developed into what was popularly known as ‘destabilization’.

The attitude of neutrality referred to above did not mean that the Soviet Union was now considered a friend of South Africa. The statement was included to serve two distinct purposes. One was sending the Western world the message that South Africa’s full allegiance should no longer be expected and that the country would manage on its own. The second purpose revealed itself when South Africa negotiated an arms deal with Bulgaria, a communist country at the

³¹ James Hamill, *From Realism to Complex Interdependence?: South Africa, Southern Africa and the Question of Security*, *International Relations*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, December 1998, p. 3.

³² Donald Sole, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

time³³. This does not mean that relations with the United States and Britain were abandoned. The rise to power of conservative governments in these two countries in the 1980's meant that South Africa was not fully cut off from the Western world. Washington's policy of 'constructive engagement' with South Africa, which was based on the contention that change in South Africa could only be brought about by continuing relations with the apartheid state, often served as a pretext for turning a blind eye to the attempts to circumvent the trade ban. It is also during the 1980's that South Africa's relations with Israel and Taiwan (themselves pariah states of sorts) flourished. It is even speculated that South Africa had a helping hand from these two countries in developing its own nuclear weapons programme³⁴.

Starting from 1980, the ANC staged a number of attacks on strategic targets in various parts of South Africa. Taking this as proof of the continuing presence of the total onslaught, South Africa adopted a strategy of weakening the pro-ANC neighboring states with an ultimate view to surround itself with 'friendly' governments³⁵. The means used to achieve this end ranged from attacking ANC targets in neighboring states to the manipulation of economic links, from acts of sabotage to providing military support to rebel movements in these countries. This came to be called a policy of 'destabilization' with Angola as the principal target and Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia as other suspect states.

For a while, the flexing of military muscle appeared to work. In February 1984, Angola signed a ceasefire with South Africa with Mozambique following suit the next month in the form of the Nkomati Accord. These developments took place at the same time as internal reform efforts resulted in the creation of a new Tricameral Constitution. Under the provisions of this new constitution, the Coloureds and the Asians would have their own parliaments. No provision was foreseen for the African majority. Despite this 'minor' shortcoming, Botha had

³³ James Barber and John Barratt, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

³⁵ Dean Geldenhuys in Robert Schrire (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 281.

the chance, albeit for a limited amount of time, to present himself as a reformer and a seeker of peace.

As it happened, not only did the Nkomati Accord fail but also the introduction of the new constitution led to Soweto-style uprisings countrywide that were condemned internationally. In 1985 and 1986, the European Community passed strict economic sanctions against South Africa tying even the hands of those countries (such as Britain and France) that had not heeded the United Nations' call to the same effect. The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act passed by the United States Congress (despite Reagan's opposition and veto) in 1986 only made the point starker.

All of these developments caused South Africa to pursue its policy of 'destabilization' even more fiercely. War did not look likely to abate in Namibia and Angola. Interestingly enough it was the decision taken by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987 to cooperate with the United States to find solutions to the long-standing conflicts in the Third World that led South Africa to reconsider its policies. A series of talks between South Africa, Angola and Cuba, with the United States acting as mediator, resulted in a peace deal for Namibia. While Cuban soldiers would leave Angolan territory, South Africa would withdraw from both Namibia and Angola. The deal meant that one of the most important problems facing the Republic was nearly solved. However, the broader issues of sanctions, growing African resistance and continuing international isolation could not be so easily solved overnight and would require further and more radical reform, the seeds of which would be sown by De Klerk starting from 1990.

2.5 The Main Tenets of the Foreign Policy of Apartheid South Africa

It is hoped that the brief foreign policy analysis in this chapter of Apartheid South Africa will provide the background against which the foreign policy of the 'new' South Africa can be understood. A detailed account of South Africa's foreign policy today shall be given in Chapter IV.

It has been shown in this chapter that South Africa's foreign policy in the apartheid years, especially after the 1970's, centered primarily around a 'search for status and security', to borrow the expression from James Barber and John Barratt. One of the key features of this search was status in the eyes of the Western world. The analysis in this chapter shows that every South African administration sought, mostly unsuccessfully rather than vice versa, to sustain or improve the country's standing before the Western world. It can be claimed that this process started with South Africa declaring war on Nazi Germany towards the actual end of the Second World War. The decision to join the War on the side of the Allies despite a certain degree of internal opposition showed South Africa's desire to take its rightful place in the new order that would follow the end of the War. The policy of seeking to maintain close relations with the West was continued by successive National Party governments. It was the First World that South Africa turned to even when it failed to find the approval that it sought there. When the United Nations appeared to take a stand against the country, South Africa looked to the Commonwealth to provide the international platform on which the views of the South African state could be presented to the world. After having to pull out of the Commonwealth, South Africa did not sever its links with Britain and continued its policy of cooperation as far as possible. With the exception of Taiwan and Israel, with which South Africa shared its status as a pariah in international relations, the bulk of the South African diplomatic activity was always with Western countries³⁶.

The diplomatic prominence of the West can be seen as contradicting South Africa's desire to play a greater role in its own region. Such a viewpoint would be misleading as South Africa tried several times to establish diplomatic and economic relations with African countries. However, the levels of success remained low due to the reluctance of governments led by Black African

³⁶ Needless to say, in those Cold War years, claiming to be part of the 'Western' world also meant adopting a capitalist economy. Indeed, so firmly has South Africa been incorporated into the global capitalist economy that, despite its socialist background, the ANC gradually came to adopt a capitalist outlook as well. For more detail on South Africa's place in the international political economy, see Chapter IV.

majorities to associate themselves with an oppressive White-minority regime. Verwoerd and Vorster's calls to African countries to exchange diplomats, South Africa's expression of its willingness to provide bilateral aid to the countries in the region (in exchange for their partial loyalty) and the constant calls made by the Republic to establish a Constellation of States (CONSAS) around it to cooperate in economic and military matters (under South Africa's domination and control clearly) are examples of this political will. The problem that the apartheid government faced was that as long as a White-minority regime was in place, in other words unless the question of legitimacy was solved, none of these plans could be fully realized. For this reason, the relations that the current South African government has established with its fellow neighbors should be seen not as a radical change in foreign policy but rather as the result of a favorable change in the political climate and circumstances allowing South Africa to finally realize its long-standing dream of playing a leading role in both its immediate region and in Africa as a whole.

It was noted previously that the first attempts to develop a local arms industry in South Africa came after the imposition of a voluntary arms embargo on the country by the United Nations in 1963. A mandatory embargo was imposed after the Soweto uprisings in 1977. These developments, coupled with South Africa's increasing involvement in regional conflicts and the already fragile domestic security situation, contributed to the entrenchment of the local arms industry. By the 1980's, South Africa had become a manufacturer of high quality arms. As early as in 1982, the quality of the South African weaponry displayed at an international arms exhibition in Athens surprised foreign experts³⁷. Also in the 1980's, the country's legal and illegal arms sales boomed and became a major source of income that remains vital to the South African economy today. At its peak, South Africa was said to have "the seventh or eighth largest armament

³⁷ Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *Hope for South Africa?*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1991, p. 79.

industries of the world”³⁸ and on the eve of the 1994 elections it was said to rank tenth in the world³⁹.

One of the ways in which the White-minority regime tried to ensure its survival was through encouraging the immigration of Whites into the country while trying to keep Black immigrants out. Figures indicate that both in the years of confidence and economic prosperity (up to the first half of the 1970’s) and in the years of crisis (up to 1989), there was a steady flow of White immigration into the country at around 30 to 35,000 immigrants per year⁴⁰. Although it did take place, the immigration of Blacks into the country was not particularly welcome. White employers were allowed to recruit foreign Black workers on limited-time contracts. Hundreds of thousands of workers came into the country during the 1980’s, mainly from the neighboring countries of Southern Africa. Even though only a very small percentage of these workers were able to stay on in the country through legal means, many chose to stay on illegally⁴¹. Taking into account that a significant number of Black refugees also came to the country in the final years of apartheid⁴², it is clear that migration is not a recent phenomenon in South Africa. The origins of the strict attitude today of the South African government and the public to the question of migration must also be traced back to the apartheid days.

³⁸ See Neta C. Crawford, “South Africa’s New Foreign and Military Policy: Opportunities and Constraints”, *Africa Today*, Vol. 42, Issue 1 / 2, 1995 1st / 2nd Quarter, p. 93.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁴⁰ See James Barber and John Barratt, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

⁴¹ Alan Morris, “Our Fellow Africans Make Our Lives Hell: The Lives of Congolese and Nigerians Living in Johannesburg”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 6, November 1998, p. 1118.

⁴² Neta C. Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICA: MIRACLE OR EVENTUALITY?

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the end of the 1980's saw South Africa at the mercy of sanctions and almost totally excommunicated from the world community on several levels. To most who looked, South Africa was a state whose existence was no longer feasible in its present form. Something had to change. As the whole world knows, something did.

According to most political scientists and outside observers, what happened in South Africa following De Klerk's now infamous speech in 1990 is nothing short of miraculous. That South Africa had to go through some sort of change is not widely disputed (especially with the benefit of being able to speak *ex post facto!*), that it happened the way it happened is what is lauded. Indeed, there is much to be said in how South Africa as a country and as the self-proclaimed rainbow nation managed to achieve a large-scale transformation of the sort that was necessary to overturn apartheid-era structures is really quite momentous. "From being a country brutalised by its own history, it has emerged as a relatively peaceful society providing a blanket of security for its citizens."¹ It is not the intention in this chapter to provide a detailed analysis of how this change was achieved even though a brief account will be given. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the ongoing debate on South Africa's foreign

policy and tries to establish the links between the foreign policy of the apartheid state and the 'new' South Africa offering clues as to how some things have changed while others remained constant. The chapter also aims to situate the transformation of South Africa in its historical context (with reference for instance to other important changes that took place at around the same time, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the USSR). Finally, it discusses the internal and external factors that contributed to the country's transformation.

3.2 An Overview of the South African Foreign Policy Debate

The question of how much has changed in South Africa in terms of foreign policy following the transformation has so far produced varying approaches in the literature. According to Jack Spence, "South Africa is no exception to the rule that there tends to be continuity in a state's foreign policy even in the event of far-reaching domestic political change"², whereas David J. Dunn is of the opinion that "the New South Africa [is] one of the relatively few states that have experienced radical changes of direction in foreign policy"³.

It would appear that this radical divergence of views is in part due to the different analysts' different expectations of change and the diversity of the points of reference that they select to assess this phenomenon. Some refer to the declarations of the ANC and the country's official positions on various foreign policy issues to determine what has changed. Such political scientists aim to locate the divergences between the government's rhetoric and the actual practice. Others look at the way in which foreign policy is actually made and analyse the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the President. For yet other political scientists, the main point of reference to judge South Africa's 'new'

¹ Joseph Diescho, *The Limits of Foreign Policy Making in South Africa*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 1996, p. 20-21.

² Jack Spence, "The Debate Over South Africa's Foreign Policy", *South African Journal of International Affairs (SAJIA)*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Summer 1996, p. 118.

foreign policy is the country's role in the international arena and its newly invigorated multilateral relations. As a consequence, each analyst or student of political science arrives at different conclusions. This should not come as a surprise though, as foreign policy is considered today to be a dynamic process in which many actors, on local, regional, national and international levels, take part and which has come to include not only diplomatic and politico-military affairs but also aspects of economics, culture and even sports⁴. This section will try to provide examples of the different approaches given above and endeavour to lay the groundwork for the analysis of the 'new' South Africa's foreign policy in the following chapter.

