

1987

From exhortation to strategy: mediation efforts in South Africa

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/41079>

Downloaded from DSpace Repository, DSpace Institution's institutional repository

**FROM EXHORTATION TO
STRATEGY: MEDIATION
EFFORTS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

By Donald Rothchild

African Studies Center

1987

**Working Papers in
African Studies
No. 124**

African Studies Center
Boston University
270 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215

**FROM EXHORTATION TO STRATEGY:
MEDIATION EFFORTS IN SOUTH AFRICA***

By Donald Rothchild

"All South Africans need to be represented in negotiations to determine the system of government that will replace [apartheid]. Such negotiations are urgent. We cannot prescribe their outcome. But our policies and actions must be calculated to encourage the process of peaceful change"

- Secretary George Shultz (1986:6)

"We have tried talking to the [South African] government and it didn't work."

- Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (1986:5), former
Nigerian Head of State and Co-Chairmen of
the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group

In such deeply divided societies as South Africa, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka, some tacit exchanges on specific issues of mutual interest can be identified, despite the zero-sum nature of their perceptions and the deep cleavages among their collectives. Yet where the rules of the game themselves are in contention, it is important to stress the hesitant and transitory process at hand; in the absence of shared values, "antagonistic negotiation" (Strauss, 1978: 208) does not usually prove fruitful, especially in an age of the electronic media and mass public participation.

In the specific case of South Africa, an increasingly intense encounter between the Afrikaner-dominated state and the black nationalist organizations makes the prospect of all-party negotiations, as sought by Secretary Shultz, seem unlikely for the time being. In brief, there appears to be a lack of bargaining opportunities for the moment. Although the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) Mission found that "No serious person we met was interested in a fight to the finish" and that "all favoured negotiations and peaceful solutions" (Commonwealth Group, 1986: 101), the facilitation of direct talks among rival interests appears beyond the reach of domestic and external third parties. Negotiations on ending white minority rule are clearly necessary if deterioration and a possible civil war are to be averted, but the will to bring them about is not sufficient under current circumstances. Therefore, if the nature of contemporary conflict in South Africa appears to stand in the way of a successful mediatory initiative, prudence requires a rethinking of this strategy, linking it to other, more compelling incentives for change. In South Africa, political problems require an altering of structures; hence to be successful, a mediator must be prepared to intervene more actively than in other conflicts to ensure a positive, mutual gains outcome. The mediator must alter the conditions of conflict themselves.

The consequences of inaction are certainly apparent to many leaders, black and white. Averting the costs of internal violence and insecurity was clearly in the thoughts of jailed leader Nelson Mandela when, in the presence of the Commonwealth mission, he made an impassioned appeal to a South African cabinet minister, H. J. Coetsee, for direct talks between them to prevent a worsening of the situation in their country (*New York Times*, July 12, 1986:3). And, in fact, current economic indicators do seem to point to increasingly difficult times ahead. For example, gross fixed capital formation fell by 40 percent in 1985; the gross domestic product was down by 1 percent in the first quarter of 1986; voluntary disinvestment by multinational corporations was accelerating (the book value of American investments in South Africa fell by one-third in 1985 and early 1986); a small net emigration took place among whites (especially in the significant skilled manpower category) for the first time since 1977; the commercial rand declined precipitously, from \$1.28 in 1980 to below 40 cents in 1986; a capital flight of \$1 billion occurred between September 1985 and March 1986; and unemployment soared to 25 percent in the urban black community (Shultz, 1986: 2). By the year 2000, according to one estimate, there will be 5 million unemployed persons in South Africa if present trends continue (Legum, 1983-84:B713). As summarized by a spokesperson at Anglo American Corporation, "We face declining morale, an aging capital stock, exodus of skills and increasing difficulties in labor relations" (*Wall Street Journal*, October 7, 1986: 39).

Political indicators, moreover, were equally unsatisfactory for the Afrikaner-led state. With the police and army losing control over the townships, and with administrative and educational systems in parts of the Eastern Cape degenerating, a situation of ungovernability, even "violent equilibrium," appeared to be emerging (Adam, 1986: 302). Whether and under what circumstances a future African-led state can re-establish governability remains unclear.

Under these circumstances government-black nationalist negotiations appear logical. They offer an opportunity for social learning (Rothchild, 1973: 145) and hold out the possibility of avoiding a spiral into mutual destruction, with its high costs in terms of increased social polarization, a widening repression, the development of a siege economy, and the economic and political dislocation of a broader sub-region. The analogies of Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland come readily to mind. Unfortunately, however, intense conflicts over the rules of relationship do not easily lend themselves to rational processes of political compromise and peaceful change, especially where an entrenched ethnic-dominated state views structural transformation in deeply threatening terms (Kaplowitz, 1984: 377-379; Rothchild, 1986: 87-93). Such state elites are less concerned with more equitable distributive outcomes than with their expectations about how rival leaders will structure inter-group relations in the future (Jervis, 1976: 103). However, as perceptions of group conflict change, as the local balance of forces shifts, and as an appropriate mediator for this particular conflict emerges, the "ripe moment" for negotiations may appear (Zartman, 1985: 9). Until that time, however, the Shultz scenario would appear to be too straightforward and too culture bounded, and, to the extent that it diverts us from the effort to alter political structures, not very helpful in promoting the process of change.

