

FW de Klerk may be
aiming to create a
. genuine climate
A ' conducive to '
negotiations. But, argues
the African National
Congress, his immediate
goal is almost certainly to
negotiate debt
racheduling. not the end
of apartheid.
DAVID NIDDRIE
examines current ANC
thinking on negotiations.

he African National Congress is re-examining its position on negotiations. But this reassessment has nothing to do with the offer made by National Party leader FW de Klerk at his party's special congress in June.

The ANC's point of entry into current debates on negotiations is not a reaction to government initiatives. It drafted a comprehensive position on the subject four years ago, and has been prompted to re-examine that position not by De Klerk's offer, but by the circumstances which forced ' him to make the offer.

This is not a minor distinction for the outlawed movement.

On its own the offer - portrayed by De Klerk as taking place between racial groups' and with the explicit intention of entrenching a white political veto and minority control of the economy - hardly bore consideration by the ANC.

This point was made in the ANC's response and driven home by the manner in which it was delivered: as a routine comment from the organisation's department of information and publicity, rather than as a statement from its leadership.

But no serious revolutionary movement can afford to ignore the implications of an enemy offer to talk. 5

At worst, such an offer implies Pretoria needs to engage the movement politically - if only to defeat it politically. It

This in itself - is a significant achievement. Indeed, in the ANC's early years political engagement was: precisely what the movement was seeking.

The intervening years have seen a major shift both in the ANC's make-up and its strategic objective - now firmly locked on to what it calls transformation of South Africa into a non-racial, united and democratic country'.

But this does not diminish the significance of Pretoria's offer.

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In October 1987, the African National Congress identified the steps Pretoria would have to take to create a climate conducive to negotiations'. These included:
5 to the release of political prisoners;
' the unbanning of banned organisations;
' unconditional return of exiles;
to the withdrawal of troops from the townships;
to an end to the state of emergency and the creation of an

atmosphere in the country conducive to political freedom (either scrapping or suspension of repressive laws).

The movement specified that the aim of negotiations would have to be the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country, and that negotiations could only take place with the agreement of the entire democratic leadership of South Africa'.

From the ANC's perspective, Pretoria is seeking new ways of defeating its challenge for power. It is a tacit admission that the government has been unable to do so by other means, and in other terrains of struggle.

ANC officials argue that this admission of a tactical defeat demands that the movement continues and intensifies its work in these other terrains - mass political activity, military combat and the campaign for greater international pressure on Pretoria - rather than shifting the emphasis of its struggle to a terrain favoured by Pretoria.

The movement also draws encouragement from the circumstances which prompted De Klerk's offer.

While the political and economic crises which faced PW Botha through the mid-1980s appeared temporary, v De Klerk has to operate from 'a recognition that the crises facing him are real and permanent facts of South African life

'And while for much of Botha's 1 presidential term South Africa's Western trading partners viewed the National Party government as the only realistic source of political renovation, they now recognise that on its own the National Party is unequal to the task; '

The ANC believes events at home and in the region have further confirmed Pretoria's limitations: at home, Pretoria's stated aim of destroying the resistance movement and constructing an acceptable alternative has failed to break the morale of our people; and agreements on Angola and Namibia have demonstrated that with all its vastly superior resources, Pretoria can be defeated.

The international community has read and understood the message in all this: it is possible to end apartheid, and to do so soon, argues an ANC official.

The movement assesses that its own capacity to take advantage of these changed circumstances has increased. So yes, indeed, we are optimistic, says another official.

But if the combination of these factors is bad news for Pretoria, the ANC is alive to the fact that they also touch its plans.

Having forced De Klerk to acknowledge negotiations as a possible route out of his government's difficulties - effectively putting the prospects of negotiations on the agenda - the movement and its allies, argues a ANC discussion paper released on 16 June, must be ready to bear the consequences of our victories.

At this end, in 1985 when its prospects were markedly dimmer, the movement began.

evolving a series of tactics for talks. In an extensive assessment published in WIP 39, journalist Howard Barrell identified several elements of these tactics: 5: 3. A 't a clear distinction between talks and negotiations' . . . 1

't talks - far less common at the time than they have since become - covered exchanges with formations inside the country. - . . . which, the, movements regarded as its basic or explicit allies, and engagements with 'non-government elements of the white bloc'. The objective of such talks; since pursued with obvious success, was to achieve maximum unity. Talks also aimed to win over as many potentially amenable whites as possible or at least to neutralise hitherto actively reactionary elements;

it the-ANC detined negotiations, WORK IN PROGRESS Hut 9463, ox 7

by contrast, as having a far more limited and defined framework, within which attempts were made to achieve a settlement and to which several non-negotiable preconditions would apply. Central among these would be that the object of such negotiations would be to dismantle apartheid and arrive at an agreed means of transforming South Africa into a united, non-racial and democratic country. All we would be discussing in such talks is the modality for the transfer of power, an ANC official told Barrell at the time.

