

Transition in South Africa: the global context and the international role

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It is widely accepted that the current process of change in the region of Southern Africa is, to a large extent, a product of the global change set in motion by the new policies of Mikhail Gorbachev from 1985, which came to a head in 1989 with the dramatic events in East and Central Europe. While regional and local factors were also involved in Southern Africa, there is little doubt that, without the ending of the Cold War, we would not yet have witnessed the independence of Namibia, the negotiated agreements in Angola and Mozambique, a free multi-party election in Zambia, economic and political reform measures in Zimbabwe and, most important, reform and negotiations to end apartheid in South Africa. Southern Africa must, therefore, be viewed in this global context.

It is clear that over the past half century the region was increasingly affected by the Cold War. As one of the regions of the world contested by the superpowers, politically and strategically, Southern Africa became characterised by confrontation and conflict. It could not escape the constraining framework of this Cold War international order, in spite of the fact that there were no strong priority interests of either superpower in the countries of the region. On the one hand, the contesting parties and governments within the region took advantage of the competition between the superpowers and positioned themselves on one side or the other to obtain support, which the superpowers were not reluctant to give, often in the form of weapons. On the other hand, the superpowers themselves, aided and abetted by their Cold War allies, often did not hesitate to promote conflicts, as they did in other regions of the world, in order to demonstrate their global outreach and power, with little concern for the peculiar factors of the region itself.

It follows that the collapse of the global power of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War meant the ending of this grip of the old world order on Southern Africa. Local and regional imperatives could now come more strongly to the fore in determining the

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policies of governments and other parties. Moreover, it was not simply the removal of the negative constraints of the Cold War; the resulting changes in the international environment have brought some new positive influences to bear.

All this does not mean that the disintegration of the old world order, dominated by the two superpowers in the state of Cold War, has suddenly brought peace, stability and progress to the Southern African region. In fact, the regional scene reflects the current state of disorder which characterises the global scene. Nowhere in the region have the old problems yet been fully resolved; new unforeseen problems have arisen; and the painful effects of the transition process have everywhere been aggravated by generally worsening economic conditions.

It is not only on the political front that the changing global environment has impacted on Southern Africa. The depressed and disordered state of the global economy has compounded the peculiar economic problems from which the countries in the region were already suffering - not to mention the devastating effects of the current drought. Moreover, this region is part of a whole continent which has been described as being in a state of "free fall" economically. Not until the global economy begins to recover will there be much hope for growth and balanced development in Southern Africa, and, with economies shrinking and populations rapidly expanding, political transition to democracy in stable and peaceful conditions becomes almost impossible.

It must therefore be borne in mind, when considering the processes of political transition that the course of events in the years ahead will depend to a great extent on the influence of the global economic environment including especially the policies of the industrialised countries - on the economies of South Africa and the other countries of the region.

To conclude this introductory section on the international environment, it is worth identifying more specifically some of the global changes or trends which have influenced the directions of change in the region, including in South Africa itself, and which have opened the way for new roles by external actors:

The end of the role of communism as a global ideology.

The decline of marxism as a viable political/economic system, coupled with the spread of the free market concept in various forms.

The predominance of economic considerations in determining domestic policies, together with the growing recognition of the vital importance of the global economy.

The growing importance of the three major economic groupings as the dominant poles in an emerging new world order.

The strengthened role of international or multilateral organisations, especially the United Nations.

The emphasis on negotiations as the means of settling regional disputes and of avoiding conflict.

The growing acceptance that human rights protection is an international issue and not simply a matter falling within domestic jurisdiction.

The emergence from below the surface of ethnic/nationalist forces.

The threatened marginalization of weak developing countries, heightening the concern about the deepening of the so-called North-South divide.

The growing realization that regional groupings - and greater regional integration - are a necessity in these conditions, if less developed countries are to contend or even survive in the global economy.

In varying degrees these global changes have affected the situation in South and Southern Africa. This becomes apparent if one looks back at changing attitudes and policies over recent years, first in the region and then in South Africa itself.

