SOUTH AFRICA'S STRATEGY IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION
A Preliminary Analysis

Robert Davies & Dan O'Meara
Centro de Estudos Africanos
Universidade Eduardo Mondlane
Maputo

October 1983

It is obvious even to the casual observer of the struggle in the Southern African region that the South African apartheid state is engaged in various actions directed against independent states in the region. It has been involved in numerous large scale invasions of Angolan territory; it has carried out more limited but nevertheless brutal raids against Mozambique and Lesotho; it has organised and sponsored armed puppet movements acting against the governments of a number of independent states; and it has applied economic and other pressures - all in an attempt to destabilise these states. South Africa has also offered various "incentives" - including economic "aid" and even the cession of territory - to states willing to collaborate with it.

These actions are generally correctly seen as the desperate response of the apartheid system and state to the deepening crisis confronting it both internally and in its external relations. More specifically, it is widely recognised that through such actions the apartheid regime is attempting both to thwart the advancing liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia and to undermine attempts by the independent states to challenge the stranglehold of South African capitalism in the region. It is less widely appreciated however, that these actions are also elements, or tactics, within a broader and relatively coherent regional strategy. This strategy has attempted to mobilise a wide range of regional policy instruments and to guide the application of particular measures. The aim of this paper is to offer a preliminary analysis (as a basis for discussion and further research) of South Africa's current regional strategy and of the effects of its application to date. The paper also attempts to assess the results and prospects, and strengths and weaknesses of current South African strategy. Finally the paper seeks to evaluate the implications of recent debates and criticisms from within ruling class

circles about the direction of regional policy.

The Historical Roots of Current South African Regional Strategy

South Africa's current regional strategy has to be understood, firstly, as an aspect of the so-called "Total National Strategy" of the Botha regime (1). This "Total Strategy" has served as the basic strategic and ideological framework within which both the internal and external policy of the apartheid state has been organised since Botha's accession to the premiership in September 1978. However, since this Total Strategy was formulated in a particular historical conjuncture in response to specific concrete conditions of struggle, an analysis of the regime's current regional strategy has also to be located in the context of the history of previous regional strategies and struggles.

It is not the intention in this paper to present a lengthy account of the history of South Africa's regional policy (2). However, a number of aspects of this policy since the end of the Second World War are important.

The first point to note is that historically the development of capitalism in Southern Africa led to the formation of a regional sub-system in which the principal poles of accumulation were located in South Africa. The other territories in the region were subordinated to serve the needs of capital accumulation in South Africa in various ways - as labour reserves (supplying 300.000 migrant workers for the mining industry alone in 1973); as suppliers of cheap raw materials and/or specific services such as transport; and as markets for South African produced commodities. One long-standing objective of South Africa's regional policy has thus been to ensure that neighbouring territories continue to serve South African capitalism in these ways. Another increasingly important objective has been to thwart the advancing liberation struggles of the peoples of the region.

Until the mid-1970's the fundamental bedrock on which the apartheid state

based its attempts to achieve these objectives was the existence of a number of so-called "buffer" states which surrounded it. To the west was the Portuguese colony of Angola and the South African occupied territory of Namibia; in the centre the settler-ruled British colony of Rhodesia; and to the east, the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. The principal focus of regional policy was directed towards reinforcing these buffer states to serve as a protective barrier for South Africa itself. This involved the formation of alliances with the colonial regimes of these territories and the rendering to them of various forms of support, including military assistance.

With respect to the other countries of the region, until the mid 1960's South Africa sought the direct incorporation of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. These three so-called High Commission territories were administered from South Africa by the same British High Commissioner (who also served as Britsh ambassador to South Africa). The absorption of these territories by South Africa would have had the advantage from the point of view of the apartheid state of placing them under its own direct control. It would also have had the additonal ideological advantage of enabling the "racial" division of land in a "greater South Africa" to be presented as a "fair" 50:50, instead of the existing 87% white, 13% black division introduced by apartheid.

