

Chapter 1

Introduction to the study: motivation, methodology and structure

Introduction

When the Cold War ended in 1989 and both external and internal pressures brought about the end of apartheid in South Africa, the isolation from the rest of the world that South Africa had experienced up until that point began to diminish. A new, democratic South Africa emerged in 1994 and with it an international community willing to back the country as the supreme moral authority on the African continent. It was in this environment that South Africa had to establish and implement its new foreign policy goals (Barber and Vickers, 2001:343).

From 1945 to 1988, the principal aim of South African foreign policy was to preserve white control in the country. To this end both South Africa's domestic and foreign policy were shaped to ensure security of the state of South Africa within the international arena (Barber and Barratt, 1990:1-2). Since domestic policies tend to shape external relations and vice versa, it is not surprising that the new African National Congress (ANC) government in 1994 set out to promote values of human rights and democracy (the same values pursued by the ANC's liberation struggle during the apartheid years) at home and abroad.

Barber (2000:65) asserts that the international community saw the new (post-1994) South Africa as assuming a number of important roles. Firstly, it was hoped that South Africa's economy would act as a "dynamo" for the rest of Africa. Secondly, it was believed that South Africa could revitalise multilateral organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU) – now the African Union (AU). Thirdly, South Africa was designated as the leading peacemaker and peacekeeper on the continent.

South Africa was declared a success in the peaceful resolution of a conflict situation and this immediately prompted the international community to anoint it as the continental leader in the search for political stability (Mtimkulu, 1996: Internet source). It became "an example to others and a pillar of strength in Africa" (Barber, 2000:65). In an article written by Mandela entitled "South Africa's Future Foreign Policy", he declared that Africa and especially southern Africa "commands a special priority in our foreign policy". He added that one of South Africa's primary goals was that "the

concerns and interests of the continent of Africa should be reflected in (South Africa's) foreign policy choices" (Mandela, 1993: Internet source). Mandela also asserted in addresses made at the OAU meeting of Heads of State and Government in June 1994 and at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in October 1994 that Africa is inextricably a part of South Africa's destiny (Mandela, 1993: Internet source). He affirmed that South Africa would fulfil its role in helping the UN to further its purposes of ensuring that democracy, peace and prosperity would prevail throughout the globe (Mandela, 1994a:6-7).

In his address on South Africa's foreign policy objectives and challenges in June 2001, the Director-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Mr Siphosiso Pityana, declared that South Africa's vision remains to strive for peace, stability, democracy and development on the African continent (Pityana, 2001:35). South Africa's political transition and its moral status in southern Africa following the 1994 elections enabled it to "punch above its weight" in its foreign diplomatic relations (Nel, Taylor and Van der Westhuizen, 2001:2). Essentially, South Africa has assumed a leadership role in many multilateral undertakings, globally, on the continent as well as in the sub-region of southern Africa. Notably, South Africa has chaired SADC (1996-1999), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (1998-1999), the Commonwealth (1999-2002) and the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) (1998-1999). It is evident that South Africa has publicly taken on the role of leader in numerous multilateral endeavours.

However, South Africa's promised role as a leader in peace promotion as well as Mandela's personal stature placed a heavy burden on South Africa's shoulders (Barber and Vickers, 2001:338). In addition South Africa's unilateral undertakings have had mixed success in terms of its foreign policy goals.

Mandela has become a world figure and icon of peace and personal tolerance. Regarded as South Africa's "political miracle", Mandela's handling of the country's transition to democracy established him as a peacemaker and made him a symbol of non-violence, diplomacy and democratic achievement (Vale and Maseko, 1998:276). Supported by an immense following in the international arena, Mandela's leadership and South Africa's emergence from isolation suggested that the country was in the best position possible to fulfil its goals on the continent (Johnston, 2001:11). As this thesis will explain, human rights and regional integration both became key goals in South Africa's foreign policy from the early 1990s onwards (Black and Wilson, 2004:28).

Mandela (1993, Internet source) declared that in future foreign relations, the protection of human rights would be the core concern with South Africa ready and willing to play a role so as to aid “peace and prosperity”. The ANC’s foreign policy document of 1993 stated a need for “efforts to canonise human rights in our international relations” as well as the “necessity for a worldwide human rights campaign”. Such aspirations are easy to propose, but their implementation is often far more difficult. Moreover it is widely held that South Africa’s foreign policy since 1994 has “lacked coherence and consistency” (Johnston, 2001:11).

For example, Mandela was criticised internationally because he believed that quiet diplomacy and arranged visits would enable South Africa to exert its influence over the Abacha regime in Nigeria in 1995. Unfortunately such tactics did not have the desired effect and Nigerian activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists were executed ([Africa South of the Sahara](#), 2001; Barber and Vickers, 2001; Kakwenzire, 2000; Venter, 1997).

When Mandela’s successor, Thabo Mbeki, became President in 1999, his strong stance as a “champion” of Africa was built on the foundation established by Mandela, but Mbeki further refined South Africa’s foreign policy to focus on South–South cooperation, the African Renaissance and regional integration (Barber and Vickers, 2001:361). Mbeki’s views on African development, democratisation, peaceful resolution to conflict, and political and socio-economic integration have been quite apparent in his intensive championing of the African Renaissance, the “African century” and the AU. Yet Mbeki has also come under intense scrutiny and wide criticism over his soft attitude towards Zimbabwe.

1.1. The concept of “diplomacy”

Cornago-Prieto (1999:560) contends that the primary role of diplomacy over its vast history has been the peaceful settlement of disputes. While diplomacy is generally defined as “the conduct of international relations through negotiation and dialogue” and other means capable of encouraging peaceful interaction among states, coercion and threats have nevertheless also played a role in diplomacy.

Davenport (2003:18) argues that the end of the Cold War and its “predictable structure for international relations” ushered in an era for new kinds of interaction between states. The changing environment included a rapid development in technology and quicker communication methods, the

development of worldwide media networks such as Cable News Network (CNN, which was established in 1985), the globalisation of the world economy and the spread of democracy around the globe. Therefore, contrary to the Cold War period where economic and military power were the primary indicators of international leadership, suddenly the power of communication as well as the manner in which ideas were marketed emerged in the global arena. Farnsworth (1999:238) adds that with such an array of different actors in the international arena, communication between all these actors is of the utmost importance. The most widespread form of interaction between international actors is through the rules of diplomacy.

Successful diplomacy requires that compromises be made and those engaged in diplomatic endeavours need to understand and accept that the outcomes will not be perfect since obligations are imposed on both sides. Quainton (2003:9) defines diplomacy as “the art of persuading others through a patient process of give-and-take to adopt measures congruent or consistent with one’s own national objectives” and Muller (1999:585) adds that diplomacy is the peaceful implementation of foreign policy as well as the employment of official representatives at various levels.

A potentially complicating factor in foreign policy occurs when it is human rights oriented. A foreign policy that is based on human rights implies an open-ended commitment to intervene, by force if necessary. However, this kind of foreign policy is regarded with suspicion throughout the world and particularly in Africa where the preservation of state sovereignty and the doctrine of non-intervention are imperative (Evans, 1999a:12). Therefore, Suttner (1996:16) asks what a state can actually do in the pursuit of its foreign policy commitments? Does the state break off diplomatic relations? Institute sanctions? Engage in multilateral action? Speak out against human rights violations? What diplomatic paths are available to states in such circumstances?

Diplomacy can be categorised into bilateral diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, coercive diplomacy, preventive diplomacy and diplomatic negotiation (Cornago-Prieto, 1999:560-563). Coercive diplomacy refers to the threat or actual use of force (although limited) to persuade an opponent to retreat from an action considered threatening (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:386). Preventive diplomacy can be defined as “...action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disparities from escalating into conflict and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur” (Solomon, 2002:148). Kegley and Wittkopf (1999:441) explain preventive diplomacy to be the management of emerging threats by “swiftly demonstrating intentions and capabilities”.