The debate on the foreign policy of the 'new' South Africa began long before the first democratic elections. The ANC, justifiably considered by most to be the government-in-waiting, declared the principles of the foreign policy of a democratic South Africa as: a belief in human rights, the promotion of democracy, the primacy of justice and international law, international peace, the promotion of Africa's interests, regional and international economic cooperation and the consolidation of a democratic South Africa⁵. In later documents, these principles were more or less retained with advancing sustainable development and alleviating poverty also added to the list⁶. In these efforts, some analysts see a profound change of direction. According to Gerrit Olivier and Dean Geldenhuys, the new government has introduced important philosophical shifts and several changes in emphasis and priorities⁷. There are, however, critics who maintain that much of these changes remain on paper are only expressions of intentions, not corresponding to actual practice. Donald G. McNeil Jr. summarizes the dilemmas facing the 'new' South Africa as follows:

³ David J. Dunn, "International Relations and the New South Africa", *South African Journal of International Affairs (SAJIA)*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Summer 1995, p. 33.

⁴ Think for instance of the bans imposed on politically rogue countries in the field of sports. The recent refusal of the British cricket team to play in Zimbabwe due to the land occupations in that country is a good example.

⁵ African National Congress, *Foreign Policy in a New Democratic South Africa: A Discussion Paper*, October 1993, p. 2.

⁶ *South Africa Yearbook 2001/02*, Durban: Universal Printers, 2001, p. 267.

⁷ Gerrit Olivier & Dean Geldenhuys, "South Africa's Foreign Policy: From Idealism to Pragmatism", *Business and the Contemporary World*, Vol. IX, No. 2, 1997, p. 366.

The advocacy of human rights versus the need for money from anywhere; the instinct to be friend to all versus the knowledge that some nations hate each other; the desire to put Africa first versus the recognition that the developed world holds the power and many African nations are run by despots.⁸

Some of the foreign policy challenges that South Africa has faced since its first democratic elections and in which it has failed to live up to its declared principles in foreign policy are, according to McNeil Jr., the government's decision to drop ties with Taiwan in favor of the newly found relationship with the PR of China, its support of regimes with tainted human rights records such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Indonesia and Cuba and the lenient attitude adopted towards Robert Mugabe's largely undemocratic one-man rule in Zimbabwe⁹. Picking up on President Mbeki's public and private support to Mugabe, Rachel L. Swarns also declares that the country is increasingly "embracing a foreign policy seemingly driven as much by national interest as by humanitarian principle"¹⁰.

According to some analysts, it is also important to focus on how foreign policy is made in addition to what it is in order to determine what, if anything, has changed. Donald Sole, a retired South African diplomat, states that, "The formation of South Africa's foreign policy has traditionally been the responsibility of the executive head of government (prime minister or president) and his foreign minister"¹¹. Graham Evans traces this tendency back to the days of the Prime Ministry of Jan Christian Smuts in the World War II years¹². According to Jo-Ansie van Wyk, there has not been a significant change in this respect¹³. In the apartheid era, foreign policy had traditionally been the domain of the executive

⁸ Donald G. McNeil Jr., "South Africa's Foreign Policy: A Tough Balancing Act", *New York Times (Late Edition-East Coast)*, p. 13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Rachel L. Swarns., "New Pragmatism in South Africa's Foreign Policy Disappoints Some Old Supporters", *New York Times (Late Edition-East Coast)*, p. 8.

¹¹ Donald Sole, "South African Foreign Policy Assumptions and Objectives from Hertzog to De Klerk", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1994, p. 104.

¹² Graham Evans, "South Africa's Foreign Policy after Mandela: Mbeki and His Concept of an African Renaissance", *Round Table*, Issue 352, October 1999, p. 625.

¹³ Jo-Ansie van Wyk, *South Africa in International Politics*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2002, p. 121-122.

with some support from the Foreign Minister. While the military also started playing a significant role in the formation of foreign policy, especially after the 1970's with the adoption of the idea of the 'total strategy' against the 'total onslaught', it was mostly the Prime Minister's and, after 1984, the President's office where the country's foreign policy was decided with the contributions also of the Foreign Minister. This trend also appeared to continue during the initial years of the ANC government where Mandela also by virtue of his international stature usually took bold foreign policy steps without consulting the DFA¹⁴.

As has been discussed in Chapter II, apartheid South Africa was diplomatically isolated, especially starting from the 1970's, in the international arena as a result of racist policies and its refusal to grant its African majority a voice in the country's affairs. The new period following the all-races April 1994 elections saw South Africa's re-admission into various international organizations. Some of these are: ILO on 26 May 1994, UNESCO on 12 December 1994, WHO in May 1994, Commonwealth on 1 June 1994, Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 23 May 1994, the Southern African Development Community on 29 August 1994 and the Non-Aligned Movement on 31 May 1994¹⁵. Much has been written about South Africa's so-called return to the global stage. There have been several writers proclaiming the emergence of a new 'middle power' and tying this to the country's increasingly active role in international affairs¹⁶.

Much has been said about the evolution of South Africa's foreign policy after 1994. One of the much heard views is that foreign policy after 1994 is an attempt to bring together two different approaches to foreign policy making, that

¹⁴ Donald G. McNeil talks about two tracks in South Africa's foreign policy with Track 1 being the DFA and the ANC and Track 2 being Mandela all on his own. See Donald G. McNeil Jr., op. cit.

¹⁵ Raymond Suttner, "Some Problematic Questions in Developing Foreign Policy after April 27 1994", *Southern African Perspectives: A Working Paper Series*, Centre for African Studies, University of Western Cape, p. 2.

¹⁶ See Philip Nel, Ian Taylor and Janis van der Westhuizen, "Multilateralism in South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for a Critical Rationale", *Global Governance*, January-March 2000, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 43-60 and Janis van der Westhuizen, "South Africa's Emergence as a Middle Power", *Third World Quarterly*, September 1998, Vol. 19, Issue 3, pp. 435-456.

of the ANC¹⁷, which is active and extroverted and that of the NP (and the old bureaucracy¹⁸) which is more defensive and introverted¹⁹. Raymond Suttner defines this attempt as the integration of two distinct traditions into one²⁰. Jo-Ansie van Wyk also underlines the attempts to bring together these different strands in the formation of the country's foreign policy²¹.

The question of what South Africa's foreign policy can be said to consist of in the post-apartheid era will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV, which will elaborate on the themes picked up in this section. In the rest of this chapter, a brief account of South Africa's road to change will be provided. The focus will be on the roots of the reform process, the internal dynamics that precipitated this process and the international environment of the time.

3.3 The Background to Change

As mentioned previously, South Africa was on the road to change long before De Klerk became president in 1989. Before taking a look at the political side of the de-racialization process, it may be worthwhile to consider the sociological data available. Despite the considerable efforts of the apartheid state to squeeze the African majority into slums in the periphery of the metropolitan areas and into artificially created homelands, by the 1980's, Africans were everywhere in South Africa. Throughout its history, the apartheid state did everything possible to keep Africans 'where they belonged', which, according to the practice after the 1970's, was the homelands. The impossibility of such a confinement became quite clear quite quickly. Africans made up nearly 75 % of

¹⁷ Graham Evans divides the international thinking of the ANC into three time periods: Liberal institutionalist (1912-60), socialist (1960-93) and pragmatist (1993 onwards). Evans further claims that elements of all three traditions are visible in the government's foreign policy since 1994. See Graham Evans, op. cit., p. 623.

¹⁸ This is not necessarily a negative factor as Sparks notes; the absence of a competent civil service was the cause of the collapse of services and general decline in many African countries. See Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution*, Johannesburg: Struik Publishing Group, 1995, p. 234.

¹⁹ Diescho talks about the instances where what Mandela said one thing and the DFA suggested something completely different. See Joseph Diescho, op. cit., p. 6.

²⁰ Raymond Suttner, op. cit., p.4.

the population. They could not be confined solely to reserves. The myth of urban segregation was in its death throes by the end of the 1980's. It can be said that this sociological development was one of factors that contributed to the scrapping of the infamous 'Pass Laws' in 1986²². Through this abolishment, the apartheid state had effectively admitted that its attempt to restrict Africans' freedom of movement was futile.

In 1987, a very important meeting took place in Dakar, Senegal. A group of 65 white South Africans traveled to the capital of Senegal to meet an ANC delegation headed by none other than Thabo Mbeki, the current president of the Republic of South Africa. The meeting was the first of its kind between the Whites and the Blacks²³ and a precursor to the process of negotiations that would follow some years later. At the end of the meeting, the two sides produced a joint statement in which they affirmed their unequivocal support for a negotiated settlement²⁴.

3.4 The De Klerk Presidency

By the time De Klerk became president in 1989, the country was in its worst crisis ever. Interestingly enough, De Klerk, who is now recognized as one of the great transformers of South Africa, came from the conservative wing of the National Party²⁵ and was initially opposed to majority rule²⁶. It was a surprise for many when he made his historic speech on 2 February 1990, announcing the release of Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of the ANC and the PAC and freedom

²¹ Jo-Ansie van Wyk, op. cit., pp. 123-125.

²² A year before this, in 1985, the Immorality Act, which forbade sexual relations across racial lines, was scrapped. This act was also one of the cornerstones of apartheid.

²³ It must however be said that, while contacts in this form between equals did not really take place, the apartheid government did hold secret talks with Nelson Mandela starting from as early as 1984. For more detail, see Allister Sparks, op. cit., p. 91.

²⁴ Tony Pinchuck, *Mandela for Beginners*. Cambridge: Icon Books Ltd., 1994, p. 150.

²⁵ De Klerk's deeply conservative and even racist political past is dealt with in detail in Allister Sparks, op. cit., pp. 91-108.

²⁶ In the initial stages of the reform process, De Klerk made it clear that his preference would be for a power-sharing structure in which all different African ethnic groups along with Whites, Coloureds and Indians would be represented. As the Black opposition, at last legalized, proved

of political activity. It was also in this speech that a National Party leader first talked about a settlement based on votes for all.

In May 1990, the newly legal ANC and the National Party government reached an agreement for repressive laws to be annulled, political prisoners to be released and a suitable environment to be created for negotiations. Based on this understanding, a number of apartheid-era laws such as the Land Act, the Group Areas Act, the Separate Facilities Act and the Population Registration Act were repealed²⁷. In August of the same year, the ANC decided to suspend its armed struggle against the White minority government. In December 1991, 18 organizations, made up of political parties and homeland governments came together under the banner of 'The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA)'. The white right wing (Conservative Party and AWB) and the two Africanist organizations of PAC and the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) refused to take part in the Convention. In May 1992, a Whites-only referendum delivered a two-thirds majority in favor of a negotiated settlement. The process had been sanctioned by the direct beneficiaries of apartheid. After this point, a number of developments, mainly related to political violence concerning ANC meetings, led to a breakdown of the talks. The deadlock was overcome by a summit held between De Klerk and Mandela. The two leaders agreed in principle on the drafting of the new constitution by an elected constituent assembly and the installation of an interim government. In December 1993, South Africa had, for the first time, a multiracial administration as the Transitional Executive Council took power to lead the country to its first democratic elections in April 1994. The rest, namely the ANC's victory, the installation of the Government of National Unity (GNU), Mandela's swearing in as president, is now history.

impossible to contain, he and the National Party had to revise this position and settle for a transitional period with power-sharing.

²⁷ David Welsh notes that the National Party government had succeeded in repealing all the major statutes embodying racial discrimination in South Africa by June 1991. See David Welsh, "Towards a Democratic South Africa", *International Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 4, October 1991, p. 739.