The principles from which these tactics were evolved, Barrell continued, included a recognition that a liberation or revolutionary movement goes to war for the seizure of state power by the people. It does not, in the first instance, go to war to hold talks.

And while the ANC asserted that any serious liberation movement must be prepared to talk even as the battle rages, it was emphatic that italics of any kind should never be allowed to demobilise the liberation movement's forces - unless and until an explicit ceasefire is decided upon. Unless and until that happens, talks are one tactic alongside the gathering of forces involved in mass political mobilisation and armed struggle'.

Building on this, the ANC's national executive committee publicly put forward its perspective. on the issue of negotiations two years later. This included the preconditions. - now accepted both by the dominant. elements of the internal resistance; movement, and by many of the international forces and institutions, with an interest in the issue.

, 'These preconditions were designed to create. what the movement described as a climate conducive: to negotiations and to ensure mutual agreement on the object of any negotiations; the transformation of South Africa. v t

, with talk of negotiations be; ' , coming increasingly persistent this year, the ANC turned again to its 1987 position. It did so with two major aims in mind: NE G OTI ATQO N S'ilrf'

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Thabo Mbeki - leading the ANC's diplomatic campaign mind.

Firstly it aimed to broaden the base of support for its demands. It has drawn into debate those formations inside the country most likely to sit alongside it at the negotiating table. In developing a common and comprehensive position with those formations, the ANC is also seeking

to pre-empt any attempt to impose an instant settlement package from outside - the most likely candidate being Britain, which managed something similar during the Lancaster House negotiations which gave birth to Zimbabwe. '

Secondly, the re-examination is intended to ensure that the liberation movement's perspectives, platform and planning are sufficient to ensure a climate conducive to:

that negotiations'. is achieved in practice; and then that the negotiation process: has the real potential to achieve the ANC's 5 stated objective '

This re-examination has already produced. a key addition. to the demonstrated.

The ANC believes that either the military forces of both sides must control the streets during negotiations, or that neither side should have that power. Given the vast military disparity between the two, the ANC clearly favours the latter option.

An additional possibility raised during this re-examination is that of a constituent assembly. In place of a negotiating table filled with panics with no clear and demonstrable constituencies or mandates, an elected constituent assembly in which the various parties would be represented on the basis of their actual support would be a more sensible option.

Both this and the demand of SAP-SADF confinement to barracks appear to assume some degree of international involvement in policing the process and possibly in providing the backing for an interim government.

This may lie some way off in the future. But for the ANC there is a more immediate issue, which is central to its current thinking on negotiations: even if De Klerk's government moves on from its June proposals, it does so on its own terms, and under no obligation to accept either the form or the objective of negotiations favoured by the ANC.

Left to himself, the ANC argues, De Klerk will agree only to those preconditions he feels compelled to accept will implement them in the order and at times most favourable to this party, and will define the process itself in terms most beneficial to the interests he represents ' '

ANC's original five preconditions of 1987: Cosatu's proposal that South African Defence Force and police personnel be confined to base during negotiations. Individual ANC officials have pronounced themselves

in favour of this; a
This is based on a belief that
neither free political activity nor a
climate conducive to negotiations can
exist under the guns of an enemy
force - as the presence of Koevoet
units in Nanaibia has already
a , c release of Nelson Mandela
Walter Sisulu and the other
Rivonia trial prisoners is es-
sential if anyone is to regard what
1 follows with any seriousness. But
even this first step has been the target
of seriousfifes'istance from within
South Africa' 3 security estab-
lishment. Senior rnilitary and police
intelligence officers have argued that
volatile for the releases to take place.
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But having been forced to back down on the hunger strike and on the hospital protest, they are likely to lose out on this issue as well. The release process - reportedly planned to take place in stages, starting with Sisulu and ending with Mandela - will set the tone for subsequent developments, says an ANC official. In its effort to buy maximum international credit at minimum cost in political reaction back home, Pretoria is likely to warn each departing prisoner that any political activity on his part will place in jeopardy the liberty of those he leaves behind.