In 1994, Pretoria's Ambassador to the UN stated that it was South Africa's belief that "the fundamental objective of (its) regional policy should be preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and humanitarian assistance" (quoted by Solomon, 2002:148). In 2000, Foreign Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma further stressed the need for preventive diplomacy. She argued, "it is wrong to think that all conflicts should be resolved through the barrel of the gun. Political solutions should be explored at all times". Therefore, in terms of actions taken it could be said that the new South Africa's foreign policy goals, in so far as regional policy is concerned, have centred primarily on preventive diplomacy (Solomon, 2002:148). However, while certain writers on South Africa's foreign relations since 1994 have used the term "quiet diplomacy" interchangeably with preventive diplomacy (see for example, Solomon, 2002) other writers refer to South Africa's diplomatic endeavours as "quiet" diplomacy only (see for example, Barber and Vickers, 2001; Hughes and Mills, 2003; Venter, 1997). Furthermore, no generally accepted definition of quiet diplomacy exists.

Nolutshungu (1976:230) contends that governments do not come into existence "fixed on the world of diplomacy" but are rather characterised by their desire to base external policies on domestic objectives and concerns. Therefore, it follows that diplomacy employed by presidents and governments will be shaped according to the foreign policy objectives of the leaders in question. As there is no comprehensive definition of quiet diplomacy, this study will attempt to develop a definition of the concept based on how Mandela and Mbeki both chose to engage with the term "diplomacy" while in office, as well as the connotations and denotations associated with the term and as emphasised by both presidents in remarks made and actions pursued by them.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of this study is to critically analyse and explain the new South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy, initially with Mandela's handling of the Nigerian situation in 1995 and then currently in terms of Mbeki's dealings with Zimbabwe from 2000 to the present. Barber and Vickers (2001:339) have already noted that Mandela's use of quiet diplomacy in Nigeria in 1995 failed dismally and furthermore solicited vast criticism of Mandela himself, with many accusing him of appeasing Nigeria's military dictators and thereby abdicating his moral authority (Matloff, 1995:1). Similarly, Mbeki has come under fire from the international community and domestic political parties alike for his use of quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe (The Citizen, 22/05/02; Time, 18 February 2002:57).

Specific issues to be addressed include the extent to which South Africa's commitment to quiet diplomacy, which has often been criticised as being too "quiet" or too "soft", has been successful or unsuccessful with regards to Nigeria and Zimbabwe and the implications thereof in terms of South Africa's power and status on the continent.

1.3. Literature review

Although numerous scholars have investigated South Africa's international relations and interactions both with the rest of the world as well as on the African continent (for example, Van Aardt, 1996; Carlsnaes and Muller, 1997; Vale and Maseko 1998; Strelau, 1999; Mills, 2000a; Barber and Vickers, 2001; Broderick, Burford and Freer, 2001; Mills, 2001; Stols, 2002; Landsberg, 2004), there has been no comprehensive publication or comparison made of South African presidents Mandela and Mbeki's use of quiet diplomacy with Nigeria in 1995 and Zimbabwe since 2000, respectively.

Should South Africa wish to achieve its aforementioned aims of promoting peace and democracy throughout Africa, then the manner in which South Africa is viewed by African states and the rest of the world will be important in terms of the influence South Africa wishes to wield. For this reason the study will also address South Africa's structural and relational power and the impact this power has on the country's ability to succeed in its foreign policy aims. For a study on South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument with Nigeria and Zimbabwe, it is evident that South Africa's position and prestige as well as power will play a vital role. Such an assessment of South Africa's position on the continent will be developed largely from the theories on power provided by Holsti (1995) and Nye (1993; 2003).

Barber and Vickers (2001:344) and Van der Westhuizen (1998:436) assert that although South Africa is semiperipheral in the world system, it is regionally dominant. South Africa's increasing mediatory roles in conflicts the world over since 1994 indicate a new policy that reflects the dynamics of a middle power, with the capacity to exercise that power. By definition, middle powers are neither great nor small powers in the global arena and generally tend to engage in diplomacy where mediation, consensus building, conflict resolution and dedication to international institution building are characteristics. Given this style of foreign policy behaviour, middle powers are often branded as "Boy Scouts" or "goody-two-shoes" states (Barber and Vickers, 2001:344).

Whereas Mandela was responsible for leading South Africa through the transition phase, since 1999 Mbeki has had to manage this fledgling democracy with enormous expectations from the rest of the world for him to deliver (Stols, 2002:33). Hawthorne (1999, Internet source) asserts that while Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years, becoming the conscience of anti-apartheid rhetoric, Mbeki, in exile, studied economics at the University of Sussex and lobbied in international diplomatic circles for the ANC's cause. Therefore, while Mandela will always be remembered as more of a statesman than as a politician, Mbeki is regarded as a more pragmatic President with a background in economics.

The theoretical framework within which the case studies of South Africa's conduct *vis-à-vis* Nigeria and Zimbabwe will be investigated will be underscored by a thorough examination of the literature on diplomacy and quiet diplomacy and its role in foreign policy theory. It is a truism that interaction between states is as old as the state itself and that states have always tried to influence each other's actions in one way or another (Van Niekerk, 2002:218). Foreign policy consists of the actions that states undertake while reacting to changes in their external environment (see Lauren, 1979; Nye, 1993; Holsti, 1995; Cornago-Prieto, 1999; Farnsworth, 1999; Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999; Muller, 1999; Van der Waldt, 2002; Van Niekerk, 2002).

The theoretical point of departure for this thesis is rooted in traditional realism and therefore is grounded in an analysis of South Africa's power politics and pursuit of its national interests. In addition, the structural constraints of the international system on South Africa's ability to translate its power into effective practice will also be considered (See Heywood, 1997). Nevertheless, certain aspects of neo-idealism cannot be ignored given South Africa's very public emphasis on morality and respect for human rights.

1.4. Research method

This study is a qualitative analysis based on foreign policy documents, books, published articles, reports, newspapers and news magazines, papers and statements and speeches by the South African Ministers of Foreign Affairs as well as former South African President Mandela and current President Mbeki.

1.5. Research structure

Chapter 1 of the study has described the topic, purpose and motivation for the research as well as the methodology employed for the purpose of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical literature on instruments of foreign policy and conceptualises the term “diplomacy”. The relationship between power and diplomacy is analysed, as are the different types of diplomacy. A list of quiet diplomatic indicators is drawn up to provide the theoretical basis for application throughout the rest of the study.

Apart from its usefulness in explaining context, historical analysis is also beneficial in that it helps to “illuminate the present” (Holsti, 1995:23). As such, it is important to explore the historical context of South Africa’s relationship with Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Nigeria, in Chapter 3.

The fourth chapter uses the theoretical framework on quiet diplomacy provided in Chapter 2 to analyse the Mandela government’s response to the Nigerian crisis.

Chapter 5 investigates Mbeki’s use of quiet diplomacy in South Africa’s relationship with Zimbabwe (while once again referring to the quiet diplomacy indicators listed in Chapter 2).

Chapter 6 concludes the study by providing a summary of the main points researched and evaluates the success or failure of South Africa’s use of quiet diplomacy in the two cases discussed and the implications this success or failure have for South Africa’s influential position in Africa.

Chapter 2

Conceptualising diplomacy

Introduction

In this chapter, the term “diplomacy” will be conceptualised as an instrument of foreign policy. The actors involved in the diplomatic process will also be investigated. The influence of power on diplomacy and on the success of diplomatic interactions between states will then be discussed. This will be followed by an exploration of the various types of “loud” diplomacy to provide a benchmark against which quiet diplomacy can be measured and defined. The chapter concludes by establishing a number of key characteristics and indicators of quiet diplomacy that will be investigated in further chapters on South Africa’s bilateral involvement in Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

2.1. The instruments of foreign policy

Holsti (1995:18;250) defines foreign policy as a state’s actions to “sustain or alter a current object, condition or practice in the external environment” and the domestic circumstances under which these actions are developed. Barber and Vickers (2001:333) add that foreign policy acts as a bridge between a state’s domestic and international environments since a state projects its own interests and values outward and the international community responds with either support or pressure. Essentially, then, foreign policy goals and strategies are the decisions made by the governing authorities of a state in the name of that state in order to realise international goals (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2002:569). However, to limit foreign policy simply to a state’s international activities is to exclude a wider variety of actor involvement in international affairs, such as Richard Holbrooke’s mediation in Kosovo in 1998-1999 and Mandela’s attempts to save Ken Saro-Wiwa from the gallows in Nigeria in 1995. As such, any definition of foreign policy would have to include more than simply states or governing authorities of states as actors. Hence foreign policy can be defined as “the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations” (Hill, 2003:3).