False Analogies to Pre-independence Negotiations
in Colonial Africa

In gaining an understanding of the process at hand, it is important to stress at the outset that the South African negotiating context is unique in itself, making analogies to previous independence "bargains" largely false and misleading. To start with, the proportion of whites to non-whites is considerably higher in South Africa than elsewhere in Africa (with the notable exception of French-ruled Algeria). And not only is the white "community" more securely entrenched, but it has abundant resources and a closely bonded relationship with the state. South Africa is not only rich in natural resources, but it is an industrialized society with transportation links by road and rail with the north and by air and sea with the world at large. Its relatively large, white middle class is locked into an intimate relationship with the Afrikaner-run state, a relationship which affords it access, benefits and protection. Any major concessions by the state are likely to be interpreted by sections within the white community as threatening to their collective interests, leading, in subsequent elections, to a right-wing drift. Hence until the costs of the status quo rise considerably (to the point where dominant elements within the ruling class perceive their interests to be threatened by isolation and effective sanctions), bargaining seems unlikely to alter the basic rules of relationship between groups as was the case in more vulnerable Zimbabwe (and then, only after a bitter and protracted civil war). To quote Heribert Adam (1983: 132-133):

the costs of racial privilege maintenance are also increasing through heightened internal unrest, escalating guerrilla incursions and international ostracism. However, unlike the Zimbabwe situation, since blacks cannot force whites to negotiate their capitulation, the conflict remains an uneasy stalemate (Adam, 1983: 132-133; also Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 15).

But if the South African context is different from that of the states to the north during the decolonization phase, the processes of mediation and negotiation are likely to pose even more striking hurdles. Unlike Kenya and Zimbabwe, South Africa is not a classic example of external colonialism. It is a sovereign state, with membership in the United Nations. This gives the state, although not its government, legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. As such, the South African state is free to enter into negotiations with other states or sections within its own country as it chooses to do. Consequently, when state officials decide to break off contacts, as happened in May 1987 with the Commonwealth EPG mission, there is little that the world can do about it - at least until the context of relations is altered. Thus, whereas the British were the colonial masters in Kenya and Zimbabwe, and in a position to force political exchanges between rival parties from above as a price of stability and independence, there is no natural mediator for the South African domestic conflict credible in the eyes of both parties and able to maintain a momentum of ongoing negotiations. A variety of external mediators might be able to offer

some incentives to the various parties to bring them to the bargaining table, as we will see below, but it is a delicate process with a clear possibility of failure. The reasons for this are not hard to find; not only is trust in short supply and aims divergent but mutual interest - the avoidance of damage - may not be sufficiently compelling to bring the parties to a positive-sum outcome. Therefore, unlike Kenya and Zimbabwe, mediation may prove unequal to the task and a more deeply conflictive outcome (such as subjection, displacement, partition, intensified guerrilla warfare, or "violent equilibrium") may mark the scene in the years ahead. As Malcolm Fraser and Olusegun Obasanjo, the co-chairmen of the Commonwealth Missions noted: "Once a guerrilla struggle has commenced, it will be almost impossible to return to the negotiating table until one side becomes exhausted by long years of conflict" (Fraser and Obasanjo, 1986: 161-162).

The Failure of Prior Mediation Efforts

For all the apparent logic of a negotiated settlement, "honest brokers," as General Obasanjo described the Commonwealth EPG mission, have come away soured by their experience with attempted mediatory efforts in South Africa. Although the EPG mission described its role as "limited to the task of facilitating a process of dialogue for change" (Commonwealth Group, 1986: 20), it actually went further than this and proposed a "possible negotiating concept" to act as a starting point for negotiations. This negotiating concept involved the following package of proposals: a declaration of the government's intention to dismantle apartheid, the release of all political prisoners, the recognition by the state of the rights of freedom of speech and assembly, a moratorium on government and opposition violence, and an agreement between the government and the African National Congress (ANC) on the need to "act simultaneously in fulfillment of their respective commitments" (Commonwealth Group, 1986: 103). The Botha government's response to this was equivocal. While raising questions regarding specific recommendations, it did nonetheless call for a continuation of the dialogue, proposing that a further exchange of views take place between the rival parties and the Commonwealth mission. For a brief time, Botha himself seemed to be guardedly positive about the Mission's mediatory initiative. Encouraged by the positive role it might play in this conflict, the Commonwealth mission labored on and sought to clarify the various perceptions that each party had as to the nature of the conflict and its possible solution (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, May 1, 1986: U4). Subsequently, however, as the Commonwealth mission came up against the hard reality of the government's non-negotiable positions - on the renunciation of violence, the preservation of group rights, the continuance of separate education and residential areas, and so forth - as well as the deliberate military raid by South African forces against three neighboring Commonwealth countries, it lost faith for the time being in a negotiated solution as a realizable objective. "The South African Government," it concluded, "is not yet ready to negotiate [a non-racial and democratic] future - except on its own terms" (Commonwealth Group, 1986: 131; see also *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, August 24, 1986: 7). Discussions with the Commonwealth Group in fact had convinced the Botha regime that concessions would not lead to reduced pressure, rather to new demands, backed up by the threat of sanctions (*Manchester Guardian*

Weekly, August 24, 1986: 16). The upshot was as final as it was dramatic: the Commonwealth mission abandoned its mediatory effort and called upon the Commonwealth countries and their allies to implement effective economic sanctions. In the current crisis, the Commonwealth effort at mediation was deemed inadequate to the task at hand.

Following the failure of the Commonwealth EPG Mission, a number of individuals rose briefly to the challenge of peacemaker. Almost immediately, a European Community summit, under pressure from the British and West German governments which sought to avoid the imposition of sanctions, endorsed a peace mission to South Africa by the British foreign secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe. In endorsing Howe's trip in his capacity as the president of the Council of Ministers, the EC made very clear that if South African authorities did not respond positively to Howe's demands for a rescinding of the state of emergency, the release of political detainees, and a lifting of the prohibition on African political parties, its member states would place a ban on the importation of coal, iron, steel and gold coins. As anticipated by many in advance of Howe's visit, the threat of EC sanctions was not sufficient in itself to push Botha to the bargaining table. Botha resisted making any concessions to the European initiative, and the African nationalists and their front-line state supporters, regarding the mission as a play for time on the part of the British, generally looked upon the Howe journey as a futile effort. In light of the EPG mission's failure, the Howe effort was dismissed by Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe as "a waste of time" (*Harare Herald*, July 11, 1986: 1). The Zimbabwe leader specifically rejected the notion that in this situation negotiations were preferable to economic sanctions. For Mugabe and other black leaders in and out of South Africa, Botha's rejection of Commonwealth mediation was a clear signal that the South Africans were not prepared to negotiate an end to apartheid, and this left the African leadership with little choice but to press for mandatory economic sanctions (*Harare Herald*, July 12, 1986: 2; *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, July 6, 1986: 1). The gap between Botha and the African leaders was clearly too wide now to be bridged by a lone intermediary, and, after a brief encounter with a number of the protagonists, Sir Geoffrey returned to Europe empty-handed.