Changing South African regional policies

As is well known, the South African government, particularly over the three decades from 1960, gradually placed greater and greater emphasis on the security dimension of its policies in reaction to what it perceived to be a growing threat to the white-controlled state. Communism and Soviet "imperialism" were viewed as the main sources of this threat, and the strong links of the African National Congress (ANC) with the South African Communist Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, plus the support given to the ANC by the Soviet government and other East Bloc governments were the main reasons given for banning and trying to suppress the ANC.

From the mid-seventies the increasingly repressive internal security measures were matched by greater recourse to military action across borders, both covert and overt. Not one of South Africa's seven neighbour states escaped this action in the form of incursions of one sort or another, although it was Angola and Mozambique which suffered most heavily

from sustained and relatively more serious intervention. This record demonstrates the domination of government policy during this period by military and security considerations. The policy became known as the "total strategy" designed to counter a "total onslaught" on the state. This meant, of course, the abandonment of the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, which was the principle which the government defiantly maintained for decades against any attempts to intervene in its own internal affairs. The perceived need to preserve the security of the South African state became an overriding consideration, and this led to the objective of changing the policies and even the regimes of neighbour states, notably Angola and Mozambique, through direct intervention. Economic pressures were also used at times as an additional coercive element, for example against Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

If one compares the situation today with the "total strategy" policy of the 1980s, one can see how much has changed. A major change lies in the de-emphasis of security, at least in the military sense, as a prime objective of foreign policy, especially policy towards the region. This is reflected in the fact that cross-border incursions ceased after the end of 1988, in the marked bureaucratic change in policy-making, namely the reduction of the influence of the military over foreign policy, and generally in changes in regional and domestic policies. These changes can be correlated with the changes in the international environment, particularly the collapse of communism and the ending of the global power of the Soviet Union.

Change in South Africa's regional policies began before the advent of F. W. de Klerk as President in August 1989 and his landmark speech of February 2, 1990. It started towards the end of P. W. Botha's presidency, as a result of the success of the negotiations over Namibian independence and the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. The question of the ultimate cause, or causes, of the shift to a new approach - military stalemate in Angola, economic and financial imperatives, Western pressures, combined Soviet/US influence, political incentives, etc. - can still be debated. No doubt it was a combination of various factors. But the new approach could not have occurred without the change in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union and the new international mood strongly favouring the negotiated settlement of regional disputes. In any case, the effects of a *negotiated* Namibian independence, the involvement in the process of the United Nations (in the form of UNTAG) and the withdrawal of South African forces were profound. The objective of maintaining security mainly through military action was

abandoned, and the option of achieving international acceptance and credibility, and even potential rewards, through negotiation processes was considered viable.

Further, it became possible to start thinking of external involvement also in other transition processes, even within South Africa itself.

The enhanced international status and role of the United Nations, since the ending of the Cold War, have also had an effect on South African attitudes towards that organisation. It was previously regarded in government circles either as part of the external threat to the South African state, or as such an ineffective organisation that it need not be taken seriously. The ending of the Cold War deadlock within the UN and the new cooperative approach of the five permanent members of the Security Council have forced a rethink of attitudes towards the UN in many countries around the world, including South Africa. This applies to most South African political groupings, but in the case of the government particularly there has been a marked reversal of its previous stand vis-a-vis the UN.

The growing international concern with economic imperatives and the changes in the global economy have likewise affected the major political groupings in South Africa. This has been clearly evident on the government's side, where economic concerns have been a major motive for seeking a political settlement, but it has gradually become more apparent on the side of the ANC and its allies, too. These considerations are, of course, also strongly affecting the other countries of the region, and they have influenced the moves towards greater regional cooperation.

Attitudes to international involvement in South Africa

Against the above background of the changing international environment and a corresponding change in policies within the region, one can now focus more closely on the shift in official South African attitudes towards external involvement in the domestic transition process.