There are many different instruments of foreign policy that a state can employ in pursuit of its goals. Holsti (1995:vi-vii) lists these instruments as propaganda, military intervention, clandestine action, weapons and war, political influence, economic rewards and coercion and diplomacy or diplomatic

bargaining. Propaganda refers to the communications used in order to manipulate people's thoughts, emotions or actions (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:578). Governments purposefully attempt, through their diplomats, to influence the attitudes of foreign populations in the hope that these foreign groups will in turn influence the behaviour and decisions of their own governments. For example, in 1974 the military junta in Chile hired an American public relations firm based in New York to try to devise programmes that would alter the American leadership's extremely negative view of Chile's government (Holsti, 1995:152).

Intervention refers to any activity that intentionally seeks to change the political leadership or constitutional structure of a foreign state. This intervention is usually carried out without the consent of the legally recognised authorities of the state in question. Clandestine actions or subversive tactics can also be undertaken in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives. In such instances a state does not make coercive military threats or send diplomatic missions, but instead sponsors riots and strikes in the foreign target state, creates political scandals, or organises, trains and arms a group of foreign dissidents to engage in guerrilla warfare against their governments. An example of clandestine activity occurred between 1970 and 1973 when the United States (US) (hoping to quash any possible communist activity from South American revolutionaries in Chile) used economic embargoes and subversive economic tactics such as refusing credit and loans to Chile in an effort to instigate further instability in that country. In addition, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) secretly attempted to organise a *coup d'état* in Chile (Holsti, 1995:194).

Another instrument of foreign policy includes the use of force, either through war or by parading weapons. By conspicuously displaying military capability (as was the case when India and Pakistan both tested nuclear weapons in 1998) states can make diplomatic threats credible in negotiations (Holsti, 1995:194).

Economic rewards and coercion, that is, the manipulation of economic transactions, can also be used for a variety of political purposes often in conjunction with diplomatic efforts (Holsti, 1995:167). Such was the case in 1985, during the height of apartheid in South Africa, when US corporations had major investments in the country. US President Ronald Reagan adopted a policy of soft diplomacy by using constructive engagement with South Africa's white government. However, the US Congress, which disagreed with the Reagan administration's quiet approach, legislated harsh mandatory sanctions against South Africa (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2001:539). It is also important to note that sanctions, which isolated South Africa as a pariah state, were among the principal reasons

for then South African President F.W. De Klerk's decision to release Mandela from prison in 1990. Although the above-mentioned instruments of foreign policy are all significant in international relations, only diplomacy will be comprehensively analysed in this study.

Feltham (1982:1) suggests that the main purpose of any state in its relations with another state is to influence and manage such relations to maximise its own benefits. Foreign policy is undertaken by two groups: actors and agents. Generally, foreign policy formulation is a national function and as such is the duty of the politician or actor, whereas the administering of international relations as well as the managing of different foreign policy objectives is the diplomat's or agent's task (Hill, 2003: 51-95).

If governments wish to achieve objectives and defend their interests, then they need to communicate with those parties whose actions and behaviour they hope to deter, alter or reinforce (Holsti, 1995:10). Modern technology has made such communications easier with press conferences, political rallies and banquets, among other channels, offering opportunities to government officials to make statements directed to domestic audiences and foreign governments and publics alike. Nevertheless, Holsti (1995:130) points out that most official efforts to influence others are attempted via formal diplomatic channels by direct communication between heads of state or government and foreign ministers. Therefore, as Farnsworth (1999:238) contends, "the most commonly used means of contact between international actors are the rules and traditions of diplomacy".

2.2. Conceptualising diplomacy

It is generally agreed that diplomacy is an instrument of foreign policy whereby those engaging in diplomacy shape, implement and protect their own nation's interests¹ or foreign policy objectives [which are wide-ranging and can include political, economic, national, trade, aid, human rights, arms control, scientific, cultural, and academic enrichment (Muller, 2000: Internet source)] by structuring and managing international relationships (Barston, 1997:1; Farnsworth, 1999:23; Quainton, 2003:9). The process of diplomacy² itself is vast where gathering information, engendering goodwill and

1. For an interesting alternative to this traditional definition of diplomacy, see Hoffman (2003).

2. For a complete discussion on all aspects of diplomacy see Barston, R.P., 1997. Modern Diplomacy; Berridge, G.R., 1994. Talking to the Enemy: How States without 'Diplomatic Relations' Communicate; Berridge, G.R., 2002. Diplomacy: Theory and Practice; and Berridge, G. and A. James, 2001. A Dictionary of Diplomacy.

presenting intentions are among the many tasks that diplomatic officials undertake (Berridge, 2002:1).

Landsberg (2004:10) adds that most overt attempts by governments to wield influence overseas are through formal diplomatic channels. Berridge, Keens-Soper and Otte (2001:1) and Muller (1999:585) concur that diplomacy among nations is carried out physically by official representatives, that is a network of diplomats who are protected legally and who employ their diplomatic skill at various levels. Diplomacy can therefore be regarded as the concept describing the “official” channels of communication between states.

The purpose of diplomacy as a form of statecraft is to mediate differences and resolve disputes. However, it can also persuade or compel through “conveying and communicating promises, threats, codes and symbols” (Landsberg, 2004:10). As such, diplomacy has often been referred to as the peaceful art of negotiation. Indeed, “negotiation” was the term usually employed to characterise the above-mentioned activities until Edmund Burke coined the term “diplomacy” in 1796. Negotiation is defined as “an attempt to explore and reconcile conflicting positions in order to reach an acceptable outcome” (quoted by Cornago-Prieto, 1999:559). Negotiation allows certain areas of common interest and conflict to be identified. Diplomacy then actually involves the negotiations that occur between states themselves and between states and other actors in the execution of international relations (Berridge, 1994:1; 2002:1).

Nevertheless, while negotiation is the most widespread method used for settling international disputes and is consequently most characteristic of diplomacy, it is not always viable or achievable to facilitate direct discussion among disputing parties. As a result, other methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes have arisen over the years. These include good offices, inquiry, diplomatic mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement³ (Cornago-Prieto, 1999:564).

Since diplomacy is centred on the peaceful settlement of disputes, the use of any number of

3. Good offices involves the participation of a third party who facilitates dialogue between two parties but who otherwise remains neutral. Inquiry refers to the actions undertaken by a neutral group of investigators, at the behest of the conflicting parties, in obtaining evidence about a situation. Diplomatic mediation is another form of intervention by a preferably neutral third party who is tasked with suggesting substantial proposals in order to reach a compromise. Conciliation occurs when parties to a conflict request a specific neutral international institution with experience in attempting to find solutions. In arbitration parties agree to certain legal procedures and a court they prefer and are then bound by any decisions made by that court. Judicial settlement indicates that states in conflict submit their dispute to the International Court of Justice for solutions (Cornago-Prieto, 1999:564).

diplomatic channels affords a state the chance to clarify its position concerning a dispute and accordingly work towards resolving the issue or at least reaching a compromise. Even if a settlement of disputes is not immediately forthcoming, states that are engaged in talks are less likely to go to war until either party feels that any further negotiations are useless. The purpose of diplomatic talks, unless entered into for propaganda purposes solely, is to attempt to reach a genuine agreement whereby conflict is avoided or terminated (Farnsworth, 1999:238). Having said that, even under the mask of diplomacy a country could have more predatory foreign policy motives, as was the case during World War II when, behind a façade of diplomacy, the Japanese planned to destroy US naval power at Pearl Harbour and mostly succeeded in that objective.