Another example of failed facilitation occurred in September 1986 when Mrs. Coretta Scott King, the wife of former civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., canceled scheduled meetings with State President P. W. Botha and Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi. What began as an effort to start a dialogue ended soon after in embarrassment for the honest broker. Under pressure from the United Democratic Front, it became clear to Mrs. King and others that this was not the appropriate time for "a dialogue" between the contending parties. As UDF leaders put it, Mrs. King would have to choose whether she was "with the people or against the people" (*Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 1986: 8). Put in these stark terms, Mrs. King acted prudently and withdrew from the fray.

For the time being, then, the depth of conflict over the basic rules of relationship in South Africa limits the middle ground and makes mediation a particularly difficult task under current circumstances. In I. W. Zartman's terms, the mediator lacks "the informal power to make the parties decide" (Zartman, 1985: 9). For the mediator, involvement can also be deemed to entail a high price, particularly where the players perceive the conflict in zero-sum terms and where

the need for third-party credibility can lead to embarrassing relationships, as happened in the case of Namibia where U. S. mediation caused it to become identified with South African purposes (Rothchild and Ravenhill, 1987: 412-416). To be sure, a fine line must be drawn between reluctance to mediate and a self-fulfilling sense of low political efficacy; nevertheless, where inter-group boundaries are pronounced and norms of reciprocity weak, as in South Africa, the scope for bargaining seems distinctly limited and a third party might well have reason to draw back for a time from mediatory action on the grounds that the circumstances were not propitious.

At this juncture, then, the minimum consensus for meaningful negotiations in South Africa appears not to be in evidence. For its part, the Botha government gives every indication of not being prepared to compromise on the issue of "grand apartheid." Not only was this quite apparent in the dialogue that it held with the Commonwealth Group and then with Howe, but in its actions following the 1986 vote in the U.S. Congress on economic sanctions. A defiant Botha government insisted that its bargaining opposite, the ANC, is communist-dominated and that it must reject violence prior to the start of negotiations of the future of the country. "All this government has said," Foreign Minister Pik Botha declared in a television interview, "is that if the ANC, or any organization, or leader, stops violence, then they are obviously welcome to sit around the conference table with us" (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, May 1, 1986: U6).¹ But for the ANC to reject violence is to surrender its main bargaining chip in advance of serious talks, a demand that the co-chairmen of the EPG mission regarded as "unreasonable" (Fraser and Obasanjo, 1986: 156). Moreover, the other non-negotiable demands set forth by the Botha government - group rights, private enterprise, separate education, and so forth - appeared to the opposition to freeze the essentials of the status quo into effect. The government, in brief, was willing to continue the process of "reform," but in such a way as to leave the structure of white dominance firmly in place.

By contrast, the African nationalist opposition sought an end to all manifestations of white dominance and, most particularly, a transfer of political power to majority rule. As a consequence, opposition leaders expressed serious doubts over the value of mediatory efforts under current circumstances. A sample of the views of some of the more militant nationalist organizations on the utility of racial bargaining at this juncture helps to underscore this point. The ANC, threatening a process of "ungovernability" leading to "people's power," envisaged little common ground between themselves and the Botha-run state. Questioning the value of negotiations in the contemporary political environment, ANC representatives noted that the Botha regime "relies for its survival on armed aggression within and outside South Africa. Massacres and assassinations are its means of livelihood. Our people have had to accept this reality and take the only course open to them" (ANC Call, 1986: 1; *African Research Bulletin*, July 15, 1985: 7687). Perceiving the struggle in totalist terms, the course seemed clear and

¹The U.S. Congress, however, did regard this position as a reasonable one. Thus the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 (1986: 1092) asserted that: "It is the sense of the Congress that a suspension of violence is an essential precondition for the holding of negotiations."

unmistakable: to fight power with power. The effect is to leave little room for a negotiated settlement, at this time at least.

If anything, the exiled Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) is even more militant in its views (unlike the ANC, for example, whites are excluded from its ranks); it insists on rejecting negotiations as a strategy of change in South Africa. Thus the PAC speaks directly and bluntly on the issue:

All suggestions of negotiations between the racists' regime and the oppressed Azanians fall flat on the crucial question of the basic purpose of such an exercise... Our own rejection of dialogue or negotiations rests on the unacceptability of any peace talks that cannot centre on the total abandonment of the present settler-colonial political system plus the the full realisation of the inalienable right to self-determination by the indigenous African majority in our country (Azania Combat, 1986: 4).

