

Section Five of our party Manifesto (WWW remains a valid, general guideline to the kind of SACP that we should be building. The general theses in Section Five need, however, to be supplemented thus:

c A) 3 fuller assessment of current: emergence over the last two and half years of legal. party building;

(8) further consideration of the path to socialism and the kind of socialism we are hoping to build in our country (the implications these have for party building); and

le, generalisation of changes within working mass in 1993. (the implications these have for a party of the working class).

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There are a number of very significant positive achievements that we have accomplished in the last two and a half years:

- With a membership of nearly 40,000 our party is now considerably larger than at any time in its history. We have launched 10 regions, and built up a communist presence in most of the major industrial complexes.

- ' The recently released Markinor opinion poll (conducted in November 1992) showed that our party is performing extremely well in terms of popularity amongst the majority African population.

- In the course of 1992 our party's catalysing role in the mass action campaign (particularly between June and August) was obvious, and led to a concerted anti-communist offensive by the regime and liberal media - a sure sign of our impact.

These achievements are particularly notable, considering that they have occurred against the backdrop of the most serious international crisis for socialism and the communist movement.

These achievements have much to do with the general character of our party membership. Generally speaking we have a devoted, serious, and disciplined membership. Those joining our party are doing so out of ideological commitment, a conviction that our party has a principled ideological perspective.

But the last two and half years have also revealed many shortcomings and limitations.

In particular we have not been able to match our major increase in membership with an adequate organisational consolidation. This in turn relates to limitations, some of which are

more or less objective, and others are the result of our own weaknesses.

The most obvious. omecttve difficultxes relate to our extremely limited resources - material me. ;erna_:s especzaiiy, human 21:; :arms 0: a'. 'al;abzli;;.u. Llany or' our beet party m embers

are engaged full-time (or prioritise work) in the ANC. C OSATU, etc.

What has been lacking from our side has been a :eaiistzc Strategic perspective of the role of

the SACP. not in general terms, but specifically, in terms of:

the concrete organisational alignment of progressive forces in our country in the present;

the obvious posslbiity and need for e. division of labour with; the ANC-led alliance: and

our own potential Strengths and obvious objective Limitations.

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policy posxtion on every issue - something that is way beyond our resources. In campaigns we have sometimes tended to compete with the AN C and other forces. Our few full-time, or relatively full-tirne cadres have been spread thin through a range of meetmgs and conferences. Their actual effectivity has been limited and often unstrategic.

We need to map out a few clear strategic tasks for the SACP. These tasks need to relate to

what we can do well. to what we specifically St and for and to what we can perhaps do better

than others.

this relates directly :0:

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In our Manifesto (and also in the earlier Path 29 25mm; we rejected the administrative command economic systems of bureaucratic socialism.

. We have also committed ourselves in our Manifesto and in our Constitution to:

multi-party democracy and regular elections:

3 justiciable bill of rights:

"numerous independent mass democratic formations;

both representative and participatory democracy.

Our criticisms of distorted socialism and our positive commitments to certain democratic values will. however, simply remain piecemeal or, even worse. look like belated concessions.

defensive attempts to ttprove our democratic credentials" UNLESS THEYARE RELATED TO a coherent approach to the kind of socialism we are trying to build.

Indeed. our criticism of the administrative command system. of bureaucratism and our support for representative and participatory democracy ARE W part of a coherent approach to socialism. But we have not yet adequately developed this.