When it became clear that in the epoch of decolonisation Britain would not accede to these demands, but was on the contrary "preparing" these territories for eventual independence, the Verwoerd regime proposed in 1963 the establishment of a "common market/commonwealth" in Southern Africa. This proposal, which has found an echo in the Botha regime's plan for a "constel -lation of states", envisaged as a first step the establishment of a free trade zone in the region. Once this was established it was considered that the economic links between territories would be so strong that the basis would be laid for the establishment of a regional political institution - a commonwealth, described by apartheid ideologues at the time as an "association of black and white states", with South Africa as the 'mother

country".

This commonwealth project failed to materialise. However increasingly close links were forged throughout the 1960's and early 1970's with the colonial regimes in the buffer states. Moreover none of the independent states which came into existence in the region during this period proved willing or able to mount any effective challenge to South African hegemony.

With its base in the region thus apparently secure, a new offensive was launched by the Vorster regime in the late 1960's in direct response to the process of rapid decoloniasation then under way and the increasing international condemnation of apartheid. This offensive, known as the "outward looking" policy or "dialogue initiative", had as its objective a search for allies within the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). As such, it scored some initial succeses. In 1971, for example, six OAU members (Malawi, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Madagascar and Lesotho) voted against a motion condemning Pretoria's dialogue proposals as a "manoeuvre" designed to "divide African states and confuse public opinion in order to end the isolation of South Africa, and thus to maintain the status quo in South Africa" (3). Five other states (Dahomey, Niger, Swaziland, Upper Volta and Togo) abstained. The Vorster regime also achieved its biggest "coup" in the same year, with the state visit to South Africa of Banda, followed by the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with Malawi.

These developments gave the impression that things in the region were pretty much going Pretoria's way. Yet in reality the balance of forces were being dramatically altered by the advancing liberation struggles in territories still under colonial rule. This became strikingly clear in April 1974 when the Portuguese fascist regime was overthrown as a direct result of the heightening of contradictions in Portugal through the impact of the colonial wars. The overthrow of the Portuguese fascist regime was followed by the independence of Mozambique and Angola in 1975, under govern-ments formed by the liberation movements - FRELIMO and MPLA. This dramatic-ally changed the balance of forces in the region and undermined the basis on

4

which South African policy had hitherto been built. The independence of Mozambique and Angola meant that two of South Africa's key buffers had fallen. It was also becoming clear that the Smith regime in Zimbabwe had been forced onto the defensive in large measure due to the facilities made available to Zimbabwean freedom fighters by FRELIMO. Moreover South Africa's own forces in Namibia were being placed under increasing pressure from SWAPO guerillas now able to operate along the entire 1.000 km northern border. The situation in the region, in short, had changed dramatically. The bedrock on which South Africa's regional policy had up to this point been built - the buffer states - had finally proved to be sandstone rather than granite.

The collapse of Portuguese colonialism gave rise to a hasty reformulation of regional strategy by the Vorster regime in 1974. One aspect of this involved a further expansion of the military forces. The military budget for 1974/5 was one-and-a-half times that of the previous year, and by 1977/8 it had risen to a level three-and-a-half times that of 1973/4. Another aspect was the launching of a new diplomatic/political initiative known as detente. Orchestrated and conceived by BOSS, detente had as its objective a desparate search for influential allies within the OAU. Bribery, secret diplomatic contacts (often arranged through BOSS's connections with western intelligence services) and eventually a visit by Vorster to a number of countries in West Africa as well as a meeting with President Kaunda of Zambia, were all means used in the attempt to achieve this end. At the same time some minor internal changes were made, such as the scrapping of some forms of "petty apartheid". This had the clear objective of giving credence to the notion that "dialogue" could be a viable alternative to "confrontation".

Despite some important initial successes, however, the detente initiative began to crumble in the debacle of the South African invasion of Angola in 1975, and the eventual expulsion of South African forces by MPLA and Cuban troops in March 1976. While there still remained some impetus from Zambia and some other Southern African states to maintain dialogue with

South Africa, this was finally destroyed by the brutal repression of the Soweto uprising. Not even the most conservative African regime could now afford to be seen to be collaborating with a regime which slaughtered school children in the streets.