When former State President P. W. Botha declared a state of emergency on 12 June 1986, he referred to the threat of sanctions (particularly by the United States), saying he would not "crawl" to prevent them. "Neither the international community at large, nor any particular state, will dictate to us what the contents of our political programme should be

... we ourselves will find solutions to our problems and we will make them work."¹ That attitude, expressed even more defiantly in many other government statements during the period of acute domestic crisis in the mid-1980s, was the culmination of four decades of refusal by the government to accept any international role in dealing with South Africa's domestic problems. It started with attempts to persuade outside powers that interference - even criticism of domestic affairs - was contrary to international law, especially the UN Charter. Persuasion turned to resentment as the international community insisted more and more strongly that human rights abuses were an international concern and, moreover, that the developing situation in apartheid South Africa was a threat to regional and international peace.

As the situation became worse and South Africa more isolated internationally, the resentment turned to defiance. The National Party government - its thinking severely restricted within the limits of ideological apartheid - led most whites to believe that there was no alternative to the maintenance of ultimate white control, except the alternative of handing over power to a black majority, which they believed would spell doom for whites in their own country. Attempts were made from the late 1970s through the 1980s to soften the edges of apartheid, and even to allow some groups of "non-whites" into the political process. These reforms were in part designed to satisfy the outside world and reduce international pressure, even though this motivation was vehemently denied. But in any case they failed to satisfy the majority of South Africans or the international community.

The political, cultural and sporting isolation, which had increased steadily from the 1960s, seemed accepted resentfully by most whites as the price of maintaining a white-controlled state, at least until the rest of the world "came to its senses" about South Africa. (Economic isolation was not yet significant.) The attitude of resentment and even defiance was compounded by the isolation of most whites from streams of thought in the changing and increasingly interdependent world. At the same time the banned liberation movements set about promoting this isolation and the build-up of international pressure as a crucial weapon in their fight against apartheid, together with domestic resistance and the armed struggle. This was especially true of the ANC from the mid-1970s, and it established missions in countries around the world to lobby governments and international organisations. In particular, these movements worked for the universal application of economic sanctions against South Africa. The activities of the ANC and the Pan-Africanist

¹ Quoted in Barber, J. and Barratt J., *South Africa's Foreign Policy. The Search for Status and Security: 1945-1988*, Cambridge University Press, page 332.

Congress (PAC) were closely linked to the actions of many anti-apartheid groups in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and other countries of Europe.

The pressures on governments and companies increased in the 1980s, contributing to the escalation of official sanctions, disinvestment, the application in 1985 of private financial sanctions by banks, and in 1986 the adoption in the United States of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. All these punitive economic measures by outside powers and institutions (especially in the United States, in spite of opposition from the Reagan administration) began to have a discernible negative impact on the economy and could not be ignored. Nevertheless, publicly the defiance against external interference was maintained, and in white elections this attitude against the outside world continued to be very rewarding in terms of votes for the National Party, particularly in the election of 1987.

However, inside the government and bureaucracy concern was growing, following the private financial sanctions by banks imposed in 1985. The reform measures, even under P. W. Botha, indicated the recognition of a need to reduce external pressure. In the second half of the 1980s there was even growing public acknowledgement that negotiations were needed to find a political settlement which would stabilise the domestic situation and be acceptable externally. Although it was not envisaged that such negotiations should include the ANC and PAC, this was a significant shift away from the attitude that both the nature and the pace of change and reform should be dictated and controlled by the government alone. It was the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, which visited South Africa in May 1986 and presented its report in August that year, which placed the concept of negotiations firmly at the top of the international agenda for dealing with the South African issue. From that point negotiations, involving the government and the banned movements, became the main aim of Western governments and others, including the neighbour states and the Soviet Union. Diplomatic influence was now increasingly brought to bear on the South African government and also on the ANC. The chasm of mistrust between the two sides was still vast, and there is no need to go into the reasons here. Nevertheless, the ground was now being prepared for the dramatic change which came at the beginning of 1990.

As already pointed out above, a major contribution to improving the fertility of the ground for negotiations was the conclusion of a negotiated settlement of the Namibian conflict in December 1988 and then its successful implementation, under UN auspices. In the settlement of that dispute, which had escalated over the previous four decades, outside

diplomatic involvement, particularly by the United States and Soviet Union, played a key role.

This occurred in the context of the global change in East/West relations, which also had a crucial effect on the change of attitudes within South Africa.