A senior ANC official argues that De Klerk is thereafter likely to move rapidly to consolidate his reputation and credibility abroad - and attempt to outflank the liberation movement, forcing it to participate in negotiations or face increasing marginalisation. His logical next step would be to lift the state of emergency and an informal lifting of the ban on the ANC by tacitly recognising Mandela and his ex-prison comrades as an internal ANC committed to peace'. -

Having thus fulfilled the first three clauses of the release-unban-dismantle-negotiate process demanded of him - but without actually creating the climate conducive to negotiation' - De Klerk would then logically offer the internal ANC a place in his national council. If the ANC rejects this (as seems most likely) he could, without losing anything, offer to talk to them, on virtually any subject under the sun. The international credibility thus accrued would, for De Klerk, be literally worth its weight in gold; argues the same ANC official. And it can only be imagined what Margaret Thatcher, who has virtually single-handedly held off tougher sanctions in the Commonwealth and European Community in exchange for not a single major reform from Pretoria, could achieve for political activity, spontaneous or organised, to name probably (the

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ANC National Executive

Committee member Ronnie

Kassrils

most significant - would seriously distort this and similar scenarios. ANC officials are not overly fond of scenario sketching. But they demonstrate a keen awareness of their need to deny De Klerk a free hand in setting any negotiations agenda.

They also believe that once De Klerk begins moving it will be in his

interests, in the early stages, to move fast. If he is seen to be granting major concessions of the sort described in the scenario, his reward will come in the form of growing pressure - particularly from the West - on the ANC to respond in kind, with concessions of their own. Thereafter, say ANC sources, Pretoria's pace would logically move down several gears much as it did over Namibia from 1980- with the intention of wearing down its opposition with endless highly technical negotiations: haggling, in the expectation of a slow but steady demobilisation and demoralisation of the liberation movement's support base at 2414M t -J '1. .

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De Klerk has in fact spoken of 'the next ten years as deciding the future' of the country and the region.

ANC, however, identifies a more immediate hurdle for De

Klerk. Next July, South Africa's R30-billion foreign debt standstill agreement expires and in the run-up to expiry, the government must negotiate rescheduling (delaying repayment) of the debt. If the political situation in South Africa looks rosy, and the economy as if it may be on the road to some sort of recovery, foreign bankers will be amenable to fairly benign rates of interest and terms of repayment. And Pretoria will have won itself some economic breathing space.

ANC is engaging in a dual diplomatic thrust. As a short-term objective, it is working to bring maximum pressure to bear on the British, French, US, West German and Swiss bankers involved in negotiating the debt rescheduling.

At the same time, anti-apartheid groups throughout the world will be working to seal off Pretoria's existing access to desperately-needed finance.

If this succeeds or even threatens to succeed in the next 11 months, De Klerk will have to work extremely hard to keep the bankers happy - thus making himself more vulnerable to the demands of the ANC and its allies.

Paralleling this initiative is an attempt by the ANC to build a substantial body of support for its negotiations platform to counter-balance that being offered by Thatcher.

This could demand substantial compromises by the ANC and its allies on positions they regard as essential if the attainment of political power is to have any meaning for the majority.

This issue is currently under

examination by a sub-committee of the Organisation of African Unity- TheVANC would like to see both OAU and the frontline states hammer out a common position in advance of the Commonwealth conference in October to head off any Thatcher initiative.

The ANC thus sees De Klerk's current initiatives as a genuine attempt to create a climate conducive to negotiations - but on debt rescheduling, not on the end of apartheid. If De Klerk succeeds with this, his narrow options will expand considerably.

Internationally, therefore, the

t the rhetorical level,
at least, there is inter- ,
national consensus on
the need for a
negotiated settlement in South
Africa between the two prime
protagonists , - the South
Afn'can State and the African
National Congress.

Says United States Assistant
Secretary of State for Africa Herman
Cohen: tI think it is important for the
two parties to get themselves
together. It takes two to tango. We
are not going to talk only to the
South African government. We must
ll: to the black leadership,
#luding the ANC, and say to them,
" f the new government of South
Africa proposes a dialogue, will you
be ready?"

Earlier this year, Soviet Foreign
Minister Anatoly Adamishin used
exactly the same metaphor of the
tango to assert a very different
position. The ANC, he asserted was
ready to negotiate. "There is no need
to push them on that. But it takes two
to tangol.

Adamishin made this observation
in Harare, on a continent where the
Namibian settlement has dramatically
underscored how the settlement
process itself determines the fmits of
negotiation.

Many have welcomed as a clear
victory the Namibian settlement
ich will lead to the final
lthdrawal of South Africa from its
formetcolony. The decisive battle at
Cuito Cuanavale, combined with the
inabilitygof thegSouth- African
government to sustain the costs of
the ,war, has won what no-one
thoughtgpossible a year ago -,
independence for Namibia before the
end of the apartheid state.