By the end of 1976 then, in addition to its internal crisis, the apartheid regime faced a collapse of its regional policies. At the same time, top military strategists, allied to monopoly capitalist class forces, had become more stridently critical of the bases on which regional, as well as other aspects of state security policy, had hitherto been conducted. This critique covered important aspects of the organisation of military interventions in the region as well as the approach towards winning allies which relied on influencing individual decsion makers rather than the objective environment in which decisions were made. In the 1977 Defence White Paper - the document in which top military commanders first publicly laid out and called for the adoption of their "Total Strategy" - it was argued that the mobilisation of economic, political and psycho-social as well as military resources was necessary to defend and advance the interests of the apartheid state both at the internal and regional levels. More specifically, the White Paper identified the need "to maintain a solid military balance relative to neighbouring states and other states in Southern Africa". At the same time it called for "economic action" and "action in relation to transport services, distribution and telecommunications" to promote "political and economic collaboration among the states of Southern Africa" (4).

Total Strategy at the Regional Level

Following the rise to power of the Botha regime in September 1978 and the subsequent adoption of the Total Strategy a number of steps have been taken to restructure regional policy in important respects.

Firstly, the objectives of this policy have been somewhat reformulated. The ultimate objective has been identified as the establishment of a "Con-

6

stellation" of anti-marxist states informally allied with and tied through a range of joint economic projects to apartheid South Africa. In many respects this represents a resurrection of the old Verwoerdian "common market/commonwealth" proposals, but with some noteable differences. Firstly, the terminology has been modernised to exclude some of the more blatantly crude formulations of the Verwoerdian era, such as the explicit declaration of the aim to set up South Africa as the "mother country" in the region. Secondly and more importantly, the constellation proposal represented a new departure in that it clearly sought to influence the objective environment within which decisions were made, rather than as for example during the detente phase, influencing individual decision makers directly. In other words it envisaged extending economic links with neighbouring states as a means of entrapping these states politically.

In addition to this ultimate objective, a number of more immediate limited objectives have also been defined. With the paralysis of the constellation proposal these have come to assume a particular importance.

A strikingly clear statement of these immediate regional policy objectives by Deon Geldenhuys - one of the Botha regime's leading academic consultants on foreign policy issues. In a commissioned paper published by the Institute of Strategic Studies of the University of Pretoria in early 1981, Geldenhuys defined the first of these objectives as being to ensure that:

> "Neighbouring states are not used as springboards for guerrilla or terrorist attacks on South Africa. South Africa clearly not only wants neighbouring governments to give an undertaking to this effect but also wants them to implement it effectively, thus ensuring that unauthorised incursions do not take place. Furthermore, South Africa would wish that black states in the region (not merely neighbouring countries) would not provide training facilities for anti-South African liberation movements and, ideally, would not allow the fighters transit facilities or allow the movements to establish offices in their countries."

This clearly demands not only that independent states in the region refrain from actively supporting the armed liberation struggles in South Africa and Namibia, but also that they act as police agents for Pretoria and prohibit any form of political organisation and expression by refugees resident in their territories.

The second objective, reflecting the Botha regime's definition of the crisis confronting it as a product of a Soviet orchestrated "total onslaught", is to ensure that "Soviet bloc powers do not gain a political and least of all a military foothold in Southern African states."

The third and fourth objectives are directly aimed at thwarting any attempts by independent states to reduce their economic dependence on South Africa. As Geldenhuys puts it, South Africa wants to see that:

"Existing economic ties with states in the region are maintained and indeed strengthened. An obvious pre-condition for the strategic application of economic relations (read exertion of economic pressure - RD/DOM) is that these links have to exist in a meaningful way."

Another related demand is that:

"Black states in the region <do> not... support calls for mandatory trade sanctions against South Africa. For some of them, implementation of sanctions would have devastating results; others may perhaps be prepared to run the risks, as in the case of sanctions against Rhodesia. The stronger the economic ties with South Africa, perhaps the lesser the chances of their supporting sanctions. Black states could, in other words, shield South Africa from mandatory economic sanctions."