3.5 The International Context

What is provided above is a conventional account of how the South African transformation took place. However, it is also an account that concentrates on the internal political environment and does not address the international developments that played a part in the changes. It would be a poor political analysis that does not take into account for instance the positions of the three major powers of the United States, the United Kingdom and France. It was these three countries that consistently voted against sanctions in the United Nations²⁸ thus sustaining the apartheid regime beyond its expected lifespan. The dire economic straits that South Africa found itself in by the end of the 1980's had a great deal to do with these three countries' succumbing to international pressure and applying, albeit half-heartedly, sanctions on South Africa.

Of these countries, the United States, up until the 1980's, often justified its 'constructive engagement' with South Africa with reference to the threat of communism. On this point, it can be said that the apartheid state's rulers and the USA leadership saw eye to eye. However, Mikhael Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika and the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Empire eroded the validity of these claims from both sides. The kind of 'communism' against which South Africa, as a state, positioned itself did not exist anymore. Furthermore, the unraveling of the Soviet Empire also meant the downfall of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and Albania. In the early 1990's, it appeared that socialism was discredited and that liberalism had triumphed. It was this liberal utopia that led the likes of Francis Fukuyama to proclaim the 'end of history' and the 'death of the ideologies'. The reflections of these developments in the international sphere can be seen in the internal politics of South Africa. When De Klerk made the bold move to unban the ANC, he acted knowing that the movement would no longer have the USSR to support it²⁹. It is

²⁸ *New African*, "South Africa: Voting for Apartheid at the UN", No. 415, February 2003, p. 32-35.

²⁹ Indeed, parallels are often drawn between the changes that took place in South Africa and those that took place in Eastern Europe. In Allister Sparks' words, "The February 2 speech [of President

easy to imagine that the outcome of the Whites-only referendum in 1992 would not have been so favorable to change had the USSR still been in place and firmly supporting the ANC. In the same way, when the ANC found itself legitimized by the winds of liberalism, it sought to soften its formerly strong socialist slant and attempted to speak the 'universal' language of liberalism. The emphasis placed on the protection of personal property in the negotiation process along with the economic programmes and policies of the ANC governments to-date shows just how acceptable neo-liberal paradigms have become in the party.

The De Klerk presidency should be regarded as the period in which the reform process in South Africa was decisively consolidated. The international approval of these reforms can also be seen in the fact that the European Union and the United States both lifted their sanctions against South Africa during De Klerk's term as president and that a number of African states moved closer to the Pretoria regime³⁰.

A major development that precipitated the transformation process is the changes that the Western world itself went through from the 1960's onwards. As has been discussed in Chapter II, South Africa's racially-based political system was not an aberration in the immediate post-World War II era. This was a time when most Western powers held colonies in Africa and Asia and when being white was still a symbol of privilege. As a country that identified itself with the values and the civilization of the West, South Africa did not stand outside the *zeitgeist* of the period. Nevertheless, over time and especially after the process of decolonization, these values and indeed the whole of the 'Western' mentality underwent a change. More emphasis was put on democracy and human rights and human rights gradually came to include values such as non-racialism, non-sexism and equal opportunities. With the demise of colonialism, the argument that the 'Western' powers were in Africa and Asia as 'bringers of civilization' also lost its

De Klerk] was to race relations everywhere as the fall of the Berlin Wall was to communism". See Allister Sparks, op. cit., p. 10.

³⁰ Chris Alden, "From Liberation Movement to Political Party: ANC Foreign Policy in Transition", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1993, p. 63.

relevance. The fact that similar changes were not experienced in South Africa gradually led to a crisis of an intellectual sort. The West to which South Africa always looked as an example was not the same West anymore. South African rhetoric parroted the Western position and values of several decades ago and was clearly out of touch with the times. South Africa's transformation should therefore also be seen as an attempt to settle this problem so as to bring the country on par with the times. It can be said, therefore, that through its transformation, South Africa has emulated the West yet again. Ironically, this time it has been the African majority at the helm of this civilizing mission.

3.6 The Question of Legitimacy

Another issue related to the apartheid regime that had international repercussions is that of legitimacy. In the eyes of the world at large, South Africa was a state that had been independent since 1910, nearly 80 years, and had not yet had one single 'legitimate' government. The pretexts that had previously been used to justify this situation, as noted above, no longer applied. Consequently, South Africa could not continue to be ruled by governments that were not sanctioned by the majority of the population. Indeed, the more time that passed, the more the South African model appeared to be an aberration. By 1989, South Africa was the only country that refused a part of its population the right to vote on a racial basis. There are even today countries that have not yet granted political rights and the right to vote to their female citizens (Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia et. al.), however there has not been any state which has denied the vote to a part of its population due to race-related reasons for a long time³¹. The problem was therefore a normative one. International morality and common sense dictated that the system of apartheid was wrong and had to be repealed. Furthermore, as Geldenhuys points out, it did not seem likely that the international normative framework would anytime soon swing in South Africa's favor³². The Western world could never really bring itself to sever its relations with South Africa

³¹ Even Rhodesia, where a minority rule similar to that of South Africa applied, did not have a franchise based on race, but rather on a complicated system of property ownership.

altogether any more than it could condone the regime in good faith. Apartheid South Africa, with all its rhetoric of being part of the 'White Christian civilization' was something of an embarrassment for the Western world, which purported to put significant emphasis on human rights, democracy, self-determination and, as times changed, on racial equality. The staunch apartheid regime was in a way an ugly reminder of the own racist policies of colonial powers, of Belgium's King Leopold, of the concentration camps of the British, of the French crimes of humanity in Algeria and of all colonial powers' varying systems of racial discrimination. The demise of the apartheid regime meant that the Western psyche could rest in peace once again erasing the past misdeeds from memory and entering the realm of forgetting³³. With the democratization of South Africa's political system, quite possibly the last remaining racially oriented regime, the world's last racial oligarchy in Allister Sparks' words³⁴, came to an end, hopefully never to make a comeback again.

3.7 The Internal Dynamics

Apart from the external pressures, there were the internal dynamics some of which have been treated previously. The South African business world was largely cut off from the world up until the end of the 1980's and the country's industry had had to learn to be self-sufficient in many respects. This necessity meant that South Africa had become adept in developing its own products and brands for which there existed a very fertile ground in the rest of the African continent and indeed the rest of the world. For these markets to become available though, the problem of legitimacy had to be solved. This is one of the main reasons why the South African business community also favored the negotiation process.

³² Dean Geldenhuys cited in Jo-Ansie van Wyk, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³³ The European Union immediately comes to mind. The very same countries responsible for unmentionable cruelties in their colonies and that indulged in the biggest war the world had ever seen merely 50 odd years ago are now presenting themselves as the epitomes of democracy and human rights.

³⁴ Allister Sparks, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

It is also towards the end of the 1980's that the militarization of the South African society began to subside. The negotiated solution to the problem of Angola and South Africa's withdrawal from its 'Cold War' fronts meant that a process of peace could be initiated in the South African region as a whole. The next step in this process was the independence of Namibia. The granting of independence to Namibia had been on the cards since the 1970's and had been postponed a number of times due to last-minutes hitches in the process. It was De Klerk who once again reinvigorated the process agreeing for a UN-supervised transition period and all-races democratic elections in 1990, which saw the victory of SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) and the rise of its leader Sam Nujoma to the presidency of the newly-independent Namibia. Indeed, some analysts see the negotiation process in Namibia as the beginning of South Africa's re-entry into the world community³⁵. It also served as an example to South Africa's own transformation as the two countries shared a similar history and ethnic composition³⁶.

Another major development that may be used as a case in point to date the reform process in South Africa back to the pre-democracy days is the country's nuclear policy and the disarmament that took place in the early 1990's as the first such undertaking in world history. The disarmament itself and the time of its announcement to the South African public and the world at large are not synchronous. While there had always been suspicions concerning the development of nuclear weapons by South Africa, President De Klerk's declaration to a special joint session of the South African parliament on 24 March 1993 was the first official admittance by Pretoria of these efforts. The inside story of how South Africa first developed and then gave up, of its own will, a nuclear capability gradually emerged. Investigations into the possibility of developing a nuclear capability first started in 1971 but were 'initially limited to theoretical

³⁵ Graham Evans, "Myths and Realities in South Africa's Future Foreign Policy", *International Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 4, October 1991, p. 714.

³⁶ The ANC's proposals for transition were partly based on the Namibian experience. See David Welsh, *op. cit.*, p. 743.

calculations and introductory studies of ballistics'³⁷. It was only by the second half of the 1980's that South Africa had developed proper nuclear weapons. South Africa's justification for the development of nuclear weapons was the perceived communist threat. With the resolution of the problem of Angola, the withdrawal of Soviet and Cuban troops from this country, the independence of Namibia and the fall of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, these justifications no longer held. As a result, De Klerk initiated a process of disarmament, upon the advice of an Expert Committee, in early 1990, by which time South Africa had developed a total of six devices³⁸. The process was completed by July 1991 and South Africa joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in July of the same year. All these developments made South Africa the first and only country in the world to have developed a nuclear capability and relinquished it of its own volition.

As noted above, South Africa's policy to develop a nuclear capability was a response to a particular threat perceived, rightly or wrongly, by the apartheid state. In the end, it was the same state and indeed the same ruling party that decided to discontinue the effort when it had judged that the threat had disappeared. This example also demonstrates that any analysis of the change that has taken place in South Africa must account for the fact that a significant amount of transformation was initiated and put in force by the De Klerk government. Equating all change with the first democratic election in 1994 and the ANC's victory and subsequent government would be erroneous.

This chapter has looked at some of the ways in which the developments in the world at large affected and impinged on the process of change in South Africa. The following chapter will provide a more detailed account of those aspects of South Africa's foreign policy that underwent changes and those that did not, concentrating on the latter. However, when such an analysis is being undertaken, it would be useful to trace the change back to its origins in order to locate it in its

³⁷ J.W. de Villiers, Roger Jardine and Mitchell Reiss, "Why South Africa Gave Up the Bomb", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 5, November/December 1993, p. 99.

³⁸ Ibid.

historical context. It is common knowledge how much emphasis the current South African government puts on relations with Africa. As will be remembered, it is the contention of this thesis that South Africa always desired to play a leading/dominant role in its region and in Africa as a whole but could not realize this desire, as the question of legitimacy on home ground was not adequately addressed. Once this problem was solved, South Africa did not find it difficult to assume this desired role on the continent. The idea of South Africa surrounding itself with a Constellation of States (CONSAS) was much vaunted by the apartheid regime but never realized also due to the above-described question. A closer analysis of South Africa's role in SADC today might lead us to think that this long-desired constellation now exists, although it is in the guise of a cooperation council. To give another example, in 1990, South Africa only had 30 overseas representations³⁹. Only a year later, semi-diplomatic ties had been established with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and 18 African states⁴⁰. It would appear from these examples that what is doable means a great deal in the pursuit of foreign policy. The New might have the same desires as the Old but, for a change, more of these desires are now realizable⁴¹.

³⁹ Jo-Ansie van Wyk, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁴⁰ Graham Evans, "Myths and Realities in South Africa's Future Foreign Policy", *op. cit.*, p. 711-712.

⁴¹ I have borrowed the comparison from Graham Evans, *ibid.*, p. 718.

CHAPTER IV

SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER 1994: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

4.1 Introduction

As discussed earlier, opinion appears to be divided when it comes to the extent to which South Africa's foreign policy has or has not changed. Some of the differing viewpoints in this debate were given in the preceding chapter. This chapter will constitute a study of South Africa's foreign policy in the period following the country's first democratic elections in April 1994, which will aim to pinpoint areas of continuity and of change.