-The elections will test snpport foil
the; South West African- People' s
Organisation (Swapo),jAnd, while a
hostile South Africa cannot be
wished (or fought):-away at this
stage, it.is for Swapoeto ensure that
the transformationiof' Namibia gains
the active participation of
Namibians, making foreign
disruption less likely.

l Others believe that while
Resolution 435 has resulted in a
Negotiations are not an
all-or-nothing matter. They
need not be-atrecipe for instant
defeat, but equally they will be
no instant solution for the
victory of democracy, argues
MARK PHILLIPS from the
a Centre for Policy Studies.
Who, of the many actors in the
drama, will win out in
determining the context for
negotiations will not become

clear for some time to come.
relatively peaceful settlement, it has
altogether excluded Swapo and the
Namibian people from the settlement
process.

A South African-appointed
administrator continues to wield final
authority during the transition. Dirty
electioneering may prevent Swapo
from gaining the 66% of the votes it
needs in November to be able to
draw up a constitution without
having to strike compromises with
other parties.

And with South Africa holding
onto Walvis Bay and maintaining
troops at bases less than an hour
from the Namibian border, its
capacity to destabilise and
incapacitate the new states economy
and social infrastructure is even
greater than it was in Mozambique.
All these factors make it difficult
for many to see recent events as
anything more than a partial victory
for the Namibian people.

To avoid a playback of the
Namibian settlement in South Africa,
the Mass Democratic iMovement
(MDM) is moving towards a
three-part programme involving
setting clear terms for negotiation;
taking the initiative in popularising
these conditions; and mobilising to
play a central role in any negotiations
which may form part of a political
solution. . . ,

It is no longer a question of
whether the MDM views
negotiations as desirable - for they
are rapidly becoming a reality. For
instance, in May the United States
Assistant Secretary of State for
Africa Herman Cohen announced his
government's intention to do
everything possible to organise
negotiations between the black
majority and the white minority'. .
This was but one indication of the
powerful pressure which US
President George Bush and British
Premier Margaret Thatcher, on the
one hand, and the Frontline states,
the Soviets and the millions of South
Africans who desire peace, on the
other, are bringing to bear both on
the state and the liberation
movement - a

Negotiations are not an all-or-
nothing matter. They need not be a
recipe for instant defeat, but equally
they will be no instant solution for
the victory of democracy. In certain
circumstances they may be
complementary to mass mobilisation
for people's power.

The issue of negotiations is one
terrain of struggle, among
others. Both the state and the
liberation movement will mobilise to
advance their interests to the maxi-

mum. i ._
Beeld's political correspondent,
Willie Kuhn, sees negotiations as a
indifferent kind of war' more testing
to the state than the fight against
terrorism. In an article in April this
year, he argued that the state lacked -
and badly needed - a plan.to deal
with the possibledecisiongby the
ANC to suspend armed struggle as a
strategy.
in will have to be able to defend
this plansnot onlyyagainst -__smaller
powers like. those participating in the
tricameral.parllament.but,ultimately
against much stronger. powersuwho
also geresent .UDF/ANC interests
The: party whiCh-acanngt: properly
pursue; that ciebateg' ultimately loses
the war That 'is the hidden danger
when war is pntsnedas debate! -.
The Nationalgl. Patty ,(NP)':
government enters the war;': onva
strong organisational basis and,
throughtits security network, _
effectively ln control of the state But
its options are narrowing and it has
to. contend with dissension within its
ranks. _.
Since PW Bothais stroke and the
resultant power. struggle within the
National Party, the executive, the
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security establishment and the state president are no longer the omnipotent power which PW Botha and his military advisers so successfully bound together.

The economy is widely perceived to be in a state of / decay. Both ministers Adriaan ' Vlok and Barend du Plessis have openly admitted that international pressure, particularly in the form of financial sanctions, is an effective constraint on state / action.

The moribund state of the national statutory council (or Great Indaba') is the most graphic illustration of the state's failure to broaden its political base despite three years of emergency rule and co-ordinated counter-revolutionary warfare policies.

Though it has been weakened and fragmented, mass democratic organisation is slowly reconstituting itself and it continues to hold the greatest political influence over most township residents. It has managed, under difficult circumstances, to broaden its influence, mobilising the biggest stayaway in South Africa's history under emergency conditions. It exercises the greatest constraint on the ambitions of conservative politicians in urban councils and bantustan states.

The success of the hunger strikes has effectively eliminated mass detention of activists as a cornerstone of the counter-revolutionary 'i warfare' policies. It is rumoured that the state security council was overruled by the cabinet on the hunger strike - 'i the first time in years that political considerations outweighed those of security in this way. - ..

While the domestic 'crisis' of legitimacy remains quite unresolved; there is mounting pressure on the state to dismantle apartheid and deal with its prime adversary - the ANC:

"'Yet; the questions of who to negotiate with to resolve the political stalemate and what form of constitutional proposal to back remain sources of deep conflict in the NP state.