Diplomacy has been in operation as far back as the late fourth millennium BC between the “great kings” of the Near East. At the time, communication between the kings was dependent solely upon messengers and merchant caravans. However, as communications were unpredictable, slow and far from secure at this time, such use of diplomacy was not called into effect very often. By the fourth and fifth centuries BC when the Greek city state system existed, the environment of the time required a far more sophisticated method of diplomacy. As such, a local citizen or “*proxenos*” was employed and diplomatic immunity became the norm. Byzantium (the eastern Roman Empire) led diplomatic development in medieval Europe, but diplomacy was still confined to special envoys who were themselves often limited by time and the tasks they had to carry out (Berridge, 2002:2).

During the late 1400s, a network of diplomats appeared in the Italian city states where the resident embassy was born. The resident emissary who presided over this embassy would be a subject of the prince or republic it represented and would seek that republic’s interests. This Italian method developed into the French diplomatic structure when the first office or ministry of foreign affairs was established. In 17th century France, the renowned chief minister of King Louis XIII, Cardinal Richelieu, created the office of foreign affairs after acknowledging that for an equilibrium to exist between Europe’s states, relations between them all had to be constantly nurtured. This meant that all the important capitals required resident ambassadors (Berridge, 2002:2;5).

A further reason for the formation of an office of foreign affairs was to “recruit, brief, despatch, finance, and maintain secure and regular communications with the state’s diplomatic representatives abroad” (Berridge, 2002:8). However, those representatives abroad were themselves divided into separate diplomatic and consular services. Diplomats worked in the embassy located in the capital city of the host state and were engaged in prestigious political work, while consuls were diffused

around the main ports and industrial areas and were consequently engaged more with commercial matters. Today, the foreign affairs office remains an important and overt department of central government in almost all states (Berridge, 2002:8).

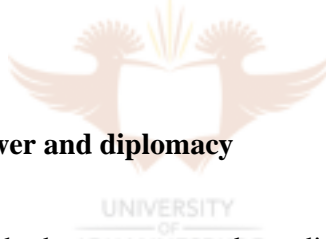
Emissaries are among the first distinct political roles established in human society. Primitive tribes required communication between them and subsequently special personnel with certain bargaining or language skills were appointed to discuss various issues. The emissaries of that time bargained over territories and the settling of clan disputes, whereas today diplomats “seek to extend national interests in foreign territories, protect the national society from a perceived threat, increase the volume of trade, resolve a conflict over contested territory, or regulate traffic in drugs” among many functions (Holsti, 1995:132). Most often diplomatic communications incorporate a government’s objectives, threats, promises and the holding out of possibilities for reaching agreements on querulous issues. Diplomats are partially successful in their mission when they can get the government with whom they are engaged in talks to see a certain situation in terms of their own government’s view. They achieve total success when they are able to alter or maintain the actions of the foreign government in a way that their own government prefers (Holsti, 1995:130-132). Diplomacy usually requires compromise in that both sides have to relinquish their goals of a perfect outcome and accept that obligations will be imposed on all parties (Quainton, 2003:8).

The French diplomatic structure is widely regarded as the first completely developed system of diplomacy and the basis of the modern system (Berridge, 2002:2). According to Cornago-Prieto (1999:560), the following are basic features of modern diplomacy:

1. Defined diplomatic protocol and procedural rules and the institutionalisation of permanent diplomatic missions;
2. Secrecy of negotiation and personal caution and discretion of diplomats;
3. The provision of some important privileges and immunities for diplomats, and
4. The professionalisation of diplomatic services.

Apart from its uses in intense conflict situations that are bordering on violent war, diplomacy is also used on a daily basis where a state’s embassies scattered across the globe are in constant contact with the host government to keep smaller, less explosive incidents contained. Furthermore, diplomats must observe the political situation of the host country in order to evaluate and ascertain any likely effects or repercussions for their home state (Farnsworth, 1999:239).

Barston (1997:2) identifies six key functions of diplomacy. The first is representation, which includes formal representation or the presentation of credentials, protocol and “participation in the diplomatic circuit of the national capital or institution” (quoted by Barston, 1997:2). Substantive representation is another aspect of representation that includes negotiating with parties and interpreting foreign and domestic policies of the host government, as well as being able to explain and defend national policy. The second key function is to act as a so-called “listening post”, which includes the skill of being able to identify issues that may arise in the host country and their implications for the home country as well as being able to give an account of the host country’s political, economic and social conditions. The third function of diplomacy is to prepare the groundwork for initiating new policies. Fourthly, should there be an actual or potential bilateral or wider conflict, then diplomacy is “concerned with reducing friction or oiling the wheels of bilateral or multilateral relations” (Barston, 1997:2). Watson (quoted by Barston, 1997:2) adds that in terms of the fifth function of diplomacy, which is contributing to order and change, a primary task is to manage change and to maintain order in the course of that change. The final function is the formulation, writing and modification of normative and regulatory rules that organise the international system.



2.3. The relationship between power and diplomacy

Coolsaet (1998:2) asserts that “he who has power, conducts diplomacy”. In other words, power and diplomacy go hand in hand. In addition, a well staffed diplomatic service can provide a state with increased power and influence.

States that are involved in diplomatic talks quite often do not negotiate as equal participants. Despite equality in terms of sovereignty in that states are legally equal to each other, states are not equal in terms of their ability to influence or exercise their power over each other (Farnsworth, 1999:240). However, “power” itself is difficult to define since it is a contested concept. Nevertheless, no matter how nominal the definition, almost every country in the world seeks to acquire power and use it for its own ends in international relations (Rourke, 2001:256). This realist perspective of international relations further contends that the sole purpose of statecraft is state sovereignty and therefore survival in a “hostile” environment. For this purpose, “no means is more important than the acquisition of power” (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:27).

Power is often defined in terms of the “exercise” of power. In other words, where one actor influences another actor, or “makes them do something they would not otherwise have done” (Dahl, as quoted by Haugaard, 1999:109; Heywood, 1997:7;11). Furthermore, the ability to control others or exercise power is associated with possessing certain resources, including a state’s territory, population, natural resources, economic size, military forces and political stability. This kind of power means “holding the high cards in the international poker game” (Nye, 1993:50). The problem with defining power in terms of resources is that some states are better at converting their resources into effective influence over others.

According to Nye (2003:60), “getting other states to change might be called the direct or commanding method of exercising power” or “hard” power. Hard power can take the form of either a threat, known as a “stick” or an inducement of some kind, often referred to as a “carrot”. The use of the “stick” or negative sanctions is intended to punish or reprimand the target state for actions they have taken or to try to alter the future behaviour of the target state and involve threatening to take action or actually following through with threats. An example of negative sanctions is the boycott of South African goods during the 1970s and 1980s in response to apartheid (Mingst, 1999:124). Positive sanctions, by contrast, involve offering a “carrot”, enticing the target state to act in a desired way by rewarding moves in the “right” direction. An example of positive sanctions is the US offering insurance to American companies willing to invest in post-apartheid South Africa (Mingst, 1999:124).

Power can also be exercised indirectly or “softly”. Soft power refers to a state’s ability to set the agenda in such a way that it shapes others’ preferences (Nye, 2003:60). For example, a state may obtain its desired objectives in international relations because other states wish to “emulate” it. However, Leonard (2002, Internet source) contends that governments still have to remould their diplomatic structures in pursuit of such influence on the international stage where diplomats have to convert themselves from reporters responding to events to shapers of affairs.

Power to influence or control other nations not only encompasses the means employed but also the goals of states that are constantly in economic, military, social and political competition with each other (Plano and Olton, 1988:20). Realists believe that a state’s sovereignty is a priority and therefore most states still use military-strategic resources in demonstrations of power, because they believe them to be the most effective resources for maintaining national security (Lynch, 1999:176). However, while military force remains an important component, conventional sources of power are

broadening to include science and technology, education, economic growth, information technology, moral influence, national image and leadership (Mingst, 1999:119; Nye, as quoted by Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:387).