As has been reiterated a number of times, this thesis does not deny the magnitude of the changes that South Africa has experienced as a result of the dismantling of the system of apartheid. However, it does maintain that two aspects of this process must not be overlooked in this regard. The first is the fact that reform and transformation in South Africa can be and indeed should be traced back to its origins, which Chapter III has shown to have started in the second half of the 1980's. The second aspect is that while much has changed, continuity in foreign policy is visible in a number of quite significant areas. These areas as also referred to in the Introduction and Chapter II of this thesis are:

- a) South Africa's place in the international political economy
- b) The manufacturing and selling of arms
- c) South Africa's perception of and relations with the West
- d) The issue of migration

e) South Africa's regional hegemony

For purposes of organization, this chapter will initially be divided into two main parts, one concerning the changes and another concerning the continuities visible in South Africa's foreign policy. The latter part will be organized under separate headings for each of the above-identified areas, which will be dealt with in detail in this chapter.

4.2 What Has Changed

As also pointed out in various earlier sections of this thesis, the transformation that South Africa has gone through is nothing less than astounding. Arguably, the most historically significant element in the country's transformation has been the process of negotiations in which all political stakeholders were more or less involved, even though the bulk of the talks were between the National Party and the African National Congress. As a result of these efforts, South Africa has held two democratic elections in 1994 and 1999 both of which have resulted in the ANC's victory and been considered free and fair by local and foreign observers. In addition to this, the country's new constitution, which has also been negotiated by various stakeholders¹, is a progressive document that entrenches participatory democracy and bans discrimination on a number of grounds including race, ethnicity, religion, culture and sexual orientation².

Internally, the negotiated transformation has also produced further results. Racial equality has been consolidated both through the scrapping of what little apartheid-era legislation had been left and through affirmative action strategies towards the disadvantaged sections of society. These include headways made in housing, access to health services, medicine, electricity, clean water and nutrition.

¹ Some 2 million submissions were received from the public and were taken into consideration in the drafting of the constitution. See Antoinette Handley and Jeffrey Herbst, "South Africa: The Perils of Normalcy", *Current History*, Vol. 96, No. 610, May 1997, p. 222.

² Leonard Thompson, "Mbeki's Uphill Challenge: After Apartheid, A Struggling South Africa", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, Issue 6, November/December 1999, p. 83.

Since 1995, more than a million low-cost houses have been built, and the poor now have access to free medicine and more than 700 additional healthcare clinics. More than 5 million needy children now get a fifth to a quarter of their daily nutritional needs through school-based programs. More than 2 million people have received access to electricity and 7 million to water.³

At the same time, white fears concerning their future in the 'new' South Africa were addressed both by the 'sunset' clause⁴ included in the new constitution and also by Nelson Mandela's conciliatory and forgiving approach to the deeds of the past. Through these efforts, South Africa has managed to prevent a large-scale exodus of Whites and establish a proverbial 'rainbow nation' of many races with one homeland. It is the optimism generated by this constructive approach that has led to comments such as, "South Africa's best export [to the rest of Africa] will be its experience as a democracy capable of showing that economic and racial divides can be closed"⁵.

Indeed, today, South Africa is considered to be a relatively well-established democracy in Africa, a continent that is characterized by a general lack of this particular system of government. As noted previously, the country now has a very liberal constitution that protects individual liberties in addition to foreseeing a separation of powers and a commitment to equality, non-racialism and non-sexism. The new political system, albeit dominated so far by the African National Congress, is one where parties can be freely established and opinions fearlessly expressed. The evidence shows that a veritable police state in the not-too-distant past, South Africa has emerged as a true bastion of democracy. With its successful transformation, the country has set an example to all countries involved in long-standing conflicts (Israel, Cyprus, Kashmir *inter alia*) and inspired hope in the developing world. In the years to come, "South Africa will

³ See Robert Mattes, "South Africa: Democracy Without the People?", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2002, p. 23.

⁴ The clause guarantees apartheid-era state employees' jobs until their retirement. See Leonard Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁵ *Christian Science Monitor*, "Keep an Eye on South Africa", Vol. 94, Issue 71, p. 10.

no doubt remain a symbol of the Third World struggle for liberation, human rights and distributive global economic justice”⁶.

These positive developments do not nevertheless mean that the country does not face problems and challenges. While social cohesion has largely been ensured, the country has inherited from the apartheid regime one of the biggest gaps in terms of incomes between the rich and the poor. In 1992, the Human Development Index (HDI) figures for South African Whites were comparable to that of Spain, whereas the HDI for the rest of the population was at the level of Congo-Brazzaville⁷. It was noted in 1997 that 53 % of Africans lived below the poverty line as opposed to 2 % of the Whites⁸. While the situation is in all likelihood better today, there remains much to be done to address this particular heritage of apartheid. It is clear that economic imbalances will have to be addressed in order for the young South African democracy to be irreversibly consolidated. Fueled partially by this imbalance and by the current government’s inability to solve the problem in the relatively short period of time since democratization, crime rate has risen in South Africa to alarming levels⁹. In larger cities, it is considered unwise to leave one’s car outside at night time and certain parts of larger cities are universally avoided by whites for fear of mugging, in some cases even during daytime. In Johannesburg, the country’s largest city and the economic capital, the situation has become so bad that most businesses have left the downtown area for the relative safety of the suburbs further out such as Sandton. Despite the considerable progress that has been made, health services are still poor especially in rural areas and AIDS is a major problem throughout the country. According to a report by Worldwatch, an American conservation group, it is likely that one in five South African adults would die of AIDS in the next decade¹⁰.

⁶ Graham Evans, “South Africa’s Foreign Policy after Mandela: Mbeki and His Concept of an African Renaissance”, *Round Table*, Issue 352, October 1999, p. 625.

⁷ Patrick J. McGowan and F. Ahwireng-Obeng cited in Jakkie Cilliers, “An Emerging South African Foreign Policy Identity”, *Institute for Security Studies*, Occasional Paper No. 39, April 1999, available at <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Papers/39/Paper39.html>.

⁸ Antoinette Handley and Jeffrey Herbst, op. cit., p. 224.

⁹ Some government documents put the 1998 murder rate at 58.5 killings per 100,000 South Africans. See Leonard Thompson, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁰ Cited in Leonard Thompson, *ibid.*, p.86.

While not all of it is positive, it should be clear from the above account that much has changed in South Africa internally in the aftermath of the April 1999 elections. On the external relations front, a number of important developments also took place. As detailed in Chapter II, South Africa was able to exist as more or less a 'normal' state in the international sphere up until the 1970's. It was after this time that South Africa's racist domestic policies led to the country's gradual isolation from the family of nations. It was not the reforms that culminated in the dismantling of apartheid that won South Africa the right once again to return to the international stage but rather the first democratic elections in April 1994. Immediately following the elections, South Africa regained membership to a number of organizations from which it was excluded in the apartheid era in addition to having the opportunity to join a number of other organizations in line with the newly acquired 'legitimacy' of the South African state: ILO on 26 May 1994, UNESCO on 12 December 1994, WHO in May 1994, Commonwealth on 1 June 1994, Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 23 May 1994, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on 29 August 1994 and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on 31 May 1994¹¹.

The evidence shows a clear eagerness on the part of the global community to re-embrace South Africa as soon as the problem of 'legitimacy' was solved. In a manner of speaking, changes in form (the replacement of the white government with a multi-racial one) rather than in substance (actual differences in foreign policy as a result) was sufficient for South Africa to readmitted to the world community as a 'normal' state once again. As will be remembered, Chapter III has shown that the reform process in South Africa had its roots in the late 1980's and was not an attribute solely of the first democratic elections in 1994 or the assumption of power by the African National Congress. It can be inferred from this example that a country's acceptance by the global community depends very much on the perception of that particular country in the world. While South

¹¹ Raymond Suttner, "Some Problematic Questions in Developing Foreign Policy after April 27 1994", *Southern African Perspectives: A Working Paper Series*, Centre for African Studies, University of Western Cape, 1995, p. 2.

Africa did not experience any great changes in terms of its political system in the period between 1945 and the 1970's, the country went from a reasonably 'normal' state to a pariah in world affairs. In the case of the country's democratization, the starting of the reform process by the National Party government was not by itself sufficient for the world to re-embrace South Africa.

With its new-found respectability, South Africa has emerged as a state that prioritizes multilateral relations. Since 1994, South Africa has assumed a number of important international roles. It has chaired the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Commonwealth in addition to being the current chair of the newly-created African Union (AU). South Africa has also assumed the following multilateral leadership responsibilities:

- Seeking and securing nomination as chair of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in 2000;
- Acting as chair of the Oslo Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Land Mines;
- Chairing the 1998 session of the UN Commission on Human Rights;
- Being elected to the executive boards of the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Population Fund (UNFP) and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).¹²

In addition to assuming these responsibilities in international fora, the ANC government has also put considerable emphasis on peacekeeping and peace brokering engagements not only in Africa but also on a more global scale. These have so far included the peace process in Israel and Palestine, the conflict in

¹² Philip Nel, Ian Taylor and Janis van der Westhuizen, "Multilateralism in South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for a Critical Rationale", *Global Governance*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, January-March 2000, p. 48.

Northern Ireland, the refugee crisis in the Great Lakes, the East Timor question and the conflict in Sudan¹³. The country sent peacekeeping troops to African hotspots such as Eritrea and Congo DR¹⁴. A budget of R40 million was foreseen for the UN's peacekeeping operations in 2001¹⁵. These efforts are in line with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad's statement that "a fundamental objective of [South Africa's] foreign policy must be preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and humanitarian assistance"¹⁶.

According to the South Africa Yearbook¹⁷, published by the Government, the foreign policy objectives of South Africa are to:

- promote democratization and respect for human rights,
- prevent conflict and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts,
- advance sustainable development and alleviate poverty.

These objectives stand in stark contrast to the memory of the foreign policy of the old regime, which was, according to Gerrit Olivier & Dean Geldenhuys, "philosophically right-wing oriented, uncompromisingly pro-Western, critical to the point of being hostile to the Third World and its causes, and skeptical about universal liberal ideals such as human rights and gender issues"¹⁸.

With its return to the international sphere, an original initiative of the 'new' South African government has been to lobby for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. The argument that the Security Council reflects the status quo as it was at the end of the Second World War and is no longer applicable is used, in addition to South Africa, by a number of other emerging

¹³ Janis van der Westhuizen, "South Africa's Emergence as a Middle Power", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 19, Issue 3, September 1998, p. 437.

¹⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁵ Cited in Tony Leon, "Economic Diplomacy and Political Leadership: An Alternative Foreign Policy Vision for South Africa", *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Winter 2001, p. 30.

¹⁶ Cited in Janis van der Westhuizen, op. cit., p. 437.

¹⁷ *South Africa Yearbook 2001/2002*, Durban: Universal Printers, 2002, p. 267.

¹⁸ Gerrit Olivier & Dean Geldenhuys cited in Marie Muller, "Current Developments in South African Diplomacy", http://www.diplomacy.edu/Books/mdiplomacy_book/muller/muller.html.

nations and middle powers as well such as Brazil, India, Egypt and Nigeria¹⁹. Whether it is realizable or not, this initiative is indicative of the role that South Africa aspires to play in the world. For its lobbying efforts to this end, the budget foreseen by the South African government in 2001 was R 1.8 million²⁰.