The state-appointed Law Commission, exploring the issue of a Bill of Rights, concluded that all South Africans required the vote. Though its recommendations have support within the NP, there is little consensus over precisely how votes should be exercised.

De Klerk has declared himself in favour of four separate constituent

assemblies for town affairs' and
 some sort of consensus-based
 multi-racial executive controlling
 general affairs without any one
 group dominating any other group.
 The dominant NP idea at its last
 federal congress centred on the
 concept of concurrent majorities.
 This seems to imply the majority
 representatives 'of all four racial
 groups' (and possibly; the
 representatives of an 'non-group'
 group) would have to separately
 agree on an issue for it to become
 law. White rule would be exercised
 through a veto over policies 'contrary
 to white group interests. i i
 3- negotiations with the ANC are
 the key issue for the NP
 -' state. In this light, the sym-
 bolic significance of PW Botha's
 meeting with Nelson Mandela on 5
 July cannot be ever played. Although
 , - ngf/muck
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 . a-fNEGOTIATIONS- , ,
 h leader.
 Yet, it was just over a year
 ' ago that two top officials in
 the department of
 constitutional development
 and planning had their
 security clearances
 withdrawn, partly for their
 willingness to talk to
 members of the MDM. And
 during the reign of the
 securocrats, firm
 instructions were issued to
 officials to stop talking to
 81/ revolutionaries - a
 reference to community
 organisations and bodies
 like the National Education
 Crisis Committee (NECC)
 which had engaged the state in
 negotiations both at the local and
 national level in the 1985/6 period.
 , The NP's insistence that the ANC
 (renounce' violence before it would
 consider talking to it reflected this
 hard line. But the failure of security
 structures to resolve political conflict
 led some within the the NP camp to
 look beyond this position.
 In January the NP-supporting
 daily, Beeld, declared in an editorial
 that negotiations with the ANC were
 not as unthinkable as was commu-
 nism.
 Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
 moderator Johan Heyns , has
 suggested that the renunciation of
 violence should be an outcome of
 negotiations not -'a precondition for
 them; as - the state has insisted. A
 recent NP statement puts the
 precondition somewhat differently,
 stating it is willing to talk to anyone
 who is committed to the pursuit of
 peace? _ , ...- . ; ; . - a W

v Verligte Nat MP'Alb'ert Nothna e
- now Ambassador to The Hague -
was defended. _by Botha whenhe
stated that the" government would one
day have to negotiate with the ANC.
Many NPZ'sup'porters are worried
that the government is not adequately
prepared for the new situation which
is developing?

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Botha says that no negotia-
tions or policy discussions
occurred, the fact remains
that Botha became the first
head of the white minority
state to meet the ANC

Beeld's Willie Kuhn points out that the release of Mandela would give the ANC the key to participation in the political process - and therefore the opportunity to begin its war-like debate.

The states refusal to release Mandela has been portrayed as the key obstacle to negotiations by everybody, from bantustan leaders to Western governments and the ANC itself. But once he is released - and public pressure almost guarantees it will be as an unrestricted activist - the state will effectively be allowing the ANC leader to operate openly within the country.

Since becoming NP leader, de Klerk has had a series of discussions with the conservative National Forum, with Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha and with a range of bantustan leaders, such as Gazankulu's Hudson Ntsanwisi, Lebowa's Nelson Ramodike and Enos Mabuza of KaNgwane.

These discussions, billed as evidence of the NPs serious intent to 'negotiate' a new constitution, would be better seen as evidence of de Klerk's continuing intent not to negotiate with the ANC? to keep it on the outside and to pursue a reformist, multi-racial power-sharing formula in which the demands for a non-racial democracy would not have to be addressed.-

The state might hope for an inflexible negotiating stance on the part of the liberation movement which would allow it to gradually bring into state structures a range of conservative blacks while refusing to accede to genuine democratic demands. As this 'scenario' developed, the liberation movement, to avoid marginalisation, might feel impelled to join the negotiating system from a position of weakness): ' 't

If the government - Were under less pressure internally and externally, negotiations could become just another in the long line of strategies which successive governments have pursued to defend the white minority state.

In all these scenarios de Klerk still faces formidable obstacles, including the dilemma of Nelson Mandela; the demand for an end to the state of emergency; the severely limited credibility of conservative black politicians; the power of the MDM; and intense international economic and political pressure for all-party

talks to include the liberation movement.