The above developments are referred to not in an attempt to explain fully how the transition began in South Africa (which is not the purpose of this paper), but rather to underline the crucial role of diplomatic involvement from outside, against the background of mounting external pressure, as well as the importance of the growing international emphasis on negotiations as the means to resolve the South African conflict. Previously, a viable alternative to continued white domination had not been offered to the government and whites in general, who viewed - rightly or wrongly - the outside world as simply demanding a hand-over to a black majority. Now, as the decade of the 1980s ended, Mr. de Klerk's government was able to seize on an alternative course which would allow for compromise and the possibility of safeguarding values considered important by whites. The ANC, for its part, was also offered this alternative to a long and increasingly costly struggle. It was no longer a *zero sum* game for either side.

To cross the chasm of misperceptions and mistrust and move into the negotiations mode still required a leap of faith and a willingness to take considerable political risks by the main protagonists. It seems that the first moves were made by Mr. Mandela, while he was still in prison, and the ANC's Harare Declaration publicly offered the opportunity of negotiations, albeit under strict conditions. Then, in his statement of February 2, 1990, President de Klerk, with the National Party behind him, took the required leap across the chasm, and Mr. Mandela and the ANC, for their part, did the same in their response. In making these decisive moves from previously hard-line positions, in order to break the vicious cycle of mistrust and conflict, both sides were strongly encouraged by governments in the outside world, particularly by the major Western governments.

Unfortunately, progress towards a non-racial democratic constitution has been erratic during the past two and a half years, but the government has continued, since February 1990, to stress the importance of the outside world and the need to be accepted internationally. In fact, the need to be involved in the global economy has been given as a prime reason for the change in official attitudes and policy. This has led, of course, to the Conservative Opposition accusing the government of bowing to international pressure and of sacrificing the interests of whites to satisfy the international community. The

Conservative Party and its allies are now employing the identical arguments used for years in the past by the National Party against its opponents on the left.

The whites-only referendum (on continued negotiations with the ANC and others) in March 1992 illustrated clearly the degree to which the attitude of the government and National Party had changed vis-a-vis the outside world. The State President led a campaign which unambiguously stressed the importance of South Africa rejoining the international community, especially for economic and financial reasons. In this approach they were actively supported by the business and financial community, which undoubtedly had a major effect on the outcome. The ending of sporting links was the other issue which strongly influenced white voters who clearly showed in the nearly 70% "yes" vote that they did not want to be cut off from the world again and that they valued the potential benefits of the ending of South Africa's isolation.

The fear of renewed isolation, if the negotiating process were to be aborted, was reinforced strongly by the statements of several world leaders, particularly in the United States and Western Europe, about the serious negative implications of a "no" majority. It must be said that the size of the "yes" majority was in large measure the product of this concern about the consequences of international isolation, rather than enthusiasm for the probable outcome of the current negotiating process. But this means that the potential influence of the outside world is now greater than ever in ensuring that the negotiations continue and that the momentum is maintained until a conclusion is reached.

The very positive response of the international community to Mr. F. W. de Klerk's initiatives after February 1990, particularly the response to the referendum result, has reflected a reversal of the positions of the two main players in the current negotiations, the ANC and the government/National Party. Previously the ANC's bargaining position was greatly strengthened by international support and particularly by the pressures from outside applied on the National Party government. Now the international plaudits, and even the rewards in the form of the lifting of many sanctions and the ending of sporting, cultural and other forms of boycott, have reduced the strength of the leverage which the ANC once had. It can justifiably be argued that these "rewards" were, and are, necessary to encourage continuation of the transition process on the part of the whites. But at the same time it is necessary that a balance be maintained, and therefore the public and private "threats" of the consequences of backsliding by the government remain an important factor.

The current crisis and the international role

Since President F. W. de Klerk's speech of 2 February 1990, the negotiating process has staggered through various phases (which it is not the purpose of this paper to analyse), culminating in the two sessions of the multi-party Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). During the process significant progress was achieved, reflected in the repeal of much of the basic apartheid legislation, and in agreements on various important matters between the major parties, notably the government and the ANC. The aim has been to level the political playing field and then to establish a broadly acceptable, legitimate interim/ transitional government to oversee the drafting and eventual adoption (by a democratically elected constituent assembly) of a new constitution for the future non-racial, democratic South Africa.