Making use of its new-found respectability and its weight as an emerging middle power, South Africa has, since 1994, also aimed to play a mediating role between the rich 'North' and the poor 'South'. A country with a First World infrastructure and Third World problems, South Africa does not stand out of place either within the countries of the 'North' or those of the 'South'. This has helped South Africa ploy the middle ground between countries from the two camps. In the area of non-proliferation and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and of conventional weapons (including land-mines), for instance, South Africa has played this role remarkably well. According to Marie Muller;

South Africa is seen as having the standing and the capacity to promote dialogue and interaction between the developed world on the one hand, while on the other, address the concerns of the developing world that they do not acquire the technology they need for their development. The South African government, therefore, supports all bilateral and multilateral initiatives to prevent the proliferation and development of such weapons on the one hand and to promote total disarmament of these weapons on the other.²¹

The evolution of South Africa's foreign policy in the period following the first democratic elections in 1994 has been the subject of considerable debate. Reference is made, for instance, to an attempt to bring together two significantly different approaches to foreign policy that coexist within the South African state. The ANC with its background as a liberation movement sees international affairs quite differently from the NP remnants in the Department of Foreign Affairs who have had to struggle, during the apartheid era, against what they perceived as a

¹⁹ Incidentally, these four countries and South Africa are part of the informal grouping of G-5 whose aim is 'to give the developing world a more united voice in international trade negotiations'. See *South Africa Yearbook 2001/2002*, op. cit., p. 296.

²⁰ Cited in Tony Leon, op. cit., p. 30.

²¹ Marie Muller, "Current Developments in South African Diplomacy", available at http://www.diplomacy.edu/Books/mdiplomacy_book/muller/muller.html.

hostile and uncompromising world²². Janis van der Westhuizen sees the same debate from the perspective of a division between an ‘internationalist’ and a ‘neo-mercantilist’ camp. According to this view, the diplomats of the apartheid regime belonged to the second camp and tended to underline trade relations and self-interest above all else. In contrast, most internationalists came from amongst the ANC exiles and tended to be in favour of a more collective approach emphasizing solidarity with the developing world, human rights and multilateralism²³.

It would appear that it is this dilemma between trade relations and concern for human rights that has caused many of the contradictions in South Africa’s foreign policy in the post-apartheid era. According to Graham Evans, “The ANC as the ruling party has not yet resolved the basic contradictions that have bedeviled its international thinking since it came to power”²⁴. The fact, for instance, that Indonesia is one of the most important buyers of South African arms made it difficult for the government to speak out against human rights abuses in East Timor. Trade relations with Morocco prevented the South African government from recognizing the Saharawi Republic and economic concerns made quiet diplomacy the instrument of choice in the Nigerian case of executed environmental activists²⁵. Furthermore the ties that the ‘new’ South African government has established with states with questionable human rights records such as Libya, Iran, Iraq, Cuba and Indonesia has called into question the ‘new’ regime’s commitment to human rights and led the New York Times to declare that, “Unpredictability seems to be one of the salient characteristics of the South African policy”²⁶. Marie Muller retains that “actual practice [of foreign policy] has shown that the new South African government may be influenced quite substantially by old friendships on the one hand and pragmatism on the other”²⁷. Consequently, South Africa’s foreign policy remains, according to Ryall,

²² The instances where there were discrepancies between the statements of Mandela and the DFA have been offered as proof of this two-tier approach to foreign policy. See Joseph Diescho, *The Limits of Foreign Policy Making*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 1996, p. 6.

²³ Janis van der Westhuizen, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

²⁴ Graham Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 623.

²⁵ Maxi van Aardt cited in Janis van der Westhuizen, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

²⁶ Donald McNeil Jr. cited in Janis van der Westhuizen, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

²⁷ Marie Muller, “South African Diplomacy and Security Complex Theory”, *Round Table*, Issue 352, October 1999, p. 591.

“disorganized and confused”, perhaps due to “the way in which South Africa’s recent past is continuing to shape its future”²⁸.

4.3 What Has Remained Constant

It is clear that much has changed in the way South Africa is perceived in the world after the country’s democratization. A mere 15 years ago, the South African state was rigidly undemocratic, openly racist and internationally shunned. Today, South Africa is held up as a model democracy not only to the rest of the African continent but also to all the countries in the world that have yet to make a similar transition. It has been demonstrated that the country’s internal democratization has been accompanied by a growing respect for its successes in the international community. Consequently, the country’s foreign relations have improved and multilateralism has become an important aspect of South Africa’s foreign policy. This can be seen in the increasing number of roles that it has assumed in the international organizations to which it belongs, in its peacekeeping operations and its role as facilitator in international conflicts.

Having said all this, one of the most important propositions of this Thesis is the contention that while some aspects of South Africa’s foreign policy have changed, other quite important components of the country’s foreign affairs have not and that this is a situation that is noteworthy for a country that has undergone such a drastic change of government. The next section will therefore aim to undertake a more close-up analysis of these aspects of South Africa’s foreign policy; namely, South Africa’s policy in terms of international political economy, arms manufacturing and sales, South Africa’s perception of and relations with the West, the issue of migration and South Africa’s regional hegemony.

²⁸ David Ryall, “Caught Between Two Worlds: Understanding South Africa’s Foreign Policy Options”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18, Issue 2, June 1997, p. 400 & 402.

4.3.1 South Africa in the International Political Economy

Throughout its existence, apartheid South Africa strove to play the part of the reliable ally of the West. The division of the world into the two camps of the East and the West in the post-World War II era was as much an economic division as it was a political one. In both of these respects, White South African governments saw themselves and the country as belonging to the West. It followed, therefore, from the apartheid regime's claim of belonging to the so-called Free World, it was also part of the global capitalist order. While the country encountered problems in accessing markets due to its domestic policies (mainly after the second half of the 1970's in the form of sanctions), once this problem was relatively eased out of the way, the regime came up with a major foreign policy review named 'New Diplomacy'. While some argued that the apparent reason behind this reappraisal was opening up the region to South African trade and diplomacy, van der Westhuizen states that the ultimate goal was to "tie the hands" of any future ANC-led government in regard to South Africa's geographical location and position as regional hegemon²⁹. It was, in other words, an early exercise that aimed to ensure that South Africa would remain firmly entrenched in the global capitalist order. As it turned out, the ANC did not really need any hand-tying by the outgoing NP as the party reassessed during 1992-93 its approach to foreign policy and economics, gradually aligning itself with the main tenets of New Diplomacy³⁰. According to Evans, the current President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki played an important role in this shift in the ANC's outlook:

During 1993-94, (...), in a series of in-house party discussion documents, Mbeki began to distance the organization from its commitment to socialist ideas and moved to articulate policy programmes which converged with the post-Cold War neo-liberal international system.³¹

²⁹ Janis van der Westhuizen, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Graham Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 625.

Taking his cue from the debate on South Africa as a middle power, Janis van der Westhuizen suggests that change at the level of the world order influenced the ANC's foreign policy and tamed the socialist edge to the party's rhetoric. This is especially true, van der Westhuizen continues, for the evident moderation of ANC's economic policy³².

It is therefore not surprising that the two main economic programmes prepared by the ANC after 1994, namely the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR), have been tinged with a noticeable neo-liberal flavor. A Financial Times writer even went so far as to say, "[With GEAR] the ANC emerged with as powerful a commitment to budgetary discipline and fiscal conservatism as White South Africa could have wished"³³. According to Peter Vale, the South African leadership seems to have understood that "the world is driven only by the economic issues of trade, industry and investment"³⁴. Indeed, "so rapid has been the collapse of the ANC's revolutionary tradition that it now appears to be little but a quaint memory"³⁵.

Adam Habib also points out a stark similarity in the economic policies of the apartheid state and the 'new' South Africa and, referring to the "new consensual capitalist order negotiated primarily between the ANC and NP", goes on to remark:

Political elites in both the apartheid regime and the ANC established corporatist institutions and processes because they recognized that their neo-liberal economic program was bound to provoke mass discontent³⁶.

According to Leonard Thompson, the ANC's choice to pursue conservative (i.e. neo-liberal) economic policies in the post-apartheid era was due

³² Janis van der Westhuizen, op. cit., p. 436.

³³ Cited in Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, "Neoliberalism and the Political Economy of the 'New' South Africa", *New Political Economy*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, March 2000, p. 31.

³⁴ Joseph Diescho, op. cit., p. 13.

³⁵ David Ryall, op. cit., p. 400.

³⁶ Adam Habib, "From Pluralism to Corporatism: South Africa's Labour Relations in Transition", *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 1997, p. 68.

to the fact that no “rational alternative” was available³⁷. In any case, whatever the reason or justification, it is clear that there are remarkable similarities between the economic policies of the apartheid state and the ‘new’ South Africa.

4.3.2 South Africa as an Arms Manufacturer and Seller

Since the 1970’s, South Africa’s defense industry has been one of the largest in the developing world. As explored in the earlier chapters of this Thesis, the expansion of the defense industry and arms production in South Africa was triggered principally by a number of external factors. Until 1961, South Africa imported the bulk of its armament needs. The withdrawal of the country from the Commonwealth in 1961 and the imposition of an arms embargo by the UN in 1963 made it increasingly difficult for South Africa to obtain arms from abroad and led to the development of an indigenous arms industry. Local arms production began with the establishment of the Armaments Production Board in 1964 and the Armaments Development and Production Corporation in 1968. These two bodies were merged in 1976 to create ARMSCOR (the Armaments Corporation of South Africa)³⁸. It is also in the late 1970’s that South Africa started work on developing nuclear capability and nuclear weapons. As referred to Chapter III, South Africa then went on to dismantle its nuclear capability and became the first nuclear power in the world to do so. The dismantling process was completed by June 1991 and South Africa joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in July of the same year.

South Africa’s increasing involvement in regional conflicts, the volatile domestic security situation and the continuing arms embargoes contributed to the maintenance and expansion of a robust arms industry throughout the 1980’s. Much progress was made in this period in the production of quality arms. In 1982, the quality of the South African weaponry displayed at an international

³⁷ Leonard Thompson, “Mbeki’s Uphill Challenge: After Apartheid, A Struggling South Africa”, op. cit., p. 85.

³⁸ Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *Hope for South Africa?*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1991, p. 79.

arms exhibition in Athens surprised foreign experts. In 1986, South Africa displayed its latest aviation technology at an international air show in Santiago de Chile³⁹. It is also in the 1980's that South Africa began its arms sales, a major source of revenue that continues to be integral to the South African economy today. At its peak, South Africa is reputed to have had "the seventh or eighth largest armament industries of the world"⁴⁰ and on the eve of the 1994 elections it was said to rank tenth in the world⁴¹.

The pulling out of the Cuban troops out of Angola and the negotiated independence of Namibia coupled with the economic difficulties resulting from the sanctions caused South Africa to cut down on its military expenditure at the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's. This seems to have stopped though since the country's democratisation. The 1994 military budget was 10 % greater than that of 1993 and the army actually expanded rather than being downsized in that period⁴². While this was partly due to the fact that the units from the MK, the APLA (Azanian People's Liberation Army – the military wing of AZAPO) and old homeland armies were being integrated with the SADF, the thinking that South Africa needs a large military and arms industry also appears to find wide appeal in the new government⁴³. In addition, certain conservative think-tanks and commentators use the new government's interest in peacekeeping operations to advance their agendas for the maintenance of the country's arms industry⁴⁴.