It was precisely the existence of an administrative command system (and the equation of this

with socialism) that meant in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe the withering away of

.ev-
 anv mass democratic movement zinczudmg etfectzve trade umons). There is no place for wage bargaining. for inatance. let alone trade union inv ivement in policy formation if everyt hing
 is centrally land bureaucratically) planned.
 In turn. the administrative command system went hand in hand with:
 :he one party state (and the disappearance of effective representative democracy);
 bureaucracy;
 which in turn spawned unconstitutionaiity and in the Stalin years in partzcular. massive criminal abuses.
 Our party has already condemned these maipracnices. But our condemnation. so far. has often tended to be a moral riticism. There is nothing wrong with a moral criticism but clearly we need to carry through a more far-reaching Marxim; analysis as well.
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 country? Among the major implications are the following".
 The socialism we should be building
 1.
 ii.
 iii.
 will not be (one) party-centred. or stete-centred - which is not to deny the importance of both a Marxist party (or parties) and a socialist state.
 that is, it will be toated in working class and broad mass participation - both to make the socialist breakthrough. and to develop and deepen it.
 therefore, socialism will be essentially fought for, developed and defended, not bureaucratically, but by a W.
 Specifically, in South African conditions this means:
 i.
 ii.
 iii.
 iv.
 socialism will need to be. net an SACP monopoly, but a project which comes to be endorsed overwhelmingly from within the broad AN C and MDM;
 that is. a more W of socialism becomes necessary. It is a project to which we seek to win a wide range of forces (civics, trade unions. churches, youth and students, rural people.iicultural workers. other political formations. etc.). In relating to this wide range of forces. we also understand that we do not have a monopoly or a copyright on socialism. Many of these formations have deep roots in the the SM working class. There is much we can 193;; (perhaps even about socialism) from their diverse strengths.
 The need for a more pluralistic approach to the struggle for socialism also relates to the character of the working class. The broad working class in SA is net homogeneous (see SA WORKING CLASS halo 1.
 socialism is not so much a separate entity from the national democratic revolution. as a crucial part of. or stage in deepening and defending it.
 therefore. in the course of the NDR we should continuously seek to create momentum mm: socialism, capacity f9; socialism, and even elements of socialism. AmongSt other things this means:

- a reconstruction process that greatly increases the size and economic weight of the proletariat (tens in millions, inter alia, mass emphasis on job creation) (see RECONSTRUCTION PACT below);

- empowering the working class (organisationally, politically, economically, culturally) - this includes increasing working class influence within the state, and developing and strengthening institutions of participatory democracy;

- propagating an anti-capitalist, socialist perspective.

i. We are building a Communist Party in a broad ANC-led liberation alliance, and in a still broader mass democratic movement. The fact that there is a major ANC-led MLM, and a mass democratic movement in our country, and that the SACP is deeply rooted within them, is an enormous strength in our revolutionary struggle for socialism. It is not

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Within the context of this broad popular movement we need to avoid narrow, competitive duplication of functions. The SACP, for instance, needs to avoid trying to do everything the

ANC does, only with a slightly more leftist inclination. Instead, we need to concentrate on well-

planned, quality interventions.

The SACP is certainly the most effective, the most respected and the most coherent socialist

political party in our country. But the fate of socialism in our country does not depend only

on the fate of the SACP. Indeed, the evolution and developing character of the ANC and MDM are also critical to this outcome.

Either way, the evolving role of the SACP will also depend upon the development of the liberation alliance as a whole. Depending on different possible trajectories of this overall

alliance, the SACP will need to adapt its own role and organisational character.

If the national liberation struggle is successfully hijacked by some liberal project, or undermined by general chaos: if our MLM unity is broken and our national democratic strategic purpose is lost, the SACP may well need to assume a more autonomous character.

In such circumstances it might, for instance, be essential to focus on building a massive and

independent electoral base for the SACP; to build the SACP as a major oppositional force to

the elected government. But a situation in which this became a prime focus of our efforts would clearly be extremely unfortunate. It would represent a temporary (but perhaps long enduring) strategic defeat for our entire national liberation struggle. It is a possibility,

but far

from necessary, medium-term outcome.

While we must not rule out such a possibility, and while we should have the capacity to survive it, nothing in what we do now should simply concede in advance such a major defeat

e.g. a narrow, SACP egoistic attitude; or, loose, generalising and demoralised assumptions that the ANC (in its entirety) has sold out", etc.