This process has received wide international diplomatic support, and Western governments particularly have sought to encourage it by giving "rewards" for progress in the form of lifting economic sanctions, ending sports and other boycotts, and welcoming President de Klerk on official visits. While the ANC has recognised the need to use the "carrot" approach to encourage whites to accept change, it has not welcomed all the steps taken by outside powers, especially the lifting of most sanctions. The PAC has objected even more strongly to the extent of the relaxation of pressure on the government and whites generally. (The IFP on the right has always opposed sanctions.) However, it seems that most governments concerned with the South African issue, including governments which have not yet formally lifted sanctions, e.g. in Africa, are keen to see South Africa's international position normalised as quickly as possible. Among the various political and economic reasons for this attitude, is undoubtedly the perception that South Africa has an important potential role in helping to rescue Africa, especially the Southern African region, from its downward spiral to economic disaster. Whether the future "new" South Africa will be able to fulfill this role is another question!

In spite of all the international concern, diplomatic support and encouragement, the transition process is taking much longer and proving much more difficult than most people envisaged. Many obstacles have been encountered and some overcome, but the factor which has aggravated the difficulties more than anything else has been the escalating violence in several regions of the country. The tragic massacres in Boipatong in June and Bisho in September 1992, which followed the failure of the second session of CODESA to reach agreement in May, have brought this factor of violence to the forefront of

international attention. As a result, a new phase of international involvement, which goes far beyond diplomatic pressure and encouragement, has been launched.

Before the collapse of the CODESA negotiations, the expectation was that a political/constitutional agreement, at least on the question of an interim/transitional government, would lead to the ending of the violence. This expectation has had to be revised, because it became clear that the escalating violence - with its various causes, including political rivalry - was the prime factor preventing agreement. Moreover, it was widening the gulf of mistrust between the main political groupings and threatening to undo the progress already made. Violence and negotiations are so closely interlinked that one cannot be put before the other; both issues have to be tackled together, if a settlement is to be reached. This then has become the concerted approach of the international community, as reflected in the resolutions of the UN Security Council (765 and 772).

The new and more direct international involvement is most clearly demonstrated in the actions of the Security Council and the Secretary General since July. The direct intervention of these UN organs would not have been possible without (a) the change in the UN's status and role since the ending of the Cold War, and (b) the surprising change in the South African government's attitude to the UN. Having for decades strongly objected to UN interference (on the grounds of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter), the government has now positively welcomed UN intervention in the crisis. In his statement after the adoption of resolution 772, for instance, Foreign Minister Pik Botha said: "The government looks forward to building a constructive relationship with the international community on the encouraging foundations laid in the latest Security Council resolution."² There is considerable irony in the apparent competition, at least in public, between the government and the ANC as to which of them is most in favour of the UN's involvement.

The Security Council met on the South African crisis in mid-July 1992 at the request of the OAU. This move was initiated by the ANC which no doubt hoped that the Council would send a clear signal of support for its cause and of condemnation of the government's role in the violence and in the negotiations stalemate. Surprisingly to many, the government did not oppose the move: Foreign Minister Pik Botha instead moved quickly to ensure that as many of the internal parties as possible were invited to express their views in the Council's debate. As a result, the Council was treated to an extraordinary and exhaustive exposé of South Africa's domestic political arguments, with contributions from across the spectrum.

² Statement issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs on 18 August 1992.

(The Conservative Party, however, did not agree to participate, maintaining its position - previously held for decades by the National Party - that the UN had no right to intervene in matters which fell within domestic jurisdiction).

The public debate in the Security Council was one dimension of the proceedings; the other was the intensive negotiations behind the scenes to draft a resolution which would be approved unanimously and also be acceptable to the main South African parties - primarily the ANC and the government. Resolution 765 (1992) achieved these aims, and it set in motion the new direct involvement of the UN in South Africa's domestic transition process. It went beyond an expression of the Council's views which included condemnation of the violence and stressed the importance of resuming negotiations. The central point in the resolution was an invitation to the Secretary-General

"to appoint, as a matter of urgency, a Special Representative in order to recommend, after *inter alia* discussion with the parties, measures which would assist in bringing an effective end to the violence and in creating conditions for negotiations leading towards a peaceful transition to a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa, and to submit a report to the Security Council as early as possible".