Even though the embargo imposed on South Africa by the UN covered both arms procurement and sales, the country still managed to do business with roughly 30 countries throughout the world⁴⁵. Official enquiries in the period following 1994 have found that the apartheid state sold arms to Iran, Iraq,

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See Neta C. Crawford, "South Africa's New Foreign and Military Policy: Opportunities and Constraints", *Africa Today*, Vol. 42m, Issue 1 / 2, 1995 1st / 2nd Quarter, p. 93.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴² Ibid., p.100.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁴ Peter Vale and Siphon Maseko, "South Africa and the African Renaissance", *International Affairs*, Vol. 74, Issue 2, April 1998, p. 275.

⁴⁵ Neta C. Crawford, op. cit., p. 107.

Yugoslavia, Rwanda and other African nations⁴⁶. When the embargo was lifted following the country's first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa was able to claim a larger share of the international market in terms of arms sales.

Since 1994, the new government has made it abundantly clear that it has no intention to cut down on or curtail its arms sales. Former President Nelson Mandela has argued, "I don't think it would be fair to say that a particular country should not engage in trade in arms. Arms are for the purpose of defending the sovereignty and integrity of a country. From that angle, there is nothing wrong with having trade in arms"⁴⁷.

The new government has nevertheless declared its intention to be a 'responsible' arms trader and established a National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) to be composed of ministers to be designated by the cabinet in charge of regulating the trade in conventional arms. Within this context, the Committee is responsible for authorizing the transfer of conventional arms and related technologies to a given recipient country on the basis of the following considerations:

- The respect showed for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The NCACC will determine this from an evaluation based on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Instances where the political, social cultural, religious and legal rights are seriously and systematically violated by the authorities of that country will be considered very critically.
- The internal and regional security situation of the country taking into consideration existing tensions or armed conflicts.
- The record of compliance regarding international arms control agreements and treaties.
- The nature and cost of the arms to be transferred in relation to prevailing circumstances, including justified security and defence needs and the objective of the least diversion of human and economic resources for armaments.

⁴⁶ Neta C. Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁴⁷ See Neta C. Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

- Whether such arms sales support South Africa's national and foreign interests.⁴⁸

This, however, is what is pledged. What is implemented in practice tells a different story. The list of the countries that procure arms from South Africa does not appear to support the claim that the above considerations are in fact taken into account in decisions relating to arms sales.

Since its democratisation, South Africa has sold weapons to countries such as Algeria, Angola, China, Colombia, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), India, Indonesia, Namibia, Pakistan, Rwanda, Syria⁴⁹, Uganda and Zimbabwe. While South Africa did refuse an arms transfer to Turkey in 1995 due to human rights abuses including 'widespread torture and mass displacement'⁵⁰, the same sensitivity has clearly not been shown to other countries involved in human rights abuses, some of which are included in the above list. Human Rights Watch's report of 2000 on South Africa's arms trade charged that the country consistently approved weapons sales to countries alleged to engage in repression against their own people or to countries involved in their own or other countries' civil wars. It goes without saying that such sales violate South Africa's policy of acting as a responsible arms trader and the principles set out in the country's official documents (as listed in the preceding page). It can be concluded from these examples that, despite pronouncements to the contrary, arms sales are seen principally in the light of economic considerations⁵¹. On this front, it would appear that past habits have not changed.

⁴⁸ See the website of the South African Directorate of Conventional Arms Control, at http://www.mil.za/SecretaryforDefence/ConventionalArmsControl/NCACC2001/ncacc2000_2001.htm

⁴⁹ In 1997, a South African arms sale worth \$ 640 million to Syria led to tensions between the United States and South Africa as Syria was on the United States' list of countries sponsoring terrorism. See *The Economist*, "Arms for Syria?", Vol. 342, Issue 8000, 18/01/1997, p. 42-43.

⁵⁰ See Human Rights Watch, "South Africa: A Question of Principle – Arms Trade and Human Rights" at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/safrica/>.

⁵¹ In 1995-1996, weaponry was South Africa's second biggest manufactured export employing about 50,000 people. See *The Economist*, "Arms for Syria?", op. cit., p. 42-43.

4.3.3 South Africa's Perception of and Relations with the West

Chapter II discussed at length how South Africa, under the apartheid regime, saw itself as an extension of the 'White Christian' world at the tip of the African continent. Accordingly, the country in this period tried to act as much as possible in concert with the major powers establishing close relations with the United States, the United Kingdom and France amongst others. While these relations were strained under the weight of the sanctions imposed by the United Nations from the 1970's onwards, they were all the same never completely severed.

At first look, the 'new' South Africa looks to be radically different from the apartheid regime in this respect. One of the pillars of South Africa's foreign policy today is, as set out by Nelson Mandela, a reflection of the concerns and interests of the continent of Africa in the country's foreign policy choices⁵². It is also true that the 'new' South Africa has taken steps to ensure that Africa's voice is more strongly heard in the world⁵³. However, actual practice shows a number of trends in the country's foreign policy that suggest that what is proclaimed officially does not always correspond to practice.

According to the 2001/2002 edition of the South Africa Yearbook, around 45 % of South Africa's total trade is conducted with Europe. The top 3 trading partners of the country are the USA followed by the UK and Germany. Europe continues to be South Africa's principal partner in terms of trade, investment, finance and transfer of technology⁵⁴.

⁵² Nelson Mandela, "South Africa's Future Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 5, November/December 1993, p. 87.

⁵³ President Thabo Mbeki's call for an 'African Renaissance' is the latest and the most emotionally charged of these attempts. For more on the African Renaissance, see Peter Vale and Siphosiso Maseko, "South Africa and the African Renaissance", *International Affairs*, Vol. 74, Issue 2, April 1998.

⁵⁴ *South Africa Yearbook 2001/02*, Durban: Universal Printers, 2002, p. 291-292.

Janis van der Westhuizen identifies three main foreign policy debates in South Africa, one of which is the criticism leveled, mainly by other Third World countries, against South Africa concerning its pro-Western orientation⁵⁵.

The first such criticism was voiced after and in connection with South Africa's position during the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference (NPT Review) held in New York between 17 April and 12 May 1995. The Treaty, which came into force in 1970, allows only the 5 nuclear powers (The USA, the UK, France, the USSR (later Russia) and China) that manufactured and exploded nuclear devices prior to 1 January 1967 to possess nuclear weapons⁵⁶. In the review, the 5 nuclear powers were in favor of an indefinite extension, which would continue their hegemony in the field. The Non-Aligned Movement and most countries in the 'South' were in principle opposed to an indefinite extension, a move which they considered equivalent to "an implicit recognition of the perpetuation of the existence of nuclear weapon states"⁵⁷. From an initial position that was identical to that of the Non-Aligned Movement, South Africa ended up, during the course of the Review, after pressure mainly from the USA supporting an indefinite extension. The Review concluded by an acceptance of indefinite extension and South Africa is generally seen as having contributed to this outcome, despite the fact that this angered its partners in the 'South'⁵⁸. The NPT Review process is thus seen as an indication that ultimately South Africa chooses to go along with the wishes of the hegemonic powers of the West rather than stand up for the 'South'. In other issues as well, mainly those concerning the African continent, South Africa has been criticized for running "to Washington and London before and/or without reaching some measure of collective sentiment among fellow African leaders"⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ Janis van der Westhuizen, op. cit., p. 436. The other two debates that van der Westhuizen mentions are the conflict between South Africa's championing of human rights and democratic values and the difficulty of achieving these in practice and the exclusion of civil society from the foreign policy process.

⁵⁶ Philip Nel, Ian Taylor and Janis van der Westhuizen, op. cit., p. 49.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ J. Simpson cited in Philip Nel, Ian Taylor and Janis van der Westhuizen, op. cit., p. 50-51.

⁵⁹ Joseph Diescho, op. cit., p. 17. See also *The Economist*, "A Diplomatic Casualty", Vol. 349, Issue 8088, 03/10/1998, p. 48.

There is also a question mark over the country's diplomatic ties with the West in contrast to its ties with countries from the 'South'. It is clear that South Africa's diplomatic representation has increased with the country's democratization. However, there is no indication that relations with the 'South' are being privileged as the government has promised. Fatima Hajaig of the parliament said in the Foreign Affairs debate in 1994:

More is being spent on countries which have long-established ties with South Africa, namely North America, South America and Europe. The amount allocated to them is approximately R387 million. On the other hand, for relationships with Africa South of the Sahara, coupled with North Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, Asia, Oceania, in other words, the rest of the world, only a total of approximately R242 million is to be spent.⁶⁰

Since 1994, the situation has been balanced slightly towards the advantage of countries outside Europe and North and South America but the disparity still shows. According to Chris Alden, there was initially an eagerness to establish new missions, especially in previously inaccessible African states. However, these intentions soon bowed to budgetary pressures as *normal priorities* (emphasis mine) were reasserted and resources remained concentrated in Western Europe and North America⁶¹. Of the 90 new bilateral missions opened between 1994 and 1997, 24 were in Africa, 45 in America and Europe and 21 in Asia and the Middle East⁶². In 2000, South Africa had 255 diplomats working in the Americas and Europe as opposed to 136 in Africa and 102 in Asia and the Middle East⁶³. While a total of R455.9 million was allocated in 1999/2000 to the missions in Europe and America, significantly less than this amount (R329.1 million) was foreseen for all of Africa, Asia and the Middle East⁶⁴.

⁶⁰ Cited in Raymond Suttner, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁶¹ Chris Alden cited in David Ryall, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

⁶² Marie Muller, "South African Diplomacy and Security Complex Theory", *op. cit.*, p. 601.

⁶³ Jo-Ansie van Wyk, *South Africa in International Affairs*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2002, p. 124. The imbalance in favor of the Developed World should perhaps not come as a surprise as it was reported in 1997 that South Africa's Black diplomats preferred European postings to postings to Africa. See Peter Vale and Sipho Maseko, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

⁶⁴ Jo-Ansie van Wyk, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

4.3.4 The Issue of Migration

The apartheid state laid a distinct claim to being a 'White' country in a predominantly Black Africa. In connection with this understanding, the immigration into the country of Whites was actively encouraged. Figures indicate that about 900,000 Whites formally immigrated to South Africa between 1960 and 1987⁶⁵. Indeed, a certain level of immigration was necessary in order for all the high-level and middle-level managerial jobs reserved for Whites to be filled⁶⁶.

Needless to say, Black immigration was not welcome although it certainly did take place. Businesses were allowed to employ foreign workers on limited-time contracts. Hundreds of thousands of workers, mainly from the neighboring countries of Southern Africa, came into the country during the 1980's. Of these, a very small number was able to stay on in the country legally whereas many others chose to stay on illegally⁶⁷. In the final years of apartheid, a significant number of refugees came to South Africa, notably from Mozambique, which was involved in a civil war. During the transformation period and on the eve of the first democratic elections, a considerable number of economic and political refugees entered South Africa⁶⁸.

The democratic transformation that the country has experienced does not seem to have affected the immigration policy significantly. The Aliens Control Act of 1991, said to be centerpiece of the apartheid regulatory framework⁶⁹, is still in force⁷⁰. Furthermore, the dominant approach to the issue of migration does not seem to have changed either. Writing in 1998, Jonathan Crush remarked, "Four years after the 1994 election, the continuities in migration and immigration

⁶⁵ Alan Morris, "Our Fellow Africans Make Our Lives Hell: The Lives of Congolese and Nigerians Living in Johannesburg", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 6, November 1998, p. 1118.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Neta C. Crawford, op. cit., p. 102.