According to Mingst (1999:120), states use a wide range of techniques of statecraft to translate power potential - that is the measure of a state's tangible and intangible sources that could be transferred to actual power - into effective power. These include diplomacy, economic statecraft and force, amongst others.

States may make use of diplomacy in projecting power in any of the following ways:

- By making the target state aware, either privately or publicly, of unhappiness about that state's choice of policy;
- By intimating that relations with the target state might improve should it change its actions in a certain way;
- By appealing to an international organisation for multilateral support in dealing with the target state;
- By giving in to the demands of the target state (for example, diplomatic recognition and foreign aid) in return for desired actions;
- By threatening negative consequences should the target state continue in its policy objectives, and
- By taking away what the target state desires (for example, reduce foreign aid, withdraw diplomats, sever diplomatic ties) when unfavourable actions are taken (Mingst, 1999:120-121).

Holsti (1995:69) differentiates between two principal categories of power: structural and relational. Structural power refers to the authority and capacity to "set the rules of the game and to determine how others will play the game". Only those with superior structural power can persuade or coerce others to conform to their rules in the international arena. South Africa's economic might and domination of trade in southern Africa (it has a trade ratio of 5.1 to 1) has made it the region's hegemonic power (Barber and Vickers, 2001:337). South Africa still tends to use its vast economic power to set the rules of trade and marginalise the smaller countries surrounding it (Mlambo, 2001:650). Relational power, on the other hand, refers to manipulating, sustaining or altering conditions in other countries in order to achieve certain foreign policy goals (Holsti, 1995:126).

As an essentially political activity, diplomacy that is skilfully undertaken and well-resourced can contribute to a state's power since its principal purpose is to assist a state in achieving its foreign policy objectives without having to resort to force. Diplomacy is vitally important in preventing war and maintaining peace because skilful negotiation can deter violence from being used in an effort to settle an argument. Should war break out regardless, negotiation is still crucial if peace can eventually be achieved. Only diplomatic activity "can produce the enormous advantages obtainable from the cooperative pursuit of common interests" (Berridge, 2002:1;209).

2.4. The changing nature of diplomacy

Hill (2003:11) identifies three primary elements that represent vast change in contemporary international politics, namely the end of the Cold War, the process of globalisation, and the popular doctrine of humanitarian intervention (which is increasingly threatening the Westphalian system of state sovereignty).

Diplomacy has changed over the last two decades since the demise of the Cold War. During the Cold War, diplomacy was conducted along a very predictable structure of a bipolar world based on the capitalist West versus the communist East (Davenport, 2003:18). This ideological conflict required that a state's diplomatic agenda include military, security and stability issues. However, the collapse of the bipolar order brought with it a sharp increase in intra-state conflicts, which often resulted in gross human rights abuses and mass genocide (Stemmet, 2002:28). These violations have ensured that human rights diplomacy continues to be emphasised, with many countries citing humanitarian assistance as reasons for intervention (or "the doctrine of humanitarian intervention" as British Prime Minister Tony Blair refers to it). Other issues related to human survival increasingly appear on the diplomatic agenda and include the population explosion, food scarcity and HIV/AIDS as well as arms control, disarmament and the illegal trade in arms. Underlying this now expanded agenda are a number of issues focusing on threats to sovereignty, the relationship between domestic and external policy and the sufficiency of the agreements at global, international, regional and bilateral levels (Barston, 1997:5).

Furthermore, globalisation (or the increasing interdependence of state and non-state actors locally and globally) has instigated the meteoric rise of thousands of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with some arguing that they do not trust governments to represent them in international matters, electing instead to do so themselves. New technologies have also meant the potential for a

far more efficient and rapid means of communication (Davenport, 2003:19). The printed media began to influence decision-making in democratic states from the development of the mass printing presses in the 1800s. The technological advances of the 20th century, particularly the medium of television and more specifically the emergence of CNN, BBC World and other worldwide media, have meant that any and all global agendas are now able to be instantly marketed (Davenport, 2003:19; Mansbach, 1992:5).

Mansbach (1992:5) contends that international television services have an especially strong impact on the shaping of public opinion, which then influences diplomatic agendas. Stemmet (2002:36) explains that with the growth of international news networks, television images are now increasingly available to the masses, which in turn influence public opinion. The public then increase pressure on governments to act in line with their expectations. This trend is especially strong in situations where large-scale human rights abuses take place, for example in Chechnya and Kosovo. These changes have revealed the power that ideas, which are marketed and communicated to the world, have as opposed to only economic and military might. Diplomacy is not what it used to be.

The players in diplomacy have changed over the last few decades with a wider range of ministries and government departments having some involvement in external relations. The ministries of industry, environment, health, transport, education, sport and customs all have periodic participation in foreign affairs. It is the foreign affairs ministry's task to take the lead in such instances. Additionally, non-state actors ranging in type from economic interest groups to humanitarian, criminal, resource, environmental and global governance interest groups have increased in number. Different international organisations such as the UN and International Monetary Fund (IMF), foreign corporations and NGOs send officials to engage in diplomacy with other organisations and corporations. Some NGOs have become closely linked to official administrations and consequently institutionalised in a state's diplomatic processes, becoming an important distinguishing feature of recent diplomacy (Barston, 1997:5).

With the development of instant communications and of social responsibility, private citizens (whether as individuals or as part of social movements or organised pressure groups) are becoming increasingly assertive in foreign policy and diplomatic issues (Stemmet, 2002:26). Indeed, during the height of the land invasion crisis in Zimbabwe, the demonstrations by groups of individuals at Zimbabwean diplomatic missions as well as the many letters from private citizens in South Africa that appeared in newspapers there, the majority of which criticised the South African government's

diplomatic approach to the Zimbabwean issue, all demonstrate this growing trend. Additionally, the national media in many states has been led by the ability of the public to “connect to world politics” and the media are consequently increasingly committed to reflect, inform and even lead public opinion on foreign policy and diplomatic issues (Mansbach, 1992:86). An illustration is the ineffectual but nonetheless very strong criticism by the independent media in South Africa of the relative silence of President Thabo Mbeki on the Zimbabwean issue (Stemmet, 2002:35).

From ancient times and well into the 1800s, all diplomatic messages were carried by hand. However, it has been the advent of telecommunications and especially the telephone that has really made an explosive impact on diplomacy and negotiating channels between states. Following World War II and continuing to the present day, the refinements of telephone technology have included fax machines, electronic mail and most notably multi-media video conferencing. With technology developing and refining constantly, the possibilities for diplomatic communication are ever expanding. Telephone diplomacy has numerous advantages in that it is more personal and more flattering to the recipient (since written messages are ordinarily drafted by others); secondly, with such direct communication there is absolute certainty that the message has reached the other person. Also, telephone communication makes it possible to immediately correct a misunderstanding and to receive in return an immediate response from the other party (Berridge, 2002:90-91).

Apart from the development of communication systems in order to keep up with the vastly globalising and subsequently shrinking world, foreign ministries have also had to adapt in terms of their structures. Most foreign ministries of larger states have specialised divisions that deal exclusively with issues on the diplomatic agenda such as environmental matters, human rights and social issues (Stemmet, 2002:32). The South African DFA, for example, aware of its leading role in Africa and particularly southern Africa, created a special section within its multilateral branch whose purpose it is to arrange international conferences such as the Commonwealth Summit and the UN Conference on Racism in 2001. Because of its focus on African security issues, a special peacekeeping desk was established and is presently restructuring its organisation for the purposes of enhancing its primary policy goal of advancing the African Renaissance. Many foreign ministries have also had to adapt to the growth of subnational actor involvement in diplomacy. In South Africa, a provincial liaison directorate was established as part of the protocol chief directorate to facilitate and guide visits abroad by representatives of the respective provinces (Stemmet, 2002:32).