Similarly, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCM), which utilizes the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) as its main political voice, has become orthodox Marxist in its policy pronouncements in the last few years (Legum, 1983-84: 743). The BCM is extremely hostile toward any proposal for a negotiated settlement. Declaring that "the Botha-Malan junta is not likely to 'negotiate' with any genuine and credible freedom fighter," it goes on to oppose "uncompromisingly" any guarantees for minority interests (*Solidarity*, 1986: 2-3). This runs directly counter to State President P. W. Botha's non-negotiating principle calling for the provision of "visible and effective protection of minority groups and the rights against domination and for self-determination for such groups and communities" (Commonwealth Group, 1986: 175). Clearly the Black Consciousness objective on "destroy[ing] the racist settler-colonial state and build[ing] a democratic state where colour, race, religion, sex or tribe shall not be a point of reference" is at cross-purposes with the Botha regime's determination to preserve group rights and separate educational systems (*Solidarity*, 1986: 2-3). Where Botha seeks to preserve continuity with the past, Black Consciousness would eliminate differences based on ethnic, religious, or gender-based identity. In brief, the various rival interests diverge fundamentally for the time being in terms of the rules of relationship they view as acceptable, making negotiations extremely hazardous under these conditions. As the *New York Times* commented astutely in an editorial: "The antagonists in South Africa are not waiting for a broker to bring them to agreement" (*New York Times*, July 17, 1986: 22)

The Constraints on Negotiations

Thus far we have seen negotiations to be necessary but, because of competing preferences and principles, questions can be raised as to whether they can take place. In this, South Africa resembles the situation on the ground in Cyprus and Lebanon more than that which once prevailed in Kenya and Zimbabwe. To see the contrasts with the latter in more detail, it is essential at this point to examine the various constraints on negotiations currently in

evidence in South Africa. At that point it will be possible to look at some of the limited options open to the rivals, or more particularly for our purposes, to interested third parties.

The major constraints on South African negotiations at the present time can be grouped under the following seven headings:

1. Threatening inter-group perceptions. To the extent that ethnic leaders and groups view their counterparts as determined to alter the basic rules of relationship among sectional interests within the state, they perceive their rival in menacing terms. Their very survival - culturally, socially, politically, and even physically - is considered to be threatened to the core, and they respond defensively. The ANC is not viewed by many of South Africa's whites as a liberation movement, but rather as a terrorist organization intent upon the destruction of the white-run state. Any compromise with militantly nationalist organizations such as the ANC is viewed as threatening to their position, for they assume that their opponent will view accommodations as a sign of weakness and respond by making new demands for concessions. Such "totalist" or "essentialist" perceptions feed on themselves, leading to a negative reciprocity which is expressed in terms of fearful and aggressive behavior (Kuper, 1977: 133; Lorenz, 1969). In South Africa, the signs of such mind-sets are increasingly apparent and the effect is to make agreements difficult to conclude and to implement. Essentialist perceptions are particularly noticeable in certain sections of the white community. Viewing the African nationalist challenge as menacing to everything built by white enterprise over the years, State President P. W. Botha responded in the following aggressive terms: "We will not allow the spiritual and material inheritance of 300 years to fall into the hands of a revolutionary power clique without a fight" (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, May 16, 1986: U4). A perceived threat was not deemed a matter for reasoned discussion and compromise, but one of high conflict. Similarly external sanctions invoked by former global allies were not a cause for reflection and analysis as to the sources of conflict, but were perceived as an attempt to break the Afrikaner will. After commenting in this vein, the Johannesburg newspaper, *Business Day*, went on to remark on the sanctions effort: "It won't work. Government, like its supporting constituency, perceives in black rule a moral threat - to language, to prosperity, to identity, and to physical security - and it is vain to think that such fears can be overcome by mere threats to property" (*New York Times*, July 14, 1986, p. 6). Such a broad-ranging threat to group survival has a numbing and self-fulfilling quality irrespective of whether it fits with reality or not. Hence emergency measures are put into effect as much for their psychological impact as a display of state resoluteness in the face of various domestic and international challenges for example, as an effort to deal with any specific threat or threats.

On the other side of the conflict, black nationalism has been more careful to attack the existence of white privilege but not the right of the white community to live in the country they were born in. Nevertheless, the extent of state repression had led, at times, to a generalized picture of ethnic oppression that only the ending of white minority rule will eliminate. Expressing their anger toward ordinary white workers as well as the dominant political elite, the South African Students Organization commented that "those who oppress us jointly and

severally agree on the perpetuation of evils against us, from the 'simple white man' to the real destroyers of black lives in the 'House of Assembly,' in the South African Defense Force and in commerce and industry. When the chips are down, they will all go to unbelievable lengths to protect their white interests" (*Frank Talk*, 1984: 3). Certainly in all communities there are nonconforming elements who are careful not to misperceive among their threats and their legitimate demands, but the point to reinforce is that totalist thinking and behavior breeds its counterpart, reinforcing a negative spiral that predisposes political actors toward zero-sum expectations, not concessions and compromises. And those who are so incautious as to defy the prevailing hostility within their community run the distinct risk of ostracism, forced exile, and even the "necklace."

2. Divergence on principles, not interests. What is perceived to be at stake in the South African conflict is not distributive interests, which are negotiable, but matters of principle. For the dominant whites, the maintenance of group rights, separate schools and racially distinct residential areas, and the furtherance of private enterprise and capitalistic relations are matters of principle over which they will not compromise. For the African nationalists, majority rule, the complete ending of white minority power and privilege and individual, as opposed to group, rights are issues over which no accommodation seems possible. Conflict management clearly involves a formula which reconciles the legitimacy of one person, one vote democracy with accepted protections for minorities and the rights of citizens to form political parties and compete for power. In brief, any meaningful agreement must link security and power (Low, 1985: 104). However, this is easier said than achieved, especially given the perceptions of rivals noted above. Until mutual concerns gain substantial acceptance in rival constituencies as eventually happened in Zimbabwe after a long war and extensive negotiations, concessions are likely to be viewed as an indication of weakness, not enlightened interest.