There is, of course, a real and ongoing struggle against our entire MLM over strategic direction: over the class bias and character of the ANC; and against opportunism and its twin in

careerism - demagogic populism. Conducting this internal struggle, in a transparent and constructive manner, from a principled socialist perspective is one of, perhaps even the most

important tasks for the SACP.

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ii. The party: vanguard role is more as a generaliser. a unifier and a strategist. It seeks

to play this role by winning consent within the broad popular movement, the new historic bloc. We do not aspire to a monopoly of power, either in making the socialist revolution, or in an ensuing socialist state. We do not operate through manipulation of allied formations, nor do we act as though we had some superior knowledge 'guaranteed by the inevitable outcome of history'.

iii. The motto of the SAC? is less critical than its strategic role: within this broad social movement. Obviously the party needs to have certain critical weight (with a membership of nearly 40,000 we already have such a weight). Quality cadre development is one critical area in which the party can make a difference.

iv. Cadre development means, among other things, developing tens of thousands of working class activists who are capable of elaborating and sustaining the socialist perspective, in a non-dogmatic manner. through the length and breadth of the broad mass movement, and over the long haul of a difficult struggle.

v. If the party is to play the role of a socialist catalyst by way of active relating and democratic engagement with a range of social forces, then the party's own internal life needs

to equip its membership for such a role. Amongst other things, this means open and dynamic debate needs to be encouraged within the party itself. It is important that we overcome the stifling effects of pseudo-Marxist dogmatism. The party needs to be built on a real unity, not

a dogmatic unity. The party's theoretical positions need to be scientific (that is. open for debate and discussion), that is, living. Those who differ, either inside our party or outside of it. are not. by definition. renegades. traitors, counter-revolutionaries, etc. which is not. of

course, to say that there are never any renegades or traitors!

The character and tasks of the SACP should, then, be defined to a large extent by the kind of socialism we hope to build, and by the related perspective we have of the path to that kind of socialism.

But the nature and tasks of the SACP also need to be informed by the character of the class we hope to represent.

10. WW

There has been major restructuring of the South African working class over the last 20 years:

1. On the one hand unemployment has grown massively. Many workers have all but lost the chance of ever working in the formal wage sector of the economy. There are now some 7 million unemployed in our country.

2. On the other hand, those workers who have kept their jobs, and especially unionized workers, have often gained materially from the restructuring. For many, but not all, skills have been upgraded, and there has been a rise in real wages. Faced with the double challenge

of economic crisis and the growing power of the union movement. management has adopted the general strategy of retrenching. while upgrading and paying higher wages to a smaller but more skilled work-force.

3. At the same time. the entire working class has itself become more stratified, with growing numbers moving into supervisory, lower white-collar. technical and semi-professional work.

Put another way, the major COSATU (and SACP?) working class constituency (typically, semi-urban industrial black workers) constitutes a strategically critical, but minority stratum of the SAn working class. This stratum is flanked by:

On the one hand, millions of more marginalised workers. These include non-unionised unskilled workers; most migrants; rural labourers; those employed in the informal sector; and the millions of unemployed. Together, these millions of relatively marginalised workers represent up to 70% of the working class in our country.

On the other hand, there are clerical workers, artisans, semi-professionals, and the higher level professional and technical workers. In a trend that will continue and even accelerate, there are now increasing numbers of blacks in these categories (although there is still a preponderance of whites).

At the same time the restructuring of the economy has also had a dramatic impact on white workers. Increasing numbers of white workers are unemployed, and in general they are experiencing a major deterioration in their living conditions.

The SACP needs to pay the closest attention to the differences and possible contradictions that can develop within the working and popular masses themselves - between employed and unemployed; between older and younger working people; between skilled and unskilled; between "professional" and non-professional; between industrial workers and others, including those working in the so-called informal sector; between unionised and non-unionised; between settled and migrant; between urban and rural workers; between men and women workers; and between workers with different cultural backgrounds.