Finally, the apartheid regime wants:

"Black states in Southern Africa (to) display some moderation in expressing their customary criticism of the republic's domestic policy and in suggesting solutions. To try to induce some moderation in the heady anti-South African rhetoric is however a

8

secondary objective and its limits are obvious: it simply cannot
be expected of OAU member states to refrain from denouncing
apartheid: at issue is the manner in which it is done." (5)

In addition to the reformulation of strategic objectives, new instruments
have been developed to achieve these. These include the mobilisation of
military resources. Defence expenditure nearly doubling between 1977/8 and
1983/4 to reach R3.050 million (an amount greater than the Gross Domestic
Product of Zimbabwe). Moreover particular military capabilities for
aggression against neighbouring states, most of which have been well tested
in practice. These include:-

- Reconnaisance commandos (Reces): specialist units containing a high
  proportion of mercenaries for use in hit and run operations such as
  1981 Matola and 1982 Maseru raids against ANC residences. —

- Ethnic Battalions: units stationed near the borders of neighbouring
  states and composed of black soldiers of the same language/cultural
  group as the people of the neighbouring state. These are ready for
  raids into those territories and to support puppet groups. _

- Puppet groups, such as UNIA the MNR and the LLA, purporting to be
  indigenous "resistance movements" and indeed drawing recruits from
  the country concerned, but supplied, led and directed by the South
  African Defence Force.

However, since the Total Strategy envisages the mobilisation of economic,
political and psycho-socio as well as military resources, considerable
effort has been devoted to examining ways in which economic links in
particular can be used to further the apartheid state's strategic
objectives in the region. In the terminology of apartheid strategists, such
links can be used either as "incentive levers" or" techniques of
persuasion" on the one hand, or as " disincentive levers" or "techniques of
coercion" on the other. Among such possible incentive levers are the
offer of aid and cooperation in joint infrastructural projects to those
states willing to collaborate with Pretoria.This was orignally to have been
channeled through the institutions of the Constellation of States, and in

9

particular through the proposed Southern African Development Bank. However, other institutional forms, such as the Southern African Customs Union and straight bilateral channels, have also been used as a means of passing on "incentives".

At the level of economic "techniques of coercion" it is worth once again citing the paper of Geldenhuys. Published in early 1981 (before the extensive application of such tactics in practice), this paper had as its objective to recommend ways in which "South Africa (can) use its economic links for strategic purposes."(6) Among the measures recommended for consideration were the following (all of which have subsequently been applied or threatened):-

1) "Limiting or prohibiting the use of South Africa's railway and harbour facilities for the export of goods from black states. There are, needless to say, numerous ways of limiting the use of these facilities eg by manipulating the availability of railway trucks or berthing facilities in harbours, or harsher measures such as imposing surcharges on goods transported, or officially announcing restrictions on the amount of goods that may be exported via South Africa".

(Later in 1981 Zimbabwean exports were subjected to just such a manipulation of the availability of trucks and berthing facilities.)

2) "Limiting or banning the importation of labour from black states."

(While the reasons for the reduction in the numbers and proportion of "foreign" migrant workers in the South African mining industry are complex, it is no accident that the country most affected has been Mozambique. Moreover, the threat of a reduction in the numbers recruited from eg Lesotho has been made on a number of occassions.)

3) "Regulating the access to and movement through South Africa of nationals from black states. Without going to the extreme of prohibiting entry into the Republic, the authorities have various means open to them to make access more difficult, eg by deliberate delays at border posts."

(This was applied against Lesotho in 1983.)

10

4) "Placing curbs on the imports of goods from black states...(or) regulating the export of goods to black states. The two most crucial items are undoubtedly food and oil, but machinery, spares and various other goods could also be added."

(Zambia was subjected to precisely such action in respect of maize imports in the period immediatly prior to the Lancaster House negotiations in 1979, as was Zimbabwe in respect of oil imports in a crude attempt to force it into Minister to Minister negotiations following the sabotage of the Beira-Mutare pipeline in 1982.)

5) "Curtailing or terminating the provision of technical expertise to these states, eg in the operation of Maputo harbour."(7)

(' officials working for South African undertakings were temporarily withdrawn in 1981 shortly after the Matola raid).

One important point stressed by Geldenhuys is that if South Africa were to be seen to be openly applying economic coerc'on against other states, it would at least in principle be more vulnerable to calls for sanctions against it. For this reason some "explanation" or "justification" for such actions in terms other than attempts to exert pressure is suggested and indeed, in practice, some such explanation has been proffered on each occassion that these techniques have been applied.