⁶⁹ Jonathan Crush, "Fortress South Africa and the Deconstruction of Apartheid's Migration Regime", *Geoforum*, Volume 30, Number 1, February 1999, p. 1.

legislation and governance between the old and the new South Africa are overwhelming”⁷¹. Figures such as the Minister of Home Affairs Mangosuthu Buthelezi are known for their hawkish attitude to the issue of migration. In his speech to the parliament in September 1994, Buthelezi said, echoing the popular sentiment: “If we in South Africa are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa, than we can bid goodbye to our reconstruction and development program”⁷².

This is compounded by an overall negative approach to foreigners by the people of South Africa. There is a feeling of animosity towards foreigners, especially towards those from the north of Southern Africa, as they are thought to take jobs from South Africans. In 1997, street vendors attacked ‘foreign’ hawkers in downtown Johannesburg over tensions concerning these very worries⁷³. The definition of ‘foreign’ in the South African context is also noteworthy. Immigrants, illegal or otherwise, from the surrounding Southern African countries do not appear to be the objects of this kind of reaction as most speak at least one local language are not distinguishable from ordinary South Africans⁷⁴. There have been worries concerning a new kind of racism developing in South Africa, mainly targeting ‘foreign’ Black Africans⁷⁵. According to James Hamill, “The presence of ‘illegals’ is already leading to outbreaks of xenophobia in which ‘foreigners’ are targeted as convenient scapegoats for every conceivable ill: the crime wave, the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus, drugs and arms trafficking, unemployment and the undercutting of local labor”⁷⁶.

The rise to power of the ANC following the country’s democratization and South Africa’s accession to the SADC were initially seen as offering prospects of

⁷⁰ The act was modified in 1995 although its provisions actually increased the scope of repressive powers of the police. See Audie Klotz, “Migration After Apartheid: Deracializing South African Foreign Policy”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, Issue 5, October 2000, p. 832.

⁷¹ Jonathan Crush, op. cit., p. 9.

⁷² Cited in Neta C. Crawford, op. cit.

⁷³ Jakkie Cilliers, op. cit.

⁷⁴ Alan Morris, “Our Fellow Africans Make Our Lives Hell: The Lives of Congolese and Nigerians Living in Johannesburg”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 21, Number 6, November 1998, p. 1118.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1119.

employment and support to individuals from other SADC countries given the size and relative wealth of South Africa's economy. This however is not a realistic expectation as South Africa has significant imbalances of its own to address. Nelson Mandela, speaking at the SADC meeting two weeks after the attack on 'foreign' hawkers in Johannesburg, remarked, "We are equally beset with unemployment" and illegal immigration is "... sensitive and needs to be tackled with caution"⁷⁷.

The number of illegal immigrants is a much-debated issue. In April 1995, Thabo Mbeki estimated the number of illegal immigrants in South Africa at somewhere between two and three million⁷⁸. As no one quite knows as the exact numbers, guesses fluctuate between a low of 500,000 and a high of 5,000,000⁷⁹. With the high level of unemployment and the rise in the crime rates, new immigrants are not exactly made to feel welcome. What is interesting and most relevant to the analysis at hand is the fact that 'illegal immigrants continue to be identified primarily as a black threat'⁸⁰. According to Audie Klotz, "What apartheid defined as the 'black' threat, South Africans now generally apply to the continent as a whole"⁸¹.

4.3.5 South Africa's Regional Hegemony

The aim of this section is not to question or debate South Africa's regional hegemony. It is largely uncontested that South Africa is a 'natural' hegemon in its region and even in Africa as a whole. According to Jakkie Cilliers, 'it is difficult to overstate South Africa's dominant position in much of Africa, whether with reference to communications (in particular, the Internet), transport, population, economy or the military'⁸². This is not something new. The focus on

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Jakkie Cilliers, op. cit.

⁷⁸ See Neta C. Crawford, op. cit., p. 102.

⁷⁹ James Hamill, "From Realism to Complex Interdependence?", *International Relations*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, December 1998, p. 19.

⁸⁰ Audie Klotz, op. cit., p. 837.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 839.

⁸² Jakkie Cilliers, op. cit.

this section will be on the ways in which in hegemonic position manifests itself and how this compares with the regional policies of the apartheid state.

Old South Africa was an economic and military giant on its continent, much like the 'new' democratic regime. The country's wish to play a dominant role in the region and in Africa as a whole goes back to Prime Minister D.F. Malan's Africa Charter. Verwoerd dreamt of setting up a Constellation of States (CONSAS) around South Africa that would both provide a zone of security and furnish the regime with some level of legitimacy. Neither this plan nor full economic relations with the rest of Africa were ever realized, as Black-ruled African countries were always wary of dealing with a White minority government. Throughout its existence, the apartheid regime was never fully able to make use of its economic hegemony even though South Africa provided (and continues to provide) the transportation infrastructure for the products and trade of most of the countries in the region⁸³. Despite these major setbacks, however, it is interesting to note that apartheid South Africa ranked 8th amongst foreign direct investors in Africa⁸⁴.

In the apartheid days, and especially after the second half of the 1970's, South Africa's regional hegemony mainly manifested itself in the military sphere. The independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975 under openly Marxist governments coupled with the guerrilla activities of the ANC led South Africa to conclude that a 'total onslaught' was underway against the country and that it had to be countered by a 'total strategy'. It was on the basis of this assumption that South Africa engaged in its destabilization exercises towards its immediate neighbours, mainly Angola and Mozambique (but also Zimbabwe and Zambia in some instances).

Despite the fundamental changes that has taken place in South Africa, it may come as a surprise to some that the country, even today, experiences

⁸³ Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan, op. cit., p.42.

⁸⁴ David F. Gordon, David C. Miller Jr. and Howard Wolpe, *The United States and Africa: A Post-Cold War Perspective*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1998, p. 38.

interesting setbacks in its relations with other African countries due to its past. In earlier sections, it was stated that one of the new foreign policy goals of South Africa today is international peace-keeping operations. In late 1994, the United Nations requested South Africa to participate in a peacekeeping force to be stationed in Angola. The Angolan government was less than thrilled with the foreseen South African presence on their territory. In March 1995, the Angola's Minister of Foreign Affairs Venancio De Moura said, "If South Africa wants to participate, it can provide logistical assistance but not soldiers. History is history"⁸⁵.

Judging from this incident, David Ryall may well be right that "South Africa's recent past is continuing to shape its future"⁸⁶. Indeed, in times of differences of points of view, the country can be and has been accused of continuing to harbor a 'Boer mentality' towards the rest of Africa based on an understanding, supposedly, that "South Africa is better than and closer to the civilized world than the rest of Africa"⁸⁷.

In the same vein, Jakkie Cilliers writes;

South African foreign policy also sometimes appears to try and apply so-called 'First World' standards when dealing with dictatorial rulers and one-party states, while often appearing to fail to come to grips with the realities of the continent and even of South Africa itself. (...) Certainly, South Africa subscribes to different rules and criteria than do much of the rest of Africa.⁸⁸

South Africa's economic preponderance is not something new. South Africa was always an economic in addition to a military power to be reckoned with in its region. At the beginning of the 1990's, the then-SADDC's combined trade with South Africa was seven times higher than the trade of SADDC members with one another⁸⁹. As of 2001, South Africa generated 80 % of the

⁸⁵ Cited in Neta C. Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁸⁶ David Ryall, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

⁸⁷ Joseph Diescho, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Jakkie Cilliers, *op. cit.*

⁸⁹ Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *op. cit.*, p.42.

SADC's GDP⁹⁰. According to Gann and Duignan, "South Africa is the core of a wider southern African system dominated by Pretoria"⁹¹. The country's transport infrastructure provides the main gateway for the products of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia making these countries dependent of South Africa for their trade relations with the rest of the world.

Before its democratization, South Africa played an important military role in the region. With the independence of Namibia, South Africa gradually started to cut down on its military expenditure. This however failed to result in significant changes in the size of the military. South Africa today has the largest army in Sub-Saharan Africa and there are no indications that it will be downsized. On the contrary, "there is a sense that the military should remain robust"⁹². Military spending amounted to R2.5 billion in 1995. At this rate, it was nearly equal to the GNU's entire annual budget for the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)⁹³. Considering that a R29.9 billion package of arms purchases was approved as late as in September 1999⁹⁴, it can be assumed that military spending will continue to remain at its current levels for the foreseeable future.

There are also indications that the 'new' South Africa wishes to continue playing a dominant military role in the region. As early as in 1994, moves were made, on South Africa's initiative, to give SADC a more pronounced security aspect. A two-day conference was held in Tanzania in November 1994 on regional security issues with the participation of the Defense Ministers of South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. At the conference, agreement was reached on the establishment of a rapid deployment force to intervene in regional conflicts on short notice. Crawford draws attention to the fact that "South Africa was only country present with the military forces capable of such action"⁹⁵. This capability

⁹⁰ Sipho Pityana, "Bridging the Divide: Main Thrusts of South Africa's Diplomatic Endeavours, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Volume 8, Number 2, Winter 2001, p. 37.

⁹¹ Lewis H. Gann and Peter Duignan, op. cit., p. 41-42.

⁹² Neta C. Crawford, op. cit., p. 103.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 107.

⁹⁴ Robert Mattes, op. cit., p. 24.

⁹⁵ Cited in Neta C. Crawford, op. cit., p. 108.

was first tested in 1998 when South Africa, accompanied by Botswana under the banner of SADC, intervened in Lesotho to restore the government that was ousted by a military coup. While the government of Lesotho was restored to power as a result of the intervention, the exercise is widely considered to be a failure as it resulted in the deaths of at least seventy people, the destruction of the central commercial district of the capital Maseru, the alienation of King Letsie II and of the main opposition parties⁹⁶. It is not clear whether such exercises will be repeated in the future as part of SADC's new role. As Graham Evans observes, "A human-rights based foreign policy, implying as it does an open-ended commitment to intervene by force of arms if necessary, is rightly regarded with suspicion in the neighborhood"⁹⁷. However, it is clear that there would be higher stakes and more diplomatic risks involved if a country such as Zimbabwe or Angola was made the subject of this type of an intervention.



⁹⁶ Graham Evans, "The End of the Rainbow", *The World Today*, Volume 55, Number 1, January 1999, p. 11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

There is much that can be said about South Africa's transformation that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Arguably, the most striking and relevant aspect of this transformation is the peaceful and orderly manner in which it has taken place. This thesis focused mostly on the foreign policy implications of South Africa's transition. While recognizing the significance of South Africa's democratization process, the thesis argued that two aspects of this process must not be overlooked. The process of reform has neither started nor ended with the election of the country's first democratic government in 1994. It is the result of a long succession of events that can even be said to be continuing today. Secondly, while much has changed in terms of the country's foreign policy, a number of significant foreign policy areas have not experienced any noticeable shifts. This in itself is a variable that is integral to a complete understanding of South Africa. To recall, these areas are:

- a) South Africa's place in the international political economy
- b) The manufacturing and selling of arms
- c) South Africa's perception of and relations with the West
- d) The issue of migration
- e) South Africa's regional hegemony

When South Africa became independent in 1910, it became the 3rd country on the African continent to acquire this distinction. At that time, Ethiopia, which was never colonized, and Liberia, which was set up by freed Black American slaves in 1847, were the only independent African states. The fact that the

country was long independent by the time the process of decolonization started in Africa was a major factor in the problems that the country would face with the start of this period due to its race-based domestic policies. By 1960, a landmark year for African decolonization, South Africa had already been an independent state for 50 years. This in turn meant that the country's political structure was largely in place by this time, a structure that would prove highly resilient to the winds of change on the continent.