3. A high power disparity in favor of white minority interests. The control of the state apparatus, the industries, the educational system, and the communications and transportation infrastructure by people of European ancestry, even though a numerical minority, gives them a distinct edge in power relations in South Africa. Ethnic domination of the state and state agencies is particularly important in this regard, because the state plays a critical role in defining the relations between groups and in implementing its repressive rules. By comparison with many states in other parts of the world, the South African state is greatly expanded in terms of its personnel and tasks. The result is to create a number of positions for Afrikaners, not only in civil service and administrative posts but also in state-run industries and the military-related complex. Whites employed in these activities act as a powerful interest group from within the state, pressing for the continuation of apartheid laws and an expansionist policy. The result is a close-knit network of racial interests which pulls together behind the National Party leadership to manipulate the largely paralyzed and disunited majority. so long as racial relations reflect this striking power imbalance, the dominant minority will have little incentive for concessions, and the majority will be unable to organize to make effective claims upon the state. The result is to complicate greatly the process of managing

conflict through a bargaining process between elite spokespeople at the top of the political system.

4. Perceptions of total victory. Although it is important not to take rhetoric at face value, each side, for the moment at least, regards its "victory" over rival sectional interests as a likely eventuality. The African nationalists, viewing negotiations with the Botha regime as unproductive for the moment, are inclined to put their faith in the future, where they see themselves in a position to set rules of relationship which are egalitarian, nonracial and, in many cases, socialist. Compromise is rejected at the moment, for it offers little hope of altering the existing structure of relations in a fundamental manner. In such a limited situation, the remaining alternative, for all its apparent costs, is a protracted struggle, leading eventually to a transformed society. Viewing history as on their side, Stanley Uys describes black morale as rising while that of the whites is falling. "Blacks know suddenly," he writes, "that they are going to win. They don't know how long it will take - at least five and possibly 15 years - but they are confident now that they are on the last lap of liberation" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 1, 1986: 7; also *Africa Research Bulletin*, July 15, 1985: 7687).

But while white morale is in a state of decline, this insulated community is not yet fully aware of the impending changes that seem to lie ahead. Up to this time the costs of maintaining the status quo have not seemed prohibitive to most whites, with the result that a policy of muddling along seems a not-unattractive course of action. Moreover, extreme right-wing pressures within the cabinet and in the country at large reinforce a tendency on the part of the dominant political elite to stay with the present policy. In analyzing why the Commonwealth group failed to bring about negotiations, Malcolm Fraser (former Australian prime minister who was co-chair of the Eminent Persons' Group) wrote that "there are hard-line members of the cabinet who believe the government could either tough it out or shoot it out with the black population. At least one minister indicated that if enough young terrorists were shot, South Africa's kind of normalcy would be restored" (*International Herald Tribune*, July 14, 1986: 4). White politicians, fearing a loss of support should they adopt too conciliatory a tone, are quite explicit in drawing a connection between black militancy and the cause of reform (*South African Digest*, January 17, 1986: 41). Moreover, the warning to black nationalist organizations carries a message of strength and a firm determination to survive. "South Africa," declared P. W. Botha at the time his government launched raids against ANC bases in neighboring countries, "has the capacity and the will to break the ANC. I give fair warning that we fully intend doing it" (*South African Digest*, May 30, 1987: 467). These are not the words or sentiments of a man prepared to preside over any fundamental change in the rules of relationship in his country. Rather than bargain in any significant way over the future of the society as he knows it, Botha and like-minded members of his cabinet will probably make only limited reforms as they strive to preserve and strengthen white dominance. This rigidity reflects a view among the white elite that victory is possible and that the future can be secured if they are prepared to pay sufficient costs. The effect of this mutual determination to bring about the vision of total victory is to place roadblocks in the path of mutual gains formulas; as the middle ground recedes and residual commitments to negotiated solutions no

longer seem realizable, state repression and collective violence may well come to the fore.

5. Fragmentation within the contending groups. Meaningful bargaining at the top of the political system requires valid representatives who can speak for and, if necessary, exercise a degree of control over their constituents. Lack of legitimacy on the part of these representatives leads to a declining capacity for effective negotiations. The leader can not be relied upon to uphold his or her end of the bargain, creating a sense of futility and uncertainty about the peacemaking process. Hence conflicts of interest within the ranks of each bargaining group are not taken lightly by their opponents, for they are likely to understand that such differences complicate the process of arriving at decisions as well as implementing them. Moreover, the longer the process of inter-group negotiations are put off, the more fragmentation is likely to occur, resulting over time in an ever more complex negotiating context.

In fact, there are already clear signs of severe fragmentation taking place within the main South Africa groupings. Not only are the whites divided linguistically and ethnically among the Afrikaners, English, Jews and others, but, perhaps more significantly in today's environment, between the pragmatists, the liberal left (university faculties and students, the Black Sash, the South African Council of Churches, etc.) and the radical right. The radical right, or "new Nats" as some have called them, are a challenge that any government must take seriously, particularly in a country polarized along racial lines. Government leaders fear that any grave misstep in Namibia or at home which is perceived by the local white community as a sign of weakness, will, in the short term at least, be reflected in a bandwagon effect favorable to the hard-line conservatives around Adries Treurnicht, the Conservative Party leader (Rotberg, 1983: 5). The effect is to weaken the regime's own ability to act in transforming society in a more progressive direction at this juncture. Moreover, with respect to political negotiations with the genuine representatives of black opinion, they find themselves limited in terms of their ability to make the kinds of broad-based accommodations necessary for a successful agreement.

On the African side divisions between various interests are also apparent, not only among such moderates as the homeland leaders, the urban community councilors, and the Zulu-based Inkatha movement of Chief Buthelezi, but between these groups and the various militant nationalists: the United Democratic Front (UDF), a broad-based movement of some 700 affiliated organizations, the ANC, PAC, and the BCM. As one analyst described the situation: "Black politics inside South Africa remain bedeviled by splits and suspicions" (*Africa Analysis*, September 1986: 2). BCM leaders have expressed resentment at the Commonwealth mission's focus upon Nelson Mandela as the main spokesman for black opinion in South Africa (Interview, September 15, 1986), and divisions between the ANC and PAC were evident at the 1986 Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Harare, where both groups expressed an unwillingness to form a "patriotic front," in line with the precedent set earlier in Zimbabwe during the war and subsequent negotiations. Dismissing such an idea as unrealistic, ANC President Oliver Tambo described it as a "marriage of convenience" (*Africa News*, September 15, 1986:8). At a minimum, such splits will have to be papered over by leaders in both the white and black groupings if each

side is to know whom it is bargaining with and is to be assured that its rival will be in a position to deliver on its promises. Alternatively, one major faction could strike a deal in the hope that other factions would eventually join with them, but it is a tactic normally fraught with peril, especially in a society deeply divided by racial suspicion.