The Application of the Total Strategy

Three phases in the application of this strategy can usefully be identified.

The first ran from the end of 1978 until mid 1980. This phase saw the launching and promotion of the Constellation of States proposal. During this phase, in November 1979, the first of several meetings between officials of the Botha regime and leading capitalists took place. Here Botha called for support from the "private sector" for a proposed Southern African Development Bank to finance the infrastructural projects which

11

would be the key to the establishment of the constellation.

According to press reports at the time (8), apartheid strategists had drawn up a schedule for incorporating independent states in the region into the proposed constellation. The key to the whole project was to have been Zimbabwe. If Zimbabwe could be brought to an internationally recognised independence under a government led by Muzorewa, it was calculated that it would be a ready adherent to the Constellation. With Zimbabwe secured it was felt that the two most conservative states with already existing strong economic links with South Africa - Malawi and Swaziland - would easily be attracted. This would virtually compel the other two members of the Southern African Customs Union - Lesotho and Botswana- also to join. Zaire could then be persuaded to affiliate, and that this would put strong pressure on Zambia to associate as well. Apart from Namibia, which apartheid strategists were then hoping to bring to a Muzorewa-type "independence" under the puppet Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, this left three states - Angola, Mozambique and Tanzania. According to these sources, these three countries were not really considered candidates for membership of the constellation under their existing governments, but apartheid strategists were reasonably hopeful that these governments could be changed in due course.

In the event, of course, the constellation project failed to materialise. There were two main factors responsible for this. First was the victory of ZANU(PF) in the Zimbabwean independence elections. ZANU(PF)'s defeat of Muzorewa put paid to any hopes that Zimbabwe would become the key to the establishment of a South African dominated constellation in the region. Instead independent Zimbabwe became a member of the Front Line States alliance.

The other factor which sealed the fate of any hopes for the early establishment of a constellation, was the formation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). SADCC was officially established in April 1980, although the proposal had been discussed at a

12

meeting of the Front Line States in Arusha in 1979. SADCC defined its principal strategic objective as "a reduction of external dependence and in particular dependence on the Republic of South Africa"(9). SADCC documents identify three levels of transformation that will be necessary in order to achieve this: first a transformation at the level of the economies of each of the individual member states; second a transformation in the relationships between SADCC member states; and third a transformation in the relationship between the nine as a group and the outside world. To bring about these transformations SADCC has launched a multi-lateral development programme, concentrating on infrastructural development particularly transport (seen to be indispensable for a restructuring of relations between the nine) and, food security. Other areas of SADCC activity include semi-arid agricultural development, energy policy, industrial cooperation and training.

SADCC clearly was not established merely to frustrate South African regional policy. A reduction in external dependence and a radical change in the historical patterns of accumulation in the Southern African region are the sine qua non for the implementation of any development programme capable of satisfying the needs of the masses of the region. However it is important to note that the SADCC programme represented a challenge not only to the constellation, but also to one of the more immediate objectives of South Africa's regional policy - the maintainance and even deepening of economic ties with independent states. Moreover, SADCC succeeded in incorporating all the independent states in the region, including the more conservative. The establishment of SADCC and the inclusion of all independent states in the region thus represented an important defeat for South African strategy.

One immediate effect of this was that when the Apartheid regime eventually established the various constellation related apparatuses, these were confined in their operations, at least initially, to the so-called "inner constellation" - "white" South Africa and the "independent" bantustans. The so-called "wider constellation" was deferred to the future.

More importantly, the stalling of the constellation initiative inaugurated a second phase of South African action in the region lasting roughly from mid 1980 until the end of 1981. This involved the application of destabilisation tactics in a fairly generalised and indiscriminate manner. The period saw, firstly, increased military aggression against independent states. There were numerous large scale invasions of Angolan territory; a raid against ANC residences in Matola; a substantial increase in the level of activity by puppet movements (the so-called Mozambican National Resistance Movement - MNR -and Lesotho Liberation Army - LLA - in particular); and threats to turn Swaziland into a "second front", backed up by a number of operations by South African agents against refugees.