Although the traditional methods of diplomatic correspondence such as letters and memoranda are still important tools of international diplomacy, the continuous development of telecommunications has made direct personal contact between heads of state or officials a much preferred means of carrying out diplomatic missions (Cornago-Prieto, 1999:562). Personal diplomacy will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter.

In this study South Africa's use of so-called "quiet diplomacy" with regard to two African countries at various stages after 1994 is under analysis. To better understand what is meant by quiet diplomacy, it is necessary to briefly explore what other types of diplomacy exist, including those that are the antithesis of quiet diplomacy.

2.5. A typology of diplomacy

Barston (1997:1) points out that diplomacy is often only viewed in terms of a "narrow political strategy" and that the concept itself has expanded in modern times⁴ to include bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, preventive diplomacy, gunboat diplomacy, coercive diplomacy, public diplomacy and soft or quiet diplomacy.⁵

There has been a rapid increase in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy through conferences, meetings and more informal gatherings of technical, political and diplomatic experts (Barston, 1997:103). Bilateral diplomacy has been the definitive form of diplomatic relations for centuries (Cornago-Prieto, 1999:563). It is a term that refers to a communication limited to two parties at a given time, for example, when the British ambassador in South Africa directs a question to the South African government or when a direct telephone call is made from London. It can also occur when British and South African representatives at the UN discuss an issue together (Berridge, 2002:105). Bilateral diplomacy can take place by a variety of methods and in any number of contexts and is therefore not necessarily limited to formally accredited resident missions on a state-to-state basis.

4. Types of diplomacy have expanded to such an extent that references have been made to "church" or "gospel diplomacy", such as the kind employed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu during apartheid where clergy used moral persuasion to call on Western governments to do more to fight apartheid; and "competitive" diplomacy, for example, when the National Party (NP) and ANC appeared to use their trips abroad to "score diplomatic points off each other" (Landsberg, 2004:45;95).

5. Landsberg (2004:10) states that while diplomacy is predominantly silent or quiet in nature, it can also be "loud", in which case it is referred to as megaphone diplomacy, which is public as opposed to private criticism (Stols, 2002: Internet source).

Whereas bilateral negotiation can be relatively informal, multilateral negotiation is ordinarily conducted through formal conferences, that is, conference diplomacy (Feltham, 1982:116). International conferences can be classified in terms of their objectives, such as serving as a forum for discussion on a specific issue; to make non-binding or binding decisions on governments; to draft treaties; to exchange information on an international level, and to pledge voluntary contributions to international programmes such as the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Furthermore, with the rapid development of multilateral diplomacy since the formation of the UN, the resultant expansion of international organisations and committees ushered in a new dimension to traditional diplomacy in the form of group voting (Feltham, 1982:116).

While international law states that there should always be an attempt at a peaceful settlement of disputes as opposed to war, the success of such a mission is not always assured. Therefore, a successful diplomatic technique in trying to resolve international disputes should be to use different methods of preventive diplomacy (Cornago-Prieto, 1999:564). Preventive diplomacy has been defined as “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disparities from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur” (Rupesinghe, as quoted by Solomon, 2002:148). These actions include a number of strategies to demonstrate intentions and capabilities in order to manage any emerging threats. Preventive diplomatic strategies can be military or non-military depending on their goals, which could include crisis prevention, preemptive engagement or pre-conflict peacebuilding. The theory behind preventive diplomacy is based on the assumption that “it is better to forestall conflict than to allow it to spread” (Bennett, 1995:158).

Gunboat diplomacy is defined as “trying to solve international problems by force or by threatening to use force” (Collin, 1997:89). It includes measures such as military alerts, troop movements and naval manoeuvres all designed to coerce parties into doing something (Holsti, 1995:201; Wittkopf, Kegley and Scott, 2003:82). Sending troops overseas in an effort to intimidate an enemy is a common instrument of foreign policy, as many states believe that “actions speak louder than words” (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:444).

Realists argue that the primary motive of many states and non-state actors is to persuade others to do certain things that do not actually serve their own interests and to convince others to agree to contracts that may not be to their advantage. This kind of international behaviour is referred to as coercive diplomacy. Coercive diplomacy therefore refers to “threats or limited force to persuade an

opponent to call off or undo an encroachment” (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:386; 2001:510). While coercive diplomacy can involve the use of military force, this is not a prerequisite for success in influencing another state to do something against its wishes. Economic sanctions can also have the desired effect and are defined as “deliberate government actions to inflict economic deprivation on a target state or society through the limitation or cessation of customary economic relations” (Leyton-Brown, as quoted by Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:447). For example, economic sanctions were used with relative success, particularly by UN member states, against South Africa during apartheid.

Another method of diplomacy is public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is essentially foreign propaganda “conducted or orchestrated” by diplomats (Berridge, 2002:17). This propaganda is designed to influence a foreign government to accept a certain view by winning over the general public, the media, pressure groups and foreign allies. For example, following the 11 September 2001 terror attacks and the subsequent US-led war in Afghanistan, the US military dropped leaflets depicting members of the Taliban beating up women and carrying the message, “Is this the future you want for your children and your women?” (Leonard, 2002: Internet source). Despite the fact that propaganda itself is not diplomacy, this method has become generally accepted. Certain embassies also try to influence the receiving state’s foreign policy by helping to export their own cultures to the receiving state. This is termed “cultural diplomacy”.

Preventive, public, coercive and gunboat diplomacy can all make use of physical or intrusive acts of force or military threats in an attempt to persuade countries to do certain things. However, there is another diplomatic practice that is used extensively in international relations and employs methods that are the antithesis of the louder diplomatic approaches. Often referred to as “careful persuasion” or the “softly-softly” approach, this method is best known as “quiet diplomacy” (Cohen, 2003: Internet source).

2.5.1. Quiet diplomacy

This section is particularly important, as the theory recounted here will provide the foundations for the exploration and analysis of South Africa’s foreign policy later on in the study.

Scholars, intellectuals and politicians regard the former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, as arguably the most prodigious diplomatic player in modern international relations. His essential contributions to the negotiations to end the Vietnam War made him a joint winner of the 1973 Nobel

Peace Prize (his co-winner was North Vietnamese counterpart Le Duc Tho). Kissinger has always espoused negotiations as being the primary instrument of diplomacy. He has defined diplomacy as “a series of steps, merging into a continuum”, that is, step-by-step diplomacy that progresses slowly but surely through a series of interim agreements (quoted by Otte, 2001:197). Kissinger argues that those who seek eagerly for a diplomatic victory will invariably lose since a unilateral victory has no hope of being maintained, as no country will want to adhere to an agreement that is against its own interests. Therefore Kissinger urges that moderation and pragmatism in diplomatic practice, that is “quiet diplomacy”, and the cultivation of a sense of reliability in diplomatic negotiations, are both essential assets of a state’s foreign policy (Otte, 2001:198).

Quiet diplomacy is also defined as “discussing problems with officials of another country in a calm way”, usually without informing the media about it (Collin, 1997:89). As former UN Secretary-General U Thant once noted: “the perfect good offices operation is one which is not heard of until it is successfully concluded or even never heard of at all” (quoted by Annan, 1999: Internet source). For example, Dag Hammarskjöld (another former UN Secretary-General) employed quiet diplomacy in his style of peacekeeping in that he always negotiated skilfully with “tact, persistence and impartiality, but without fanfare” (Bennett, 1995:157). Similarly, when US special envoy Jack Pritchard and North Korea’s deputy UN ambassador met in New York in March 2003 to discuss the growing nuclear programme in North Korea, it was done as quietly as possible with very little publicity (Struck, 2003: Internet source). Professional diplomats often emphasise their importance as quiet contributors to a conversation or discussion, working behind the scenes to achieve results (Taylor and Williams, 2002:78). John Negroponte, US ambassador to the UN, is another practitioner of quiet diplomacy. He argues that “for the 10% you see on the surface or in the public arena, 90% of the work has been done behind closed doors” (Nichols, 2001: Internet source).