Furthermore, the most prominent conservative black politicians have all refused to enter into constitutional negotiations until conditions very similar to those set by the democratic movement are met. Buthelezi, Mabuza and Daveyton councillor Tom Boya have all set the release of Mandela and other political prisoners, the ending of the ANC and the lifting of the state of emergency as preconditions for talks. The success of the ANC's international and diplomatic offensive has meant that the struggle in South Africa has been internationalised to an extent unprecedented in the history of national liberation struggles. The reduction in international tension as a result of the Soviet Union's policies of glasnost and perestroika has largely removed the South African question from the sphere of east-west conflict. At the rhetorical level at least, there is now an almost complete international consensus on the need for political initiatives, including negotiations between the state and the ANC, to bring the system of apartheid to an end.

Why, after many years of being seen as being in cahoots with South African white rulers, are the British and Americans now pushing for an all-party settlement?

In the United States, the anti-apartheid movement has succeeded in integrating the issue of apartheid into the domestic civil rights issue. In 1986 this was probably the primary motor force within the US Congress in its imposition of limited mandatory sanctions, despite a presidential veto.

The increasing tempo of the struggle within South Africa has led to a re-evaluation of US policy. The Kissinger doctrine in the 1970s held that the strength of white minority regimes in Southern Africa, the weakness in nationalist resistance and the dictates of the Cold War made it logical for the US to tacitly back these states, assuming that change could only come through them. In spite of Zimbabwe's independence, the doctrine continued to underlie Reagan's 'constructive' engagement policy. But the failure of US-backed top-down reform in South Africa became very evident in the light of

the unprecedented internal resistance
of 1985/6; The Schultz report of
1986 concluded that change from
above could not work and that no
solution 4 was possible - without ANC
participation. , t a
Unlike the Reagan administration,
the Bush administration accepts the
utility of sanctions as one aspect of a
carrot-and-stick approach. Cohen
does not at this stage support further
sanctions against apartheid, but he
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NE GOTI'ATio N
 accepts those that are
 now in place and
 admits they have been
 successful _ in
 lconcentrating South
 African minds.
 The US, along with
 Britain, hopes that the
 regional settlements
 which are developing,
 in Namibia, Angola
 and possibly
 Mozambique will
 serve as a model for
 South Africa itself. It
 of the US; Because
 British foreign policy
 is determined by the
 executive without
 congressional
 constraints, it is
 easier for her to offer
 the carrots while the
 US waits behind with
 the sanctions stick.
 A relatively early
 internationally-
 brokered solution
 would be seen as less
 threatening to
 14
 is now convinced that
 this must involve
 negotiated compromise
 involving all parties, v:
 including the NP state
 and the ANC.
 While the ANC has
 privately been warned
 that it might isolate
 itself from an
 internationally
 approved process
 should it refuse to talk, the NP state
 is under great pressure to create an
 environment conducive to talks back
 home.
 The stick is the threat of continuing
 or even greater economic and
 diplomatic isolation: The carrot is
 diplomatic kudos, an easing of
 economic pressures and possible
 influence by the West to encomage
 compromises protecting key cultural,
 ecouofnic and, possibly, political
 interests V of whites in future
 negotiations.
 Along with the US, which has its
 own- limited sanctions,; Margaret
 Thatcher's Britainiis the only power
 which regularly rvetoos : mandatory
 sanctions. in theUnited Nations.
 Likewise, Britain, .with. the largest
 singlestake in the South African
 economy; was-the only stalwart
 opponent , of:_ sanctions fat the
 Commonwealth conference last year.
 The Commonwealth. conference in-
 October will bring great pressure on
 Britain to fall into line or prove that

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results. - i . ' ' '
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. The growing prospect of a labour Party revival in Britain itself is another major pressure point on British foreign-policy towards South Cosatu'sAJay Naidoo:

Cosatu positions on negotiations are very similar to the ANC's Africa.

Thatcher's stand on sanctions gives her the leverage to wield a big stick at Pretoria, while simultaneously offering an enticing carrot. This dual strategy hinges on persuading the South African state to release Mandela and, on the other hand, enlisting the support of the Frontline states to force the ANC to renounce or at least suspend its armed struggle and negotiate.

tNegotiateli has been Thatcherls
constant refrain on Southern African
issues. . v

In an interview with Beeld editor Wim Wepener, she refused to equate the IRA and the ANC, 'on the grounds of the denial of the vote to black South Africans. I do not see how', she said, 'in the modern world, it is possible to achieve political stability except on a basis where all adults have the vote'. The issue is to reconcile the exercise of those normal democratic rights, which cannot be denied, with the reasonable protection of minority interests. How that is to be done has to be negotiated between South Africans.

For the moment, Thatcher's
persuasive approach has the support
Western economic
and strategic interests
than one in which
% balance of power had
shifted decisively to
the mass-based,
.anti-apartheid
t g i , opposition.

The fear of growing
diplomatic isolation,
the possibility of a
more flexible NP

state under de Klerk and a desire both to limit the Soviet role and build on its new policy of joint resolutions to regional conflicts all contribute to the urgency with which Thatcher and Bush are moving on South Africa.