In addition the period saw the first major attempts to apply economic "techniques of coercion". South African Transport Services withdrew a number of locomotives on hire to Zimbabwean railways and created blockages for Zimbabwean exports passing through the South African ports and railways system. At the same time the apartheid regime threatened to cancel a long standing trade preference agreement under which Zimbabwean manufactured goods were admitted to the South African market on favourable terms. Although in faithful adherence to the advice of their consultants, apartheid spokesmen offered various "justifications" for these actions (eg having to give preference to the movement of South African produced maize) there is no doubt that they were a "strategic application of economic links". More precisely, such steps were a response to a number of limited measures taken by Zimbabwe to eliminate various priveleges previously given to South African - as distinct from other foreign - investors, as well as a general warning to Zimbabwe that attempts to reduce its ties with South African capitalism could lead to costly retaliation.

Mozambique too found itself subjected to this type of action. Shortly after the Matola raid , South African technicians were withdrawn from Maputo harbour, and for some time South African Transport Services refused to send railway wagons into Mozambique. Once again various "justifications" were offered in a thinly disguised attempt to conceal from the outside world the fact that these actions were in reality a means of putting further pressure on Mozambique.

This policy of generalised destabilisation was succeeded by a new phase beginning in 1982 in which the apartheid regime has attempted to act more selectively in the region. This is the case firstly at the level of objectives. Here it appears that the apartheid regime has concentrated on trying to achieve two immediate objectives. The first is its demand that states in the region act on its behalf to limit both the numbers and activities of ANC members in their territories. The regime's Foreign Minister has said that South Africa was determined to force the African National Congress out of all neighbouring countries: "Out - they must get out. There is no compromise on this one" (10). The intensified action in pursuit of this demand is a direct consequence of the deepening internal crisis in South Africa and particularly the advances made in the armed struggle since 1977. In response the apartheid regime has attempted to internationalise its own crisis in a number of ways. For some time the regime has sought to present social struggles and conflicts which arise out of contradictions internal to South African capitalism as the product of external and more particularly, Soviet intervention. By doing so it clearly hopes to draw the western powers into a more active defence of apartheid. More recently however a further dimension to such attempts to internationalise the South African struggle has surfaced. The regime now appears to seek to compel states in the region to place such pressure on the ANC that the organisation is forced to reduce the scale of its politico-military activities.

Apartheid strategists have sought as a second objective to maintain exsit-

15

ing economic links and frustrate the efforts of the states in the region to reduce their economic dependence on South Africa. This has involved both the offer of greater economic "incentives" and various actions, including direct economic sabotage, to impede attempts by SADCC countries to forge alternatives.

In addition to greater selectivity at the level of objectives, since 1982 it also appears that some attempt has been made to discriminate betweeen states in the region in the application of particular tactics. The apartheid strategists appear to have divided the independent states of the region into three broad categories. The first consists of the more conservative states, seen as real or potential collaborators. The second includes those states considered to be the most vulnerable to pressure, whilst the third embraces those states whose political systems and development strategies are seen to constitute the most fundamental challenge to apartheid capitalism.

The states in the first category have been offered various concessions with the aim of either encouraging them to deepen their economic links with South African capitalism or of rewarding them for "good behaviour". The most striking example here has been the case of Swaziland. Among the incentives offered and accepted by the Swazi regime have been assistance in building a railway line through Swazi territory linking the Eastern Transvaal with the port of Richards Bay, and a supplementary R50 million payment under the customs union agreeement. The controversial offer to cede the KaNgwane bantustan and part of the KwaZulu bantustan to Swaziland has been enthusiastically embraced by the dominant political faction in Swaziland, and remains under negotiation. In return the Swazi regime has clamped down severely on the ANC. It has also indicated that a consider-able part of its sugar and other exports will be diverted from the exist-ing link connecting Swaziland to the port of Maputo to the planned new route linking the Kingdom to Richards Bay. Apart from their impact on the ANC and the weakening of Swaziland's commitment to the SADCC principle of

reducing links with South African capitalism, these measures have also had a severe political impact within Swaziland itself. The conservative Swazi ruling class has been split into two violently squabbling factions. The most reactionary of these now appears top have established its dominance through drastic measures which seem to have undermined the very ideological framework of Swazi "traditionalism" on which its rule has hitherto rested.