Indeed, up until the 1960's and even 1970's, South Africa existed more or less as a state like any other in the international stage. In the years leading up to the Second World War, South Africa's international identity was informed by its Commonwealth membership. At the time, the British Commonwealth was made up of White dominions of the United Kingdom such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The ruling establishment in South Africa did not consider itself much different from these other dominions. In their eyes, South Africa was a 'White, Christian' country like any other.

South Africa took part in the Second World War on the side of the Allies. While there was some debate within the White elite as to whether this was the right path to choose, in the end South Africa found itself shoulder to shoulder with its old colonial big brother. Therefore, it is no surprise that South Africa positioned itself within the Western camp in the face of the post-War divide between the 'East' and the 'West'. However, this did not prevent a rift from forming between South Africa and the rest of the 'Western' camp with the granting of independence to the colonies. As it became clear that South Africa would not grant political rights to its Black majority, the country's standing in the international stage began to suffer. South Africa refused to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This was the first of the many differences of opinion that would emerge between the apartheid state and the rest of the world and eventually lead to the ostracism of South Africa from the UN and most other multilateral bodies.

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South Africa's foreign policy in the apartheid years, especially after the 1970's, revolved around, in the words of James Barber and John Barratt, a "search for status and security". The country's domestic structure and policies occupied the forefront of its dealings with the world at large as South Africa came under fire for its racial policies. As a result, South African foreign policy in the apartheid era gained a visible defensive streak. The overriding goal of foreign policy became the preservation of White political superiority in the face of growing world opposition. For apartheid South Africa, this meant sustaining or improving the country's standing in the eyes of the Western world. Equating the 'black' threat with communism, South Africa positioned itself in the so-called Free World. This also meant subscribing to a capitalist economy. South Africa never tired of looking towards the developed world even when it could not find there the approval it sought. Despite the apparent disapproval of South Africa's racist domestic policies, it has been noted that Western powers were mostly reluctant to impose sanctions on South Africa for fear that this would hurt their interests there and did so only after they were compelled to by the growing reaction on the part of the public and of organizations such as the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement. This in itself is an indication of how well integrated South Africa was to the world economy.

In the early years of decolonization, South Africa refused to establish diplomatic ties with the newly independent countries of what would come to be referred as the Third World. After the 1970's, it was South Africa that wished for the establishment of such relations and was refused. Apart from its links with other pariah states such as Taiwan, Israel and Chile, the majority of South Africa's diplomatic ties were with 'Western' countries.

As noted in the previous paragraph, South Africa tried a number of times to establish diplomatic and economic relations with African countries. After the 1970's, a growing emphasis was put on relations with Africa. This can be seen as the beginning of South Africa's desire to play a greater role in its region and ultimately on the continent as a whole. Nevertheless, these efforts were bound to

fail unless the question of legitimacy –that of a White minority regime ruling over a Black majority– was sufficiently addressed. It was for this reason that apartheid South Africa was not able to establish a constellation of states around it to cooperate with in economic and military affairs. As soon as the question of legitimacy was addressed in a satisfactory manner, South Africa joined the Southern African Development Council (SADC) and has since assumed its role of hegemon in the region. The changes in the political climate and the country's perception by the world at large have meant that the hegemony is now legitimate.

Because the imposition of economic sanctions on South Africa was opposed by the United States and the United Kingdom among others, the first sanction applied to the country came in the form of a voluntary arms embargo on the country by the United Nations in 1963. The embargo did little to disrupt South Africa's procurement of arms from the West. However, the imposition of a mandatory arms embargo after the Soweto uprisings in 1977 made this process a lot more difficult. South Africa established an Armaments Production Board as early as in 1964 to look into the possibility of producing arms locally. The process gained momentum with the institution of ARMSCOR (The Armaments Corporation of South Africa) in 1976. ARMSCOR is still in charge of South Africa's arms production. In the 1980's, South Africa emerged as a manufacturer of high quality of arms with many willing buyers, most of which traded in secret. During this time, arms sales became a major foreign currency earner in South Africa, a status that has lasted to this day.

In addition to its racist policies in the domestic sphere, the country's immigration policy was also tinged with a noticeable edge of racism. The White minority regime encouraged the immigration of Whites into the country while aiming to keep any Black immigrants out. Despite this fact, White businesses could employ foreign Black workers provided that the employment was on the basis of a fixed-term contract. A significant number of workers came to South Africa in the 1980's both legally and illegally. It is clear that migration is not a recent phenomenon in South Africa and that the hawkish attitude of the

government and the public against 'foreigners' (i.e. Blacks from countries north of the Southern African region) should be traced back to the apartheid days.

Frederick W. De Klerk assumed the presidency of the Republic of South Africa in August 1989. Conservative in origin, few thought that De Klerk would make any radical changes in how South Africa was governed. De Klerk surprised not only the world in general but even those in the National Party when he declared in parliament on 2 February 1990 that he would unban Black political organizations, free political prisoners and was ready to negotiate with the African opposition for a 'new' South Africa. The changes that have taken place since then are history. As a result of the process of negotiation initiated by De Klerk, South Africa held its first-ever democratic elections in April 1994, which resulted in the overwhelming victory of the African National Congress.

It is clear that the developments both within the country and in the world in general had an important impact on the process of transformation in South Africa. Internally, the country had reached a deadlock. By the end of the 1980's, sanctions had crippled the country economically and it had become clear that the Black opposition could not be silenced through repression. Contrary to the heyday of the apartheid regime, it became clear in the Whites-only referendum held in May 1992 also signaled that even those that stood to benefit from the system of apartheid wanted it changed.

On the international front, many unexpected developments were taking place. Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* coupled with the USSR's internal crises eventually led to a break-up of the Soviet Empire. This in turn led Eastern European countries to break off their 'communist' links and seek integration with the Western world. In Southern Africa, Namibia became independent in 1990 as a multiracial democracy, Cuban and South African troops pulled out of Angola and the Soviet influence in the region vanished with the break-up of the USSR. In other words, the real or assumed threats against which the South African regime had positioned itself since the 1970's mostly

evaporated. The moral support that the world in general provided for a peaceful transformation in South Africa further contributed to the speeding up of the process.

It cannot be disputed that much has changed in South Africa, both domestically and in terms of foreign policy. Since 1994, South Africa has held two democratic elections, negotiated one of the most liberal constitutions in the world and more or less entrenched a multiracial participatory system. From what was generally agreed to be something of a police state, South Africa is today an exemplary democracy that upholds individual liberties and human rights. In addition to this, the fact that the transformation could be achieved peacefully and without antagonizing any of the main groups in South African society has been lauded internationally as a model in the settlement of conflicts. With its experience of transformation, South Africa has set an example to all long-running conflicts in the world and inspired hope as to their peaceful resolution.

South Africa's democratization was followed by its return to the international stage. Immediately following the elections in 1994, South Africa joined or rejoined among others the ILO, the WHO, the Commonwealth, the Organization of African Unity (OAU, now AU), the Southern African Development Council (SADC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). With its newfound legitimacy and respectability, the 'new' South Africa has declared its intention to privilege multilateral relations, to uphold human rights, to promote peaceful settlement of disputes and to voice the concerns of Africa on the global stage.

While it is true that the new government has achieved a great deal in realizing these new foreign policy objectives, there remain significant continuities in the country's foreign policy that need to be underlined. Overlooking these aspects of South Africa's foreign policy would affect an equitable understanding of South Africa negatively.

These apparent continuities were discussed in detail throughout the course of the thesis. While relations have been improved with Africa and the Third World in general, the bulk of the country's diplomatic activity is still with the 'Western' World. This can be seen in both the resources allocated to diplomatic service and in the actual number and location of South Africa's diplomatic missions. As pointed out previously, the 'new' South Africa puts great emphasis on human rights and has since its democratization emerged as a promoter of these values in the international arena. These noble intentions are however overshadowed by the ongoing sale of arms to regimes with highly dubious human rights records. The evidence also shows that South Africa is prepared to forego human rights concerns in the case of countries with which South Africa has considerable and established trade links. Trade and economic concerns in general have emerged as a dominant factor in the country's foreign policy since 1994 and this has also been reflected in the government's own economic policies. The ANC has pursued neo-liberal policies surpassing even the capitalist credentials of the old National Party government. South Africa has tried to use its economic muscle and assumed the role of a natural hegemon in its region. Its membership in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is both part of the new constructive role that South Africa aims to play in the region and also a legitimization of its apparent hegemony. Finally, the migration policy of the 'new' South Africa does not seem to have changed much since the days of apartheid. In addition to the strictness of the government policy on the matter, there is a growing reaction against 'foreigners' in South Africa on the part of the general public.

Interestingly enough, it is possible to see certain similarities when it comes to why certain aspects of South Africa's foreign policy have or have not undergone significant change. It would appear that both the changes and the continuities have been caused mainly by practical and economic concerns. South Africa's economic ties with the Western world means in turn that the bulk of diplomatic activity is with these countries. These ties and South Africa's firm place in the international political economy is also the reason behind the ANC

governments' neo-liberal economic policies. The continuing emphasis on military spending and production is due to the fact that these remain central to South Africa's economy. A significant number of people are employed in this sector and the sale of arms is a big foreign currency earner. Because of its economic and military power, South Africa continues to play the 'natural' role of regional hegemon. Even though South Africa has economic problems, it is still by far the richest and most developed country in its region. This in turn attracts illegal immigrants into the country, which makes immigration both a sensitive and problematic issue in South Africa today.

Similar economic and practical reasons lie behind the changes experienced in the country's foreign policy. South Africa's perception by the world has been affected positively by the democratization process and as a result has also led to increasingly active roles for the country on the international stage. This new-found respectability means that South Africa puts significant emphasis on multilateral relations and plays leading roles in international organizations. Years of struggle against minority rule clearly informs the ANC's look at concepts such as peace, democracy and human rights. South Africa's ties with so-called radical states such as Sudan, Libya, Cuba and Syria are also a result of the international solidarity that these countries have shown to the ANC during the apartheid years.

The fact that the transformation process has led to a win-win situation is the best lesson that South Africa can offer to the world. Radical change does not mean that one side has to lose. It is possible for every stakeholder to win. If the situation in South Africa which had been complicated by 48 years of official and more than 350 years of unofficial apartheid could be solved through negotiations, there is hope for every conflict in the world to reach a peaceful resolution.

Even though nine years have passed since the first democratic elections, some might argue that it is too early to reach a verdict on the country's foreign policy path. This thesis would not agree with such an argument and it has during its course aimed to show the new patterns to South Africa's foreign policy. Some

of these can be seen to differ quite significantly from the foreign policy in the apartheid era. As has been demonstrated above, this was in some cases due to practical reasons (such as the furthering of relations with Africa and the developing world) and in some cases due to the ANC's past experiences (such as a commitment to democracy and human rights). The same is true for the continuities, which mainly have economic concerns behind them. In any case, it would appear that South Africa's foreign policy has reached a new equilibrium in which aspects of the past continue to exist harmoniously within the new structures.

South Africa will hold its third democratic elections in 2004. From this point of view, South Africa is a young democracy. It remains to be seen what type of further changes will be experienced in the country in the future. What will be the outcome of Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance? What kind of a role will South Africa play in the African Union? Will South Africa be able to play a global role as a representative of Africa and indeed the 'South'?

To conclude, this thesis has shown that any study of South Africa's foreign policy is incomplete if the continuities from the apartheid regime to the existing democratic system are not located and analyzed. Such an endeavor is by no means an indication of a disbelief in the magnitude of South Africa's transformation. On the contrary, the fact that participatory democracy could be entrenched in the face of a number of continuities in the country's domestic and foreign policies is in itself an indication of the success of the transformation process and deserves to be underlined as such.

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