Numerous differences can and do often result in real contradictions and real differences of interest. This fact underlines the importance of a 9133:311:1451. Wand 2g;icipatog approach to national democratic and socialist transformation.

At the same time, a major restructuring of our economy and society, based on growth through redistribution, in which priority is given to job creation, housing, health-care, education and infra-structural development, is in the overall interest of all working people in our country.

As a party seeking to represent the immediate and longer term interests of the entire working class, the SACP needs at all times to underline the broader perspective, the overall picture.

On the internal differences within the working class, and the broader unifying interest in major restructuring of our society are 9m realities. We need to grasp the reality of both.

We must not suppress or deny differences, but nor should we allow such differences to overwhelm the broader, unifying project. These points are critical if we are to develop a socialist project around a broad movement centred on the working masses.

The character of the SAn working class presents special challenges and difficult organisational-strategic choices for the SACP.

In 1990 we took the strategic decision to emphasise the building of our party in the main industrial centres, focussing on organised, industrial workers for recruitment. There were a number of reasons for this choice, including:

the obvious support we already enjoyed in these quarters;

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' the need to strengthen (and transform) the social character of our party, including its leadership, with a major influx of experienced proletarian cadres: and
1' the strategic importance of organised industrial workers.
In the absence of a detailed party census it is impossible to have a fully accurate picture of

how successful this recruitment emphasis has been in practice. But we suggest that the SACP's present geographical strength and its core cadreship is, in fact, largely drawn from

this stratum of the working class.

The SACP, however, should seek to represent and defend the entire working class, not least

those who are most desperate. those who are most marginalised. How do we best realise this requirement?

The marginalised 70% of the working class is, precisely, very often the most difficult to reach

and the most difficult to organise. except perhaps in periodic mobilisational drives; or through systematic developmental work (literacy training, co-operative projects. etc.). Industrial workers are partially organised and skilled by the (capitalist) production process

itself. But the rural poor, unemployed youth. rural labourers, etc., are characteristically

scattered. disorganised and unskilled.

How then. how do we take up the challenge of work in this area?

If we go for the option of throwing all or most of our resources on organising these marginalised sectors within the SACP. do we not risk falling between two stools? We might dissipate our limited resources, and lose our core strategic cadreship.

An alternative emphasis would be to use the SACP to catalyse efforts in the direction of the

marginalised working class. In other words, the SACP should struggle for an ANC, with all its resources. that is biased in this direction. We should be in the forefront of efforts to

empower MDM structures and developmental efforts directed at the marginalised, without seeking to take over, or organise these ourselves. We should espouse, as a central component

of democratisation. a reconstruction process that addresses the needs of the marginalised

. This is an argument about means: and about Strategic allocation of SACP resources and efforts. We are certainly not arguing that the SACP should have no independent presence amongst the most marginalised strata of the working class. We are not arguing that we should never organise developmental programmes in the rural areas. or that we should never run literacy classes. But these should be seen, perhaps, as catalysers. as pilot projects

and examples. We are arguing, in other words. for a strategic understanding of how best we serve the interests

of all workers in our country, with the particular strengths and the particular limitations of

the SACP.

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The inner differences and contradictions among the working masses also relate directly to real or potential counter-projects:

1" On the one hand, there is the "1st project (Low Intensity Democracy), which seeks to detach organised. skilled and semi-skilled industrial workers from the broader popular masses. This project is connected to big business's version of a social contract, -accord/pact. An

elite stratum of industrial workers would have improved work and social conditions in exchange for higher productivity and greater labour peace.

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Change m SA would benefit a stratum or the wanting mass, but will exclude the great
majority of the more peripheralised. less skilled. less organised or simply unemployed
working class (this is why such a 13ij is sometimes referred to as a 73530 solution - but
30/70 would be more accurate).

Such a project would hope to stabilise monopoly capital and a new black administrative/sta
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middle stratum would also be drawn into the deal (see CORRUPTION - a section to be added
in another paper). Politically, this would produce a kind of hneo-colonialism of a specia
l type",

N -CST.