On the other hand, the states in the second and third categories have been singled out and subjected to an intensified assault. This has now become the prinicpal and most visible form of South African action in the region. The three states which have borne the brunt of these assaults are Lesotho, Angola and Mozambique.

In the case of Lesotho, South African aggression seems to have been partly directed at trying to force the government to crack down on South African refugees and expel ANC members. The South African regime appears also to be trying to force Lesotho to negotiate with the adminstrators of the Transkei bantustan. Moreover there is some evidence that Pretoria believes that by destabilising the Jonathan government - through a combination of LLA attacks, direct South African military action and economic pressures such as border closures - the pro-South African Basotho Democratic Party led by Charles Mofeli can be brought to power.

In the case of Angola and Mozambique however, there appear to be further considerations. Apart from the considerable political and other support which these states give to the ANC and SWAPO, Angola and Mozambique are the two states in the region ruled by Marxist-Leninist parties, committed to a process of socialist transformation. As such, they pose a direct ideological challenge and potential alternative to apartheid capitalism. Moreover, apart from being one of the prime movers of SADCC, Mozambique is also of strategic importance to the realisation of the SADCC project. The country's ports and harbours offer the only realistic alternative to continued dependence on South African transport facilities for many of the SADCC states.

17

Angola and Mozambique have thus been particular victims of the South African assault. In the case of Angola this has involved repeated large scale invasions by conventional forces of the southern provinces, backed up by an attempt to foist a UNITA presence onto the populations of these areas. In the case of Mozambique there has been an intensification of activity by the Pretoria-sponsored MNR, numerous incidents of sabotage against strategic transport installations by members of the South African Defence Force, and the May 1983 air attack on Matola/Liberdade, and an attack on the office of the ANC Representative. Quite what the Pretoria regime is hoping to acheive through these actions is a matter of speculation. However, an article in the <u>Financial Mail</u> clearly based on discussions with sources in the SADF, suggests that there was some debate among "planners" over this(11). "Hardliners" appeared to believe that it would be possible to overthrow the FRELIMO government in the near future, whilst others believed that this would be difficult and would in any case have disruptive effects on South Africa itself. Destabilisation tactics should, according to this school of thought, be directed at weakening the economy so as to reinforce the propaganda offensive alleging that socialism equals economic chaos and deprivation, and also at disrupting SADCC projects. Although it is difficult to be sure, it would appear that, partly as a result of pressure from certain western powers who fear that Mozambique might be driven further into the "soviet camp", it is some version of the second alternative which currently dominates South African policy towards Mozambique.

Conclusions

In assessing the results of the application of the above described measures to date, it should be noted at the outset that they have achieved a number of "postive results" from the standpoint of the South African ruling class. Swaziland has been persuaded to act as a South African policing agent against ANC refugees, and more recently, Lesotho has been forced to agree to expel many refusgees from its territory. Pretoria's

18

policies have also succeeded in causing considerable disruption in Angola and Mozambique.

However, although the Total Strategy originally envisaged the mobilisation of a wide range of "resources" and the application of a "sophisticated" package of incentives and threats, in practice these results have been achieved increasingly through what The Economist described as a "flexible and amoral" application of 'military and economic power"(12). This points to both the strength and weakness of South Africa's regional policy. The apartheid state has at its disposal vastly greater economic and military resources than the independent states of the region. According to World Bank figures, South Africa's Gross Domestic Product of $52.920 million in 1979 was more than three times that of the nine SADCC members combined ($17.679 million). Moreover, as already indicated, South Africa's military budget is greater than the GDP of Zimbabwe. Its capacity to continue to exert "pressure" on states in the region thus cannot be in doubt.

On the other hand however, it is important to note that with a few significant exceptions, South Africa's "successes" have not been achieved through winning the ideological consent of the states in the region. The "constellation" proposals failed to attract even the most conservative, pro-capitalist regimes. Moreover, while "incentives" have been a factor in some cases (notably that of Swaziland) the apartheid regime's "successes" in terms of immediate objectives have generally been achieved through the application of coercion. Pretoria has thus not succeeded in building up a ring of allies or even willing collaborators to replace its lost "buffer states".