Quiet diplomacy has also been linked to a policy of dialogue as opposed to military coercion. Japan’s use of quiet diplomacy or “*aikido*”, for example, includes dialogue and negotiation as being more effective instruments in achieving foreign policy objectives than exclusion or overt coercion (Vodanovich, 2003: Internet source). Tony Blair also adopted a policy of quiet diplomacy over China’s human rights abuses in Tibet. Blair visited China in 1998 when he quietly engaged in negotiations with the Chinese leaders to release democracy activist Xu Wenli (Reynolds, 1999: Internet source). However, in this case the soft approach to diplomacy failed because despite Wenli being released initially, he was re-arrested weeks later and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

From the countless examples spanning hundreds of websites and newspapers, it is evident that the term “quiet diplomacy” is used extensively although loosely in international relations to refer to many types of soft diplomatic approaches. It is nonetheless possible to identify a set of characteristics of quiet diplomacy:

- **Personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state or government or senior officials.**

Holsti (1995:134) expounds that with transportation becoming so much faster and easier, policymakers, high-ranking officials and even heads of state can maintain direct communication, thereby bypassing the traditional diplomatic intermediary.

Diplomacy is essentially the communication of thoughts and ideas between the governments of states (although also increasingly between states and multinational corporations (MNCs) and among international organisations). This communication can be directly conducted between the heads of government or indirectly through an ambassador or written correspondence. The most logical way that diplomacy can be conducted is by heads of government meeting face-to-face and talking, reasoning and discussing. Personal or direct diplomacy is a useful tool in foreign relations because through visits, correspondence and telephone conversations, heads of government can form contacts, promote their own country’s image, try and improve bilateral relations and secure approval on a critical agreement (Barston, 1997:103).

As a result of personal diplomacy, with the head of state or government becoming increasingly prominent in modern diplomacy, the local ambassador will tend to have a limited formal involvement. Nevertheless, the ambassador’s role remains important in terms of assessing political situations, explaining policy at crucial moments, being involved in trade and economic work and participating on occasion in international conferences (Barston, 1997:4).

This kind of direct diplomacy proved successful in 1994 with regard to the “King’s *coup*” in Lesotho. President Mandela was keen to avoid military intervention and sent Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Mr Rusty Evans (Director-General of Foreign Affairs) to Lesotho to negotiate a successful agreement with King Letsie III (who had initially staged the “King’s *coup*”) (Venter, 1997:89). Another example of personal diplomacy took place when both US President Bush and Tony Blair engaged in quiet diplomacy with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel

Sharon over the siege of Yasser Arafat's compound in Ramallah in April 2002. While Blair suggested that the use of British monitors (to guard alleged murderers of Israeli tourism minister Rehavam Ze'eni) be discussed at a White House dinner, Bush personally telephoned Sharon in an effort to persuade him to accept the plan. The deal was eventually agreed to (Harnden, 2002: Internet source).

- **Avoidance of media exposure.** Sucharipa (1997: Internet source) contends that the media and diplomacy depend on each other. Feltham (1998:151) agrees that diplomats have long recognised the influence that the press, radio and television have on the formulation of foreign policy and on diplomatic processes, and as such a “wary, but mutually advantageous relationship” has developed between the media and those involved in diplomacy. However, while there are benefits to this relationship, the nature of the news media is such that there can be misinformation or distortion of a message (Gilboa, 2002: Internet source). Editors and producers, no matter how objective they intend to be, have personal perceptions that will influence what news is selected and how it is disseminated to the public. These disadvantages have prompted many foreign policy formulators, emissaries and diplomats to conduct their negotiations away from the public eye.

For example, the recent thaw in the India-Pakistani relationship, culminating in the summit between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in New York in September 2004, has been widely attributed to secret talks between the two governments. The New York summit followed several unpublicised meetings between India's National Security Adviser J.N. Dixit and his Pakistani counterpart Tariq Aziz, who had met in Amritsar, Dubai and London to lay down foundations for the summit (Indo-Asian News Service, 2004: Internet source). Officials from both sides appealed to the media not to restrict the peace process by “trying to determine who the winner or loser was at any given time”. Strategic affairs expert C. Raja Mohan insisted that if India and Pakistan wanted to continue with the dialogue process, “then they should not expect the negotiations to take place in the glare of the camera”. Former Pakistan Foreign Secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh agreed that the meeting only came about because of behind-the-scenes discussions or “backroom” diplomacy. Shaikh added that the meeting proved that India and Pakistan could advance peace talks by continuing to have “quiet contacts rather than meeting under the prying eyes of the media” (Indo-Asian News Service, 2004: Internet source).

Former South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Sang-ock has also spoken on numerous occasions about diplomatic relations between China and South Korea being most successful when tackled quietly rather than publicly. He has also emphasised the importance of neighbouring countries resolving friction and disputes with frequent and direct contacts (Jae-yun, 2002: Internet source).

- **The appearance of limited action or even inaction.** An illustration is the Australian Prime Minister John Howard's meeting with China's leaders in Beijing in August 2003 to discuss the lack of human rights in that country. Howard came away from the meeting insisting that quiet diplomacy was producing "sufficient results". Human Rights Watch, however, condemned quiet diplomacy as ineffectual, arguing that "experience in China shows that dialogue will not produce results without accompanying international pressure" (ABC Online, 2003: Internet source).

The international community's quiet diplomacy and humanitarian assistance during the ethnic clashes in Kenya in the early 1990s is also regarded as being largely unsuccessful, given the recurrence of violent conflict there. According to Brown (2002, Internet source), "the international community never made any serious, conscious attempt to prevent violence from occurring or recurring" in Kenya. Often states engaging in quiet diplomacy with other states find that they need to choose between their own foreign policy goals (such as security, stability, trade and investment) and effective conflict prevention (which may necessitate a confrontation with the government of the target country). When countries have vested interests in other countries (as was the case with donors in Kenya), they feel unable or unwilling to jeopardise these relationships with the target country's government. As a result, governments often engage tentatively in dialogue with the target government and this can be seen as being ineffectual (Brown, 2002: Internet source).

- **Calm and tactful but persistent negotiation or dialogue in a non-threatening atmosphere.** Diplomacy is most often defined as conduct "by peaceful means" (Muller, 2002:24; Sharp, 1997:616; Sofer, 1988:196; Viotti and Kauppi, 1993:580; Watson, 1982:50). Kissinger (quoted by Otte, 2001:194) contends that diplomacy is "the art of relating states to each other by agreement rather than by the exercise of force". Therefore, diplomacy is conducted in international relations by means short of military action or war and is frequently

carried out through the process of negotiation. Negotiations enable members of states' foreign policy bureaucracies to meet, exchange views and communicate desired objectives and essentially find common ground on specific issues behind the scenes (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1999:459).

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) values negotiation and similar methods of enquiry and mediation as fundamental tools of preventive diplomacy. The CSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities in 1994, Max Van der Stoel (1994, Internet source), listed the following elements as essential when undertaking negotiations: intelligence gathering; discussion of the problem at hand; promotion of dialogue, confidence and cooperation between the negotiating parties; and following this, the fostering of continued consultations between the parties with the aim of finding possible solutions.

Ghebali (1998, Internet source) contends that soft or non-coercive diplomacy is by its nature a low profile activity and requires absolute confidentiality at each stage of the process. Rolf Ekeus, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities since 2001, agrees that discretion in diplomacy is invaluable as it often allows for better results in future negotiations (OSCE, 2003: Internet source).

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In September 1978, US President Jimmy Carter invited Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Camp David for a series of meetings away from the public eye. Twelve days of negotiations and bargaining ensued. Two agreements in principle came out of the meetings, including a statement on eventual self-government for the West Bank and Gaza Strip areas and Egypt's diplomatic recognition of Israel in exchange for the return of Egyptian territories held by Israel since 1967. In 1979 Sadat, Begin and Carter signed the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which formalised what was essentially agreed to at the Camp David talks (Milbank and Pimlott, 1992:212; US Department of State, 2004: Internet source).