There are some resemblances between this liberal project and social democratic dispensa-
tions in certain advanced capitalist countries. VVlthout exaggerating or underrating the
positive achievements of these dispensations elsewhere, in a country like 52k in which th
ere

is a massive d4th world" population. social democratic-Style pacts hold out very little h
ope

for any enduring resolution of our enormous social and economic crisis - apart from their
echeer lniuStice.

ll T here is also the possibility of a W counter-revolutionary project. Likely actxve.

.organisational centres for such a project are fairly obvious - reactionary elements from
the

SADF and SAP. elements from bantustan administrations, the organised neo-fascist
extreme right groups, etc. But for such a project to have any enduringponenual. it would
need

to have a broad social base as well.

This social base would need to be drawn, amongst ether things, from among the broader
working class. In this case, the target would tend to be largely at the other end of the
working

class spectrum from those workers targetted in the Low Intensnzy Democrach-CST project.

In the counter-revolutionary project. the social base would be sought for among the most
peripheralised. the most disorganised and desperate - the unemployed. migrants. anarchis-
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tic youth. refugees, rural people mere the examples of Unita. MNR, and our own local
experience with vigilante forces of all kinds is instructive).

These two anti-democratic projects (the liberal and the ultra-right) underline the need,
from

our side. for a politics that is neither blind to the real differences within the working
class,

nor neglects the crucial need for a pluralistic. working class and popular unity. Both th
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neglect of differences and the neglect of unity building can open up space within the pop
ular

masses for llliberal'w and right-wing projects.

A NEW HEGEMONIC BLOC

It is in developing a hegemonic project that the working class will best be able to unify itself and counter alternative anti-democratic projects. In part, this means that the SAC? and broader workers movement must avoid W themselves to mere denunciations of the evils of the capitalist system - although such denunciations are, of course, essential. We must also avoid limiting ourselves to purely rear-guard struggles in defence of workers interests - although, again, such struggles are important. If, however, the workers movement limits itself to denunciation and defence, it risks isolating itself, locking itself into a restricted and unmanoeuvrable position. The SACP must, with all allied formations, struggle to develop the working class in our country as the hegemonic, the leading class. In other words, we seek to develop the working class as a force which is capable of leading our society in every respect, capable of solving the crisis that reaches into every aspect of our society's fabric - economically, culturally, morally and politically. Amongst other things this means that, in a situation such as our own, in which the South African capitalist system is in deep crisis, the workers movement needs to be not a factor for dissolution, but the leading force for reconstruction and renewal along lines that open the way for a socialist transformation. We must reject the worse than better type notions. Socialist oriented development will not spring from the total collapse of the capitalist economy. We must intervene in the crisis of capitalism not to rescue capitalism, but in such a way as to develop the leading role of the working class, building around it a bloc of social forces, giving South Africa a new political leadership and initiating a process of profound renewal and transformation. It is around a major reconstruction process, driven jointly by a national democratic state, the NLM and by a wide range of mass democratic formations, anchored among the broad working masses of our country, that the correct way forward can be charted.

A RECONSTRUCTION PACT

The South African economy and the wider social fabric are in deep crisis. A wide range of forces agree that major restructuring (economic, political and social) is required. Already the present white and capitalist dominated ruling bloc is endeavouring to manage a process of restructuring that will stabilise the situation from their own point of view. Although they may succeed in imposing this project, it will be based on the perpetuation of major inequalities in our society, and, partly for that reason, it will have little prospect of success, even on its own limited terms. It is imperative that the broad liberation movement advances a coherent alternative. But this alternative needs to be more than a set of policies on paper. The manner in which this alternative is elaborated, fought for and defended is absolutely critical to its success. The elaboration of the alternative must itself be democratic, multi-partite, mobilising, and working class-powered. It must emerge from the broad mass movement and it must in turn become a critical factor in deepening the unity and mobilisation of that movement.