This point has been recognised by a number of leading academics with close links to the Botha regime. Several of these - including Deon Geldenhuys cited above - have now become critical of the recent direction of regional policy. They argue that the "sophisticated" approach envisaged in the original Total Strategy (with which they agree) has given way to a tendency to resort to "military quick fix solutions" not located within a broader

19

strategy. The broader strategic vision has become blurred while the application of diplomatic techniques and incentives has, by and large, been a failure. A continuation of this trend they argue will lead to an escalation of the conflict in the region and an even more widespread resort to destabilisation tactics. Whilst this would be costly for the "target states", they argue that it would also carry "formidable risks" for the apartheid state. "Outside forces" may be drawn in and "a wider conflict would severely affect foreign investment and destroy South Africa's vision of a Constellation of Southern African States". To avoid such an outcome, these academic advocate a more effective use of diplomacy and economic action as called for in the original formaulations of the Total Stategy(13).

What the impact of such criticisms from within the heart of the South African foreign policy establishment might be is at present a matter for speculation. However it is important to note that these views are by no means shared by all strategic studies "experts" who support the regime. A number of counter-insurgency speicialists have argued a contrary position. This has been bluntly formulated by a senior member of the South African Institute of International Affairs at the University of the Witwatersrand, who argued in the official journal of the South African Defence Force as follows:

"All terrorist concentrations threatening peace and security in SWA/ Namibia or South Africa regardless of where they are lcoated must be attacked and destroyed. So-called diplomatic considerations must not be allowed to interfere – that is the road to defeat....Standing on the defensive is not enough. The ANC must be attacked abroad. Attacks like that on the ANC headquarters in Maputo (sic) and Maseru must be repeated – again and again....Containment is not the aim. Destruction is"(14).

Similarly, The Economist article reports that "the military pragmatists" currently directing South Africa's regional policy are convinced "that no concessions should be made to an enemy until absolutely necessary". They argue that politicians and diplomats had recently been giving too much away"(15).

Moreover while the academics' critique correctly points out that South Africa has succeeded "in throwing its weight around the sub-continent...but not in ruling it" (in the words of The Economist), the fact that their analysis is located within the framework of South African ruling class perspectives places severe limitations on their capactiy to explain the reason for this state of affairs. In particular, they are unable to recognise that there is a fundamental contradiction bewtween the interests of the people of Southern Africa and those of South Africa's capitalist ruling class. Thus in the case of the progressive and socialist states in the region, their refusal to collaborate with the apartheid state is explained not by a "failure" of South African diplomacy, but rather by the incompatability of the advancement of the interests of their peoples with the maintenance of the staus quo in the region. It is thus unlikely that for these states the future holds much prospect of anything other than increased aggression by the apartheid regime.

However this is not necessarily true for all independent states in the region. The SADCC alliance consists of states with widely differing class characters. If a more "sophisticated" South African regional policy were to emerge, it could be expected to take this fact into account to a greater extent than hitherto. A "package" of well directed threats and "incentives" may succeed in making some headway with some of the more conservative and pro-capitalist regimes - as the limited experience of the case of Swaziland seems to suggest. In short, the countries of Southern Africa may be about to experience at the regional level an attempt to apply the well know technique of divide and rule.

Notes and references.

1. See R. Davies and D. O'Meara, "The State of Analysis of the Southern

21

African Region: Issues raised by South African Strategy", Review of African Political Economy, 29, 1983.

2. See S. Nolutshungu, South Africa in Africa, Manchester University Press, 1975.

3. Cited ibid, p276.

4. Department of Defence, White Paper on Defence, 1977.

5. D. Geldenhuys, "Some Strategic Implications of Regional Economic Relationships for the Republic of South Africa", ISSUP Strategic Review, January 1981, p 20.

6. Ibid. p 17.

7. Ibid. pp 22-4.

8. The Star, 20/11/1979.

9. See, SADCC, Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation - A Strategy Paper, Maputo, 1980, p 1.

10. Rand Daily Mail, 13/10/1983.

11. 16/7/1982.

12. 15/7/1983.

13. See the series of articles in The Star, 22-25 March, 1983.

14. R.K.Campbell in Paratus, April 1983.

15. Loc. cit.