6. The mediators' lack of credibility and incentives. As shown by the experiences with the Commonwealth mission and the individual efforts to facilitate a dialogue discussed above, external mediators are not, for the time being, in a strong position to influence outcomes on the South African scene. The general weakness of the mediator's position in this conflict stems from a number of factors. First, South Africa is not a colony in the sense normally used, ruling out external intervention of the sort seen in Kenya or Zimbabwe. The third party lacks a legitimate basis for the kind of directed mediation (or arbitration as one participant put it) that so marked the Lancaster House conferences in these two cases (Davidow, 1984: 115-21; interview, Harare, July 4, 1986). Second, there are few candidates left who have credibility with both sides in the current conflict situation. By their nature, highly polarized situations leave little middle ground, either for themselves or for their possible external mediators. As the external powers take a strong stand in favor of liberation or gradual reforms, they inevitably come to identify with one set of political actors or another, thereby forfeiting the high ground from which they might be able to facilitate no-fault negotiations (Burton, 1986: 105). Third, the weakened third-party intermediary, if one could be found, would have few inducements of importance to offer the highly principled and deeply divided opponents that would be sufficient to alter the basis of choice. The Afrikaners, with their fear of "swartgevaar" or being overwhelmed by the black majority (Jaster, 1985: 37), are hardly likely to be influenced by incentives involving payments, and the black leaders, who have already endured high costs in terms of psychological harassment and political and economic discrimination, are not likely to be attracted to the bargaining table by promises or grants of a distributive nature. More is needed. In theory, mediators ought to be able to provide incentives involving insurance, such as commitments by outsiders to be drawn into conflict to guarantee compliance with the terms of the agreement (Raiffa, 1982). But few mediators would want to become so deeply involved in the highly polarized South African conflict to offer such insurance incentives, and there is no certainty that even such an extensive involvement would be sufficient to bring about the desired end. Certainly, external third parties can facilitate change; even so, there are clear limits to what we can expect of mediators.

7. A widened arena of conflict. Not only does protracted conflict whittle away at the middle ground within South Africa, but it tends to expand the arena of conflict. South Africa's long-standing destabilization policy, combined with its determined effort to create sub-regional economic dependency upon its products and ports, has already had the effect of widening the scope of the domestic conflict situation. Nevertheless, as collective polarization hardens and becomes a fixed feature of the Southern African scene as a whole, countries and leaders still lingering on the periphery are likely to become entwined in the dispute. There will no longer be a "free rider" option for states in the sub-region. To ease the effects of this widening of the arena of conflict, Western states, given their

orientation toward long-term stability, can be expected to proffer support for the creation of new opportunities in the front-line countries: for example, they can be expected to give increased external support for the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and for the reconstruction and maintenance of the Beira corridor, thereby allowing for the transport of goods between Zimbabwe and the ports of Mozambique. Such initiatives are likely to bring on defensive reactions from South Africa and its Mozambique allies, particularly the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). The overall effect of this enlarging of the arena of conflict is likely to be an intensification and broadening of state and individual participation in the conflict and a raising of the stakes for all caught up in it. The effect of this seems predictable, for as the scope of conflict widens mediation can be expected to become an ever more complex task.

Conclusion: Incentives for Change

As the foregoing has shown, merely exhorting political leaders to engage in direct bargaining, as Shultz and others have done, does little to direct attention to the roots of the problem or to advance the process of political exchange. The reasons are apparent. Exhortation has limited impact where the leaders of government and social groups perceive their conflict in something approaching zero-sum terms; moreover, those who engage in exhortation tend to assume they are dealing with political actors who will respond to their appeals as the exhorter would in his own domestic social situation. Americans, as Henry Kissinger is quick to point out, are inclined to believe "in the efficacy of goodwill and the importance of compromise" - both admirable qualities provided a bargaining culture prevails (Kissinger, 1979: 259). Unfortunately, South African political actors take a much more menacing view of politics, requiring interested external facilitators to design a move complex package of incentives to move the bargaining process ahead. In brief, third-party intermediaries must develop a strategy of conflict management.

Clearly, the structure of state-societal relations makes this an unpropitious time for negotiations. The South African economy is sliding backward, but it remains strong enough for the time being to absorb some of the costs of external sanctions. The African nationalist leaders are impatient for change, but unable to make effective demands upon a state still sufficiently strong and determined to repress the outward manifestations of collective resistance. The consequence is a temporary bargaining void. An opportunity for dialogue and planned transformation is being squandered, in part because compromise, viewed as weakness, is unacceptable to the local actors for the time being and in part because there are few if any external actors with sufficient interest and credibility to act as mediators in this highly-charged dispute.

So where does South Africa go from here? Contrary to the premises of "constructive engagement," time is of the essence if a long-term process of political and economic deterioration is to be avoided. How then might the various antagonists be encouraged "to change the game by starting to play a new one" (Fisher and Ury, 1981: 122)? Leaving out such internally determined outcomes as a successful revolution, partition, displacement, or "violent equilibrium" where

there is little scope for third-party facilitation, a few points on external options in the face of this deteriorating situation deserve mention. To start with, as Conor Cruise O'Brien points out, the world community cannot stand aside should a Massu - or Nazi-style repression take place (O'Brien, 1986: 66). The states of the world are deeply involved in the situation, and their domestic publics, combined with their competitive positions, would not allow for a posture of indifference in the face of extreme actions, even genocidal measures. Moreover, they must intercede, singly or collectively, should deterioration lead to a general threat to world peace. Whether this intervention would involve a U.S.-inspired operation, with international approval, to protect its own interests in the region, as O'Brien seems to foresee, or some other type of collaborative effort (such as Denis Healey's proposed Western naval blockade) remains unclear. However, one thing appears evident: there are limits to how far the global powers can go in allowing a white-dominated state to repress the black opposition violently.