S and British strategies for a
; negotiated compromise-rel
to a large extent onSm?
co-operation. The US and Britain
hope is that if they can deliver the
N P. government to the. negotiating
table, the Soviets will deliver: the
ANC. This. gives, the 1 SOvietsl- con-
siderable power inthe process; But it
by no means implies either a: break
withgthe ANC ore uncritical accep-

tanceof the US and British agendas. , ,
While some Sovietracademics
suggest. that .SouthyAfr-im; is ripe for
political; compromises which ,will
protect. important white interests
while guaranteeing blacks political
rights; and while there are Soviet
commentatorswho have posed
negotiations ascan alternative to
armed struggle, a' Soviet Foreign
Ministry official was quoted in June
as saying: 'Scholars can hold their
own views differing from official
ones But one thing is certain. The
WORK IN PROGRESS

.the armed struggle
USSvaill continue
backing the democratic
forces in South Africa
who combat apartheid ' :
under ANC leader-
shipl.

Reports of ANC;
meetings with Soviet
government and
Afro-Asian Solidarity
Committee
representatives have b
emphasised a prefer-
ence for 'political' 1%
solutions and de-
emphasised the fact
that Soviet backing of
ntinues.

Perhaps one of the
most accurate accounts
of current Soviet t "
policy is contained in a
recent paper prepared
by senior Foreign
Ministry official AA
Makarov, in apparent
consultation with the universities, the
Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee,
the Communist Party and the
government.

It analyses the South African crisis
as having been generated mostly by-
contradictions between the
development of South African
productive forces in the age of the
revolution in science and technology
and the ' apartheid-based
stitutionalised system of
nonopolistiestate control and
regulations governing national
manpower'. It concludes that South
Africa's, .; intensive economic
development has been made directly
contingent 'on freedom from racial
discrimination and on political
rightsl. .e -

The Soviets assess the balance of
forces around: this contradiction as
relatively stable; 1Organisationally,
politically and militarily, the
anti-racist resistance movement is not
yet ready to topple the regime and
captures power, while the regime is
no longer capable of .curbing the
growth of resistance.

The Soviets believe the state will
continue with its reform programme
- but that this can at best provide it
respite.

WORK IN PROGRESS 1'

1' T: .TA'K ES 'ETVWQ'JTO LITA N G C"

Although Makarov argues that a
revolutionary overthrow of the state
remains possible, he emphasises that
objective conditions still militate
against it. These include the states
powerful apparatus of repression, the
fact that the SADF is fully loyal to
the state, the heterogeneous nature of
the resistance, the lack of a strong

political centre or' comprehensive underground structure and the fact that MK cannot yet be regarded as a people's revolutionary army'. Therefore the Soviets are-emphasising the importance of talks; says Makarov, while conceding that under present conditions talks would . be little more than 'a tactical ploy' for the state,- ' aimed at: misleading public opinion and dividing the ANC. For this reason, he writes, a political 'solution' to the South African conflict- is: only possible when the state is so; weakened by internal contradictions and popular resistance that it either has to cede state power altogether or to share it on terms laid down largely by the national liberation movement. While the ANC believes that, together with its internal; allies, it delivered power- "HEW 3", 1' " ! a.r,i.'t,yF'TV"3'A" aV'WWV"VH"KCTW'fTE? vuf-T' . ' . l ' .. : r .x Np -' Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The USSR will continue backing the democratic forces in SA " full blows to the apartheid state and helped inspire mass action . and resistance, it . K recognises that it was not able to take full advantage of favourable conditions. Points of self-criticism raised within the ANC include: a failure to deploy .. sufficient forces inside South Africa; # difficulty in arming itself V rganisationally among the masses; 'k over-reliance on an externally-based Umkhonto we Sizwe; "t failure to integrate armed struggle with mass democratic struggle, leaving the masses unarmed in the face of the security forces and vigilantes. There has been a re-assertion of the necessity for political strategy to lead and determine military strategy - allied to the belief that armed struggle must complement mass struggle. While there are differing views in the ANC over whether a military-based seizure of power is likely, what is generally agreed is that the armed pillar is indispensable as one strategy among others for the attainment of power. The creation of a revolutionary army with three components - rural guerrilla units; urban combat groups and a popular self-defence militia - is seen as; a

crucial current and future task.

..At the same time, there is a growing emphasis in the ANC on the concept of negotiationssas a complementary: facet: of struggle, Questionstare being posed as to whether there are irreconcilable contradictions between a people's war' and a negotiated settlement; betweenfpartial' and labsolutel victories; and between the armed seizure of power and a possible strategic objective of negotiating the transfer of political power from the white minority to the majority.