-ot a traditional :n-partite. soual contract signed by trade unions.
capltal and the State.

' 't muSt involve the entire. broad MDM. and not just trade unions representing organised

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employed workers.

" The pact is the mm for a broad national democratic alliance, an alliance between the MD
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and a future national democratic state.

Obviously those forces involved in this alliance wlll have to interact with other forces.

:ncludmg capxtal tboth local and international). These mteraCtions may themselves result

l:: negotiated agreements (and even perhaps pactsxaccords) of all kinds. "out the interac
tions

must at all times be guided and strengthened by the institutional and pelicy framework of
the reconStruction pact.

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arm encouraged. A reconStmcnon pact mould Lge approached :xith the following b-tw
perspectives:

T l: is, in the tlrst place. a pact between the major. maes-based. democratic. sectoral
formations and the ANC as the likely dominan: political formation within a new, democrati
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government. From the side of the MDM formatzons this means, in practzce. that COSATU.

in particular. and SANCO will have to take a leading role. But many other MDM formations

(women. rural. vouth, educational. religious. cultural. etc.) need to be brought into the
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process. So do many NGOS/service orgamsations in an advisory capacity.

'T The SACP will have a critical catalysing and theorising role in this process. (The pre
sent

process leading up to our consultative conference needs to be seen centrally in this ligh
tl. In

fact the SAG? has the capacity, given its deep strategic rootedness within bath the AN C
and

C OSATU. as well as its own inherent mobilising and theorising potential. to make a cruci
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difference between success and failure.

" The reconstruction paCt needs to be seen as a process. rather than a once-off contraCt
negotiated between the main players. The detail and depth of the reconstruction pact need
:0 be enhanced over the years.

l However. it is also imperative to have at leaet agreed upon and set in place the major
framework of the reconstruction pact being: any national, democratic electxons. The pact
needs. in part. to become the basis for a broad. popular electoral platform.

The reconstruction pact needs to embrace both an W and a mile: dimension.

t W the pact needs to elaborate a whole range of institutions of participatory
democracy. Already some of these are in place. or in the proceel of being put in place -
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national economic forum. a housing forum, an education forum. etc. The past must commit
its signatories to taking seriously these forums. and to help to develop and enhance them

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These forums will not replace or displace the institutions ofrepresentative democracy. Pr
ime

among the institutions of representative democracy will be the new, democratic parliament

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which should be the supreme authority (although, obviously, its decisions should always b
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open to challenge by mass action. protests. etc.). The institutions of participatory demo
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should supplement those of representative democracy. These institutions need to be at all

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The pact must commit the participants to the recognition that crucial areas of governance (economic development, housing, education, etc.) shall be subject to negotiations by the main relevant players within civil society in the appropriate forum before being legislated in parliament.

The pact must also commit a future democratic state to meeting some of the financial needs of these participatory democratic forums. Such financial support must not, however, undermine the autonomy of these forums.

Institutionally, the reconstruction pact must also envisage a lean but effective state. The success of the pact depends upon effective and coherent implementation, and in this respect

a trim but capable democratic state will be critical.

The principle - the reconstruction pact must be based on the macro-economic and social policy of growth through redistribution. Without ignoring the need to develop the export sector of our

economy, the main thrust of this redistribution should be large-scale inward industrialisation.

expanding and widening (through rising employment) the domestic and sub-continental market. The emphasis must be on housing, education and electrification and infrastructural development to promote employment, stimulate the manufacturing sector and redistribute resources, including skills, to urban and rural communities.

A reconstruction pact is not a mega blueprint. Its successful elaboration and implementation

will encounter many obstacles and much resistance.

Some of the potential problems lie on our side. The pact is based upon a strong MDM but, apart from COSATU, many of the major MDM sectors are in a weakened state. We need to be realistic about the actual capacity of the main MDM formations to develop and sustain a pact. Of course, we must not be fatalistic about MDM weaknesses. We need to strengthen the MDM and we also need to use the pact itself to help this strengthening.