Keeping this military interventionist scenario in mind as a strategic possibility to prevent a state-inspired program of genocide, what other options remain open to African, Western and other world powers to promote a change of direction in South Africa? As both sides in South Africa become aware of a common interest in avoiding mutual damages, new alternatives are likely to emerge, opening the way again to external initiatives. In this event, what incentives might external actors use to facilitate peaceful change? To recognize the bleakness of the alternatives open to outside actors under current circumstances is not in itself a justification for inaction. For the moment, mutual perceptions on the scene are menacing and both sides insist upon their own terms, assuming a total victory as not out of the question. But in the future, as the economy slides and the human costs of intransigence become apparent, an altered view of interests is not out of the question. At that point, the conflicting parties must be induced by an intermediary to give up one value in order to secure another. In light of this conceivable future opening for change, how might the world's powers design the broad lines of their strategy to prepare for new opportunities?

The need for strategy can never be far from the minds of practical statesmen. Foreign policy, as E. H. Carr observed, "never can, or never should, be divorced from strategy" (Carr, 1964: 110). But strategy cannot be dealt with in the abstract; it must be considered in the context of the specific conflict at hand and must relate state purposes to domestic and international political constraints and military power. Seen in these terms, several elements in a realistic strategy for change in South Africa can be hypothesized. For one thing, it must be assumed that meaningful negotiations are not likely to take place in response to the appeals of well intentioned outsiders but in an effort to avoid rising economic, political, and strategic costs. Hence external action must heighten a common awareness of increasing future costs if third-party incentives are to prove significant. And second, the kinds of costs that will induce change cannot result from the actions of a single power, but require collective measures of a determined sort. Earlier experiences with sanctions in Ethiopia, Rhodesia and Syria (following the British break in diplomatic relations in October 1986) show how difficult it is to unite sovereign powers in a common purpose; even so, the moral outrage that exists over apartheid may prove unique in providing an

adequate basis for an extensive (but probably less than universal) international cooperation.

The need to raise costs in order to promote the possibility for a necessary third-party mediation effect suggests, then, the basis for a two-track approach that might be appropriate in an extended conflict in this region. The one track seeks to raise the costs on inaction by a combination of economic sanctions and military and economic aid to the hard-pressed front-line countries that currently suffer from a series of destabilization blows aimed at their ability to function smoothly, if not their very survival. What grounds exist for believing that South Africa might be sufficiently vulnerable that collective action on the part of the African and Western states might induce it to come to the bargaining table? While being aware of the dimensions of South African fear and determination and of its economic and military strength, it is nonetheless evident that a hard track which isolates South Africa is potentially damaging to its industrial development and its dominance of the subregion. As Carol B. Thompson (1986: 18) asserts, "In discussions of South African dominance and reprisals against its neighbors for forming SADCC, few analysts take into consideration that relations in the region are reciprocal." Reciprocal in what respects? She stresses a number of significant examples in this regard: the difficulty of finding skilled miners to replace those from the frontline states who are sent home; the possible costs of a SADCC trade embargo (estimated at 10 percent of the South African market); the possible loss of rail and port fees paid by the SADCC states (estimated at \$400 million per year); the possible loss of corporate dividends and individual pension payments (estimated at 470 million a year from Zimbabwe alone). In 1986, Zimbabwe exported 250,000 tons of maize to South Africa (Thompson, 1986: 19-20). Clearly, given the sums mentioned here interdependence is asymmetrical but nonetheless two-directional; if SADCC looked to South Africa for important markets and transportation links, South Africa needs the SADCC countries' trade, transport, earning, and human and material resources. And the means is at hand to reduce greatly SADCC dependence on South African transportation routes by rapidly improving and modernizing the Beira corridor transportation system. A modernized Beira corridor system, currently protected by some 14,000 Zimbabwean troops, would be in a position to meet most of Zimbabwe's transportation requirements in the very near future. Moreover, an expanded military aid program for the frontline states would further underline the extent of the external powers' opposition to Botha policies. Some moves in the direction have emerged in recent years. U.S. military assistance has been extended to Botswana and Malawi for training and assistance and \$1 million in training and "nonlethal" equipment was proposed for Mozambique, only to be rejected by the Congress in 1985 (Howe and Ottaway, forthcoming). Although an extended military aid program by Western countries seems feasible and would send an unmistakable signal to officials in Pretoria, something more dramatic, such as a multilateral expeditionary force, seems unlikely in view of the cautious response that can be anticipated on the part of Western governments and their publics. In brief, the hard track would transform existing relations within the southern African sub-system significantly, enabling the Western countries and their front-line allies to press South Africa to change its approach to the issue of negotiations. The alternative would likely damage

South Africa's interest adversely. If it remained intransigent, it might no longer find itself able to act as a dominant sub-regional power; rather it would become a relatively peripheral and declining state with limited growth options. In psychological as well as economic terms the costs of muddling through would rise considerably.