In addition, the Council decided "to remain seized of the matter until a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa is established".

While the South African issue has clearly been a matter of increasing international concern for several decades (with countless General Assembly resolutions and several from the Security Council as evidence), resolution 765 formally confirmed the internationalisation of the issue and gave the Council and the Secretary-General the prime responsibility in this regard. Subsequently, in resolution 772 (1992) the Council invited other international organisations, such as the OAU, the Commonwealth and the EC, to co-ordinate their efforts with those of the UN.

How this responsibility will evolve, and how successful it will be in the complex and difficult circumstances of South Africa, still remains to be seen in the months, and even years, ahead. But an active and effective start has been made, and there is little doubt that the scope of the international role will grow. The door was opened for the international community with the acceptance of resolution 765 by the internal parties, notably the government, and there can be no turning back on this acceptance now. The reality is that the crisis of the past few months in the transition process has demonstrated that outside help is needed. It remains true that a political settlement, if it is to be sustained, must in the

first place be acceptable to South Africans. But it has become steadily more evident that, if left to themselves, the political groupings and their leaders may never be able to reach that settlement. Moreover, if South Africa's international relations are to be normalised - which is a prime aim of the transition process - then an eventual settlement has to be broadly acceptable also to the international community. Direct involvement now will help to ensure that outcome.

If one surveys very briefly the developments since the adoption of resolution 765, the widening scope of UN and other international involvement is evident. Mr. Cyrus Vance was appointed as Special Representative, and, accompanied by a UN Secretariat team, he visited South Africa for about 10 days before the end of July. He held discussions with political leaders across the spectrum, as well as with business, trade union and church leaders. But his visit was not limited to listening to these various viewpoints, in order to report back to the Secretary-General. On two matters he intervened more directly while still in the country. Firstly, in view of concern about potential violence related to the ANC's "mass actions" planned for early August, he obtained the Secretary-General's agreement to despatch urgently a team of 10 observers to witness the mass demonstrations. This action was taken after Mr. Vance had negotiated the consent of the major parties in South Africa.

On the second matter, namely the vexed issue of political prisoners, Mr. Vance's role moved closer to one of direct mediation. He arranged a meeting on the issue between senior government and ANC representatives. Although this issue, which was a major obstacle to the resumption of negotiations, was not immediately resolved, the meeting was a step towards the agreement between Mr. Mandela and Mr. de Klerk on 26 September 1992.

The Secretary-General's Report (S/24389 of 7 August 1992), based on Mr. Cyrus Vance's conclusions, led to the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 772 on 17 August 1992. The resolution *inter alia* authorised the Secretary-General urgently to deploy UN observers in South Africa, to operate in co-ordination with the National Peace Accord structures. These observers, numbering about 50, have since arrived and been stationed around the country, particularly where violence has been prevalent. In addition, the resolution invited the OAU, the Commonwealth and the European Community to consider deploying their own observers, in co-ordination with the UN. This, too, is happening, and the international presence, aimed at deterring violence, is thus being considerably widened. It is too early to say whether the presence of the observers, together with those from South Africa's own Peace Committees, is already reducing the level of

violence, but the indications so far are positive. It is probably that this form of international involvement will be expanded, and that it will have to continue indefinitely, given the potential for politically motivated violence, even after the establishment of an interim/transitional government.

European Community governments have played a leading role, within the United Nations and separately. The brief visit early in September by three Foreign Ministers, led by Britain's Douglas Hurd, reportedly resulted *inter alia* in an agreement that the EC would provide (in addition to its observer team) training and advice for the police force, to assist in its restructuring, presumably once there is an interim/transitional government. A British diplomatic source is reported to have commented: "The significance of this development should not be underestimated. It's the first formal acknowledgement by the South African state, on an international level, that outsiders can help to improve the credibility and competence of an internal security establishment..."³. The EC mission also obtained agreement from South African leaders that five European experts should be assigned to Judge Richard Goldstone's standing Commission on violence, thus adding an international dimension to the Commission's investigations and further enhancing its high level of credibility.