For the ANC, the urgency of the issue is increasing as the US and, other Western powers bring pressure to bear for the ANC to moderate its stance, suspend violence and start talking. This pressure can only grow. The ANC has consistently defended its alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP), but there is little doubt that this will come under heavy attack from conservatives and liberals in South Africa and the West. The SACP, although wary of attempts to push the liberation movement into negotiations before it has organised strength on the ground to back its demands, was reported after its last congress as accepting that strategies of armed struggle and popular insurrection do not rule out the possibility of negotiations and compromise.

In a statement on 9 October 1987, the ANC National Executive Committee stressed: 'The ANC has never been opposed to a negotiated settlement. The ANC and the masses as a whole are ready and willing to enter genuine negotiations provided they are aimed at the transformation of our country into a united and non-racial democracy'.

Then, and subsequently, the ANC has set out specific steps that the government would have to take to demonstrate its seriousness' and to create a climate for negotiations.

These are: a

i the release of all political prisoners and detainees;

" the lifting of the state of emergency; ' t - . - win?

1". the withdrawal: of , troops: and paramilitary , police from: the townships; -

.'" the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations; 't y .

" the scrapping of repressive laws that limit basic freedoms...-h W, ,

r-The meeting _of these conditions':

, Nwhich imply that exiles will be allowed home; treason trials will

cease and political hangings be halted

- also- forms the basis for a possible

suspension of armed struggle and the sanctions campaign; . ; 2

.The ANC has recently gone further

to propose what it calls a new

negotiation concept'. This involves

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ensuring mass participation in the negotiation process by elections to a

constituent assembly which would

draft a constitution. Negotiations

would therefore be conducted by V

' representative, elected leaders on

terms. determined by an electorate

comprising all South Africans.

The ANC might consider

participation in some form of interim government to oversee the election of a popular assembly and the consequent negotiation process. This draws on the transitional experiences of Namibia and Mozambique and, aims, among other things, to subject the claims of different groups to take part in the negotiation process to the democratic test. 'i a e mass campaigns of the 1980s placed the MDM, led by the UDF and Cosatu, as the most powerful counter to the NP government within the country. The further development of national formations among youth, women, workers, pupils and students - and the struggles conducted by them - will ensure the participation of the masses in securing their future. Congress of South African Trade Unions general secretary Jay Naidoo and this year's National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa) congress have substantially confirmed and reiterated the ANC's position on negotiations. Church leaders Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, Beyers Naude and Frank Chikane have asked foreign banks to set conditions for the rolling over of loans . to the South ' African government '- conditions similar to those listed by the ANCa prerequisites for negotiation...: . . . ; .': Negotiation strategies are. not new to Ethe: MDMizeThroughoutrfthe building of organs of peoplels power in the. 19805,: negotiations occurred betweenuUDF afiliiliatesands various state authorities. These helped to build and- legitimise organisations. 3 ' f, :: TheMDM has not made the lifting. of; restriction orders a ; precondition for:ldcal-Ievel talks. But the question of national negotiations is very different... A consistent prior demand ofthe MDM has been the;freeing of. the politicalprocess- This is linked. to a rejection of lbehind closed doors'talks which could lead to compromises and bargains which exclude the mass of South Africans. The . MDM?s position is straightforward: negotiations can only occur with a mandate; mandates can only be democratically granted . under conditions of free and open i political activity. This position is 1 based on the belief that, organised . within the tanks of the MDM, the 'masses remain the most important guarantee of democratisation and social transformation. It.is.in this context that the liberation movement's stated preconditions for t national negotiation are so significant. As articulated by the ANC, by the Numsa congress, and by Cosatuis

Naidoo, they are a power I
guarantee against a negotiation
process designed to bypass the South
African people. In Naidoo's words:
"The condition we stress is freedom
of association and freedom of
speech. In order for us to have
negotiations, organisations will have
to put their programs to the people,
to canvass the people and get
mandates. That implies that any
negotiations have to be open.
For the MDM the greatest
challenge as questions of transition
become more immediate is the
deepening of organisation and the
building of the broadest possible
unity of anti-apartheid forces. As
struggles intensify and thrust
comes under increasing pressure to
respond, a united front of
organisation and apartheid opposition
will be impossible to marginalise.
During the process of negotiation
the state may be less able to use high
levels of repression; against the
MDM; and greater space for
organisation may be created. But - a
concomitant increase in extra-legal
and informal forms of repression is
quite possible - and even likely.
Negotiations through cycles of
warfare; and conflict are no less
possible than they were in Vietnam,
Rhodesia and Namibia. If
negotiations are a terrain of struggle,
then as in other struggles; there will
be advances and retreats, gains and
losses. a
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