The second, or soft, track would open the way to new options and respectability through external mediation. This would be a mediation grounded upon the common interests of the main contending actors, with the third-party intermediary facilitating the process by initiating the dialogue, communicating between the bargaining parties, and clarifying the issues. "The prenegotiation period," as I. William Zartman and Maureen R. Berman observe (1982: 71), "is a time to probe and explore, and to show the other side examples of possibilities, but not a time to make specific promises." In the South African context, a double process of facilitation seems most likely to induce the major adversaries to begin a serious dialogue: that is, Western pressure on the Botha government and front-line pressure upon the black nationalists with South Africa. Clearly, a coordinated third-party effort will be required to overcome the current impasse. If such an effort is to gain credibility, a sustained Western involvement in the affairs of southern Africa is essential; moreover, any mediator emerging from this encounter must be seen as sufficiently neutral to be able to perform the difficult tasks of shaping the agenda and keeping the process in motion. As the Zimbabwe independence negotiation showed, a mediator can have specific interests and still be trusted (minimally) by the bargaining parties. Hence the problem is to find an intermediary with sufficient concern with the outcome to be willing to play the difficult role of broker who is acceptable simultaneously to all sides. This is a difficult, but by no means impossible, task. The Commonwealth EPG mission could possibly be reconstructed, a smaller power (for example, the British), a non-state actor (the Quakers or the World Council of Churches), or an international agency (the United Nations) could rise to the occasion. Provided that the intermediary has a minimum of legitimacy, that actor might be able to build upon the two-track approach already in place to provide a new set of incentives that will bring the conflicting parties to the bargaining table. The task is obviously complex and hazardous, but the challenge creates an opportunity within man's reach.

REFERENCES

- Adam, H. (1983) "The Manipulation of Ethnicity: South Africa in Comparative Perspective," in D. Rothchild and V. Olorunsola (eds.), *State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- _____ and H. Giliomee (1979) *Ethnic Power Mobilized: Can South Africa Change*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
- _____ and K. Moodley (1986) *South Africa Without Apartheid: Dismantling Racial Domination*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT (1986) *Solidarity*, February.
- AFRICA ANALYSIS (1986).
- AFRICAN RESEARCH BULLETIN (1985-1986)
- AFRICA NEWS (1986).
- AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (1986) "ANC Call to the People: From Ungovernability to People's Power."
- AZANIA PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (1986) *Azania Combat*, 1.
- BURTON, J. W. (1986) "The Procedures of Conflict Resolution," in E. E. Azar and J. W. Burton (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- CARR, E. H. (1964) *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939*. New York: Harper and Row.
- COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS (1986) *Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth Report*, Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.
- COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-APARTHEID ACT OF 1986. Public Law 99-440, 99th Cong. (October 2).
- CRAPANZANO, V. (1986) *Waiting: The Whites of South Africa*. New York: Vintage Books.
- DAVIDOW, J. (1984) *A Peace in Southern Africa*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- FISHER, R. and W. URY (1981) *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving in*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE (1986).
- FRANK TALK (1984) 1, 4.
- FRASER, M. and O. OBASANJO (1986) "What to Do About South Africa." *Foreign Affairs* 65, 1.
- GILIOME, H. (1980) "The National Party and the Afrikaner Broederbond," in R. M. Price and C. G. Rosberg (eds.), *The Apartheid Regime: Political Power and Racial Domination*. Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies.

- HERALD (Harare) (1986).
- HOWE, H. and M. OTTAWAY (forthcoming) "State Power Consolidation in Mozambique," in E. Keller and D. Rothchild (eds.), *Afro-Marxist Regimes: Ideology and Public Policy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE (1986).
- JASTER, R. (1985) "South Africa's Narrowing Security Options," in R. Jaster (ed.), *Southern Africa: Regional Security Problems and Prospects*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- JERVIS, R. (1976) *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press.
- KAPLOWITZ, N. (1984) "Psychopolitical Dimensions of International Relations: The Reciprocal Effects of Conflict Strategies." *International Studies Quarterly* 28.
- KISSINGER, H. (1979) *White House Years*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- KUPER, L. (1977) *The Pity of It All*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- LEGUM, C. (1983-84) *Africa Contemporary Record*. New York: Africana Publishing Company.
- LORENZ, K. (1969) *On Aggression*. New York: Bantam Books.
- LOS ANGELES TIMES (1986).
- LOW, S. (1985) "The Zimbabwe Settlement, 1976-1979," in S. Touval and I. W. Zartman (eds.), *International Mediation in Theory and Practice*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY (1986).
- NEW YORK TIMES (1986).
- OBASANJO, O. (1986) "Interview." *Africa Report* 31, 5.
- O'BRIEN, C. C. (1986) "What Can Become of South Africa?" *Atlantic Monthly* 257, 3.
- RAIFFA, H. (1982) *The Art and Science of Negotiation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ROTBURG, R. I. (1983) "Namibia's Independence: A Political and Diplomatic Impasse?" *CSIS Africa Notes* 13.
- ROTHCHILD, D. (1970) "Ethnicity and Conflict Resolution." *World Politics* 24, 3.
- _____ (1973) *Racial Bargaining in Independent Kenya: A Study of Minorities and Decolonization*. London: Oxford University Press.
- _____ (1986) "Hegemonial Exchange: An Alternative Model for Managing Conflict in Middle Africa," in D. L. Thompson and D. Ronen (eds.) *Ethnicity, Politics, and Development*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

- _____ and J. RAVENHILL (1987) "Subordinating African Issues to Global Logic: Reagan Confronts Political Complexity," in K. Oye, R. Lieber and D. Rothchild (eds.), *Eagle Resurgent? The Reagan Era in American Foreign Policy*. Boston, MA: Little Brown.
- SHULTZ, G. (1986) "The U. S. Approach to South Africa." U. S. State Dept., Bureau of Public Affairs, Current Policy No. 854.
- SOUTH AFRICAN DIGEST (1986).
- THOMPSON, C. B. (1986) "Beyond Flag Independence: The Quest for Economic Liberation in Southern Africa." Presented at the African Studies Association annual conference, Madison, WI.
- WALL STREET JOURNAL (1986).
- ZARTMAN, I. W. (1985) *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____ and M. R. BERMAN (1982) *The Practical Negotiator*, New Haven: Yale University Press.