The above examples indicate the clear trend of increasing direct international involvement in the transition process during the crisis months from June 1992. The tragic Bisho massacre of 7 September (before all the UN observers were in place) severely aggravated the crisis but at the same time strongly underlined the urgent need for negotiations to be resumed. Unless the main obstacles between the ANC and the government could soon be removed, the transition process was threatened with complete collapse, and all the international efforts would be in vain. It is not surprising, therefore, that a concerted international diplomatic campaign was launched to persuade the two main parties to reach agreement on the resumption of constitutional negotiations. The dangers may well have been appreciated by the two leaders, Mr. Mandela and Mr. de Klerk, but not apparently by all their respective associates. Western powers and the UN Secretary-General acted in effect as "mediators" (or perhaps even "arm-twisters") in the negotiations which preceded the crucial meeting between the two leaders on 26 September. In the words of a *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) editorial on 27 September,

³ *The Weekly Mail*, 25 Sept. 1992.

"...ferocious international pressure was brought to bear on South Africa's tribal chieftains to rise above their petty political concerns and to resume the search for conciliation and democracy. Foreign intervention, it turns out, may well be the most benign force at play on the South African force fields".

But how much further can this "foreign intervention" go in the future to assist in resolving the still outstanding problems in the way of a broadly acceptable political settlement? The pressures which have been exerted over many years to end apartheid are now clearly being directed at promoting the negotiating process and ending the violence. These pressures should be maintained, but not only on the government (on which the international community has the greatest leverage) and the ANC. These two main groups are now - since the Record of Understanding signed on 26 September 1992 - moving towards the resumption of negotiations. But an eventual successful outcome, including an end to violence, will require also the participation of smaller parties on the left and the right, notably the PAC, the IFP and the new Volksunie, with even possibly the Conservative Party. Can the UN Secretary-General, the United States, the OAU and EC states find ways of reaching out to these parties to persuade them that they cannot afford to stay out of the process, let alone attempt to block it?

As far as the constitutional negotiations themselves are concerned, foreign powers cannot, of course, try to prescribe a constitutional settlement. But there are means short of prescription which could be offered to promote progress. These range from the provision of experts to advise parties on constitutional alternatives, to the provision of "good offices" to smooth the communication between parties (a form of facilitation) and to actual mediation in the negotiations. To be successful, the involvement of an outside party - or a committee of outside parties - as facilitator or mediator would need the agreement of the contending internal parties. To that end firm persuasion might be required.

There are no indications at this stage that the internal parties are looking for outside assistance of this kind, or that they would welcome it, if offered. In fact, the idea of mediation has in the past been positively ruled out. However, the concept of a facilitator has at least been introduced by the UN Secretary-General for consideration by the parties. In his Report to the Security Council (S/24389) he referred to the need for the CODESA process to be pursued and improved. He stated *inter alia*:

"There is a manifest need to establish a deadlock-resolving machinery at the highest level. In addition, there may well be need for CODESA to consider the appointment of an

eminent and impartial person, who need not be a foreigner, to draw the strings together and to provide the impetus and cohesion that CODESA needs to accomplish its tasks. I recommend that these ideas be considered further by all concerned in South Africa."

In a recent (9 September 1992) editorial *The Independent* (London) referred to the stationing of UN observers in South Africa and continued: "Yet a credible 'facilitator' (to use diplomatic jargon) is urgently needed. In Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, the UN did too little, too late. In South Africa, too, a forceful UN presence is required."

The UN, EC, OAU, Commonwealth and individual governments have demonstrated their concern with the South African issue over many years. In recent times they have committed themselves to a concerted effort to ensure that the transition process leads to an equitable and peaceful political settlement. It is to be hoped that this commitment to assist South Africans to achieve such a settlement will be maintained through the difficult times which still lie ahead. As the Secretary-General stated in the final paragraph of his Report (S/24389):

"The role of the international community and of the United Nations in particular can, at this moment, be profound and beneficial. It can facilitate a great and peaceful transition of historic proportions in a part of the world that has suffered too long."