A succession of secret, informal talks was also undertaken in early 1993 between two Israeli academics and three senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials with the goal of drafting a document of basic principles for possible future peacemaking between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs. The negotiations eventually included senior Israeli diplomats and

Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst and the Israeli-Palestinian “Declaration of Principles” was worked out. The signing of the “Oslo Accords”, as they became known, was witnessed by then US President Bill Clinton in September 1993 in the presence of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (Anon., 2004: Internet source).

- **Constructive engagement with the target country in an effort to help solve the problems as quietly as possible.** The essential idea behind the method of constructive engagement is that it lies halfway between isolation and more direct confrontation and is associated with strategic engagement and critical dialogue (Vodanovich, 2003: Internet source). Constructive engagement implies that it is possible to apply pressure that will result in constructive change through mediation rather than a military response. It is worth noting that constructive engagement has not always succeeded in its objectives. Canada’s soft approach to Fidel Castro’s regime in Cuba had little, if any, positive effect on human rights there. Furthermore, American and British quiet engagement in China’s human rights have also proved fruitless (Green, 1999: Internet source).

As previously mentioned, the Reagan administration adopted a policy of constructive engagement⁶ with South Africa in the mid-1980s. However, the escalation of political violence in South Africa overshadowed US diplomatic efforts. Eventually, to rid the US of the growing perception that Reagan was “soft” on white rule in South Africa, the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1986, which crushed any hope of a continued mutually beneficial bilateral relationship (Clough, 1992:120; Mills, 1996:1).

- **Diplomacy often carried out in the context of bilateral or multilateral efforts.** During the 1990s, a combination of quiet diplomacy, bilateral US sanctions and a multilateral decision by the UN to institute sanctions played an important role in shifting Libyan foreign policy away from supporting terrorist activity (St John, 2003: Internet source). South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe formed a multilateral partnership (effectively led by South Africa) when they engaged in soft diplomacy with Lesotho during the “King’s *coup*” in 1994 (Muller, 2003: Internet source).

6. For a more complete explanation of Reagan’s constructive engagement policy, see Landsberg (2004).

Conclusion

Although there are many instruments of foreign policy - including economic rewards and coercion, propaganda, military intervention, clandestine actions, political influence and war and the use of weapons - diplomatic bargaining or diplomacy is the instrument that was analysed for this study.

While diplomacy has been carried out since ancient times, the contemporary world order following the end of the Cold War has brought with it a changed diplomatic environment. Globalisation has meant that NGOs and MNCs are becoming increasingly involved in the diplomatic process. Personal or direct diplomacy is also becoming the quickest and most efficient way to conduct relations between states. In addition, many states now seem to attach greater value to quieter or softer diplomatic approaches to international conflict situations as opposed to more direct military involvement. Quiet or soft diplomacy can generally be defined as including personal or direct contact, often in a context of bilateral or multilateral relations, between heads of state or government or officials of state, without much media involvement, and in a non-coercive or non-threatening atmosphere of calm and constructive dialogue.

Having established the theoretical basis for quiet diplomacy, that framework has to be applied. However, before the actual indicators of quiet diplomacy can be applied to South Africa, it is important to provide the necessary context. Therefore the next chapter will explore the historical relationship between South Africa and the other two countries under investigation, namely, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3

South Africa's relations with Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Nigeria, 1960-1993

Introduction

A country's historical connections to another shape its view of the other and consequently have far-reaching and important influences on its future attitude and policies towards that country. If South Africa's post-1994 diplomatic endeavours in Nigeria and Zimbabwe are to be analysed, then it is necessary to explore the historical relations with the two countries in question. The basic objective in this chapter is to analyse the relationships between South Africa and its immediate neighbour Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and an African country further afield, Nigeria, during South Africa's apartheid years.

In pursuit of these objectives three key areas will be explored, namely, 1.) South Africa's outward policy during apartheid, 2.) Zimbabwe's and Nigeria's anti-apartheid activities, and 3.) the changing nature of relationships during South Africa's transitional phase. After obtaining a broader picture by establishing the main historical themes between the countries under examination, it will be possible to analyse the post-1994 milieu in the next chapter.

3.1. Apartheid South Africa's outward policy (regional and continental)

The rapid transformation of the African continent in the 1960s, precipitated by independence from colonial rule, was characterised by signs of political and economic instability in many of the new states. South Africa preferred stability and order and was not content with uncertainties that accompanied these changes. Nevertheless, the Republic was confident about its strength domestically and based on this confidence set out to achieve three primary goals: to ensure the security of the white state; to nurture and expand economic and technical links with the rest of Africa and the West (although trade and investment ties with African states remained less important than those with the West), and to gain general acceptance as one of the foremost powers in Africa (Barber and Barratt, 1990:124-126).

The government's African policy existed on three levels. Firstly, South Africa viewed itself as a powerful white Republic surrounded by submissive black satellites – the Bantustans, South West

Africa and the BLS states (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland). The second level incorporated South Africa and its above-mentioned satellites as well as Mozambique, Angola, Malawi and Rhodesia. The third level constituted the rest of Africa with which South Africa had erratic links at best. The government reasoned that success at one of these levels would lead to success at the other and finally enhance its position in the international community (Barber and Barratt, 1990:124-126).

Engel (1994:5) and Linington (1997:43) contend that a state's foreign policy is primarily aimed at protecting a particular domestic value system. Racial discrimination had long been enshrined in the South African constitution and when the Nationalist government appeared on the scene in 1948, it took the trend further with the apartheid system. Throughout apartheid's institutionalisation until 1989, this domestic policy predominated the Republic's foreign relations, most especially relations with its immediate neighbours.

3.1.1. The Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia and UDI: 1965-1980

Between 1966 and 1981 there were dramatic changes in South Africa's immediate regional environment, including Angolan and Mozambiquan independence from colonial rule in 1975 and an ongoing guerrilla war in South West Africa against the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). As a result of these changes, the *cordon sanitaire* of white-ruled and moderate black countries that still surrounded South Africa in the late 1960s was replaced by a number of independent black states that were largely hostile to the South African government. These states came to support the actions of South African exile movements fighting for the liberation of the black majority in South Africa (Geldenhuys, 1984:38). As a result, South Africa practised a mixture of economic, political and military strategies towards its African neighbours throughout this volatile period in pursuit of its security objectives (Millar, 1985:7).

In 1953, the British government united Southern Rhodesia with Northern Rhodesia (today Zambia) and Nyasaland (today Malawi) in a Central African Federation. Africans from all three areas opposed this forced union and eventually the British government recognised the potential for violent upheaval in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and gave these two territories their independence in 1963. The whites in Southern Rhodesia regarded this as an act of appeasement by the British and subsequently voted into office the Rhodesian Front (RF), which was "dedicated to upholding white supremacy" and which demanded full independence from the United Kingdom (UK) as well as the "retention of the existing minority-rule Constitution" (quoted by Sithole, 1997:425). The UK

refused independence on these terms. On 5 November 1965 a state of emergency was declared and on the 11th Mr Ian Smith (who had become Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia in April 1964) issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) (Brown, 2002:1133; Europa World Year Book, 2002a:4484).

Officially, the reasons for declaring UDI included the removal of any possibility of British interference in Rhodesian affairs (especially the threat of imposing constitutional changes) and the elimination of any constitutional uncertainty, which, according to white Rhodesia, was impeding the inflow of investment and immigrants. Smith viewed these as the principal factors in causing white Rhodesians to emigrate (Hirsch, 1973:70). Unofficially, Rhodesia declared itself independent because the British government would not grant it independence unless Africans were given significant political rights leading to majority rule (O'Meara, 1977:15). With Southern Rhodesia's constitutional links with Britain severed, the country was renamed Rhodesia. In 1970, Rhodesia became a republic with Smith remaining as Prime Minister and head of government. (The President had nominal powers only) (Europa World Year Book, 2002a:4484).

Prior to announcing UDI, Smith visited Dr Hendrik Verwoerd (South African Prime Minister, 1958-1966) to gauge his reaction to the impending decision. There are conflicting accounts of what occurred during that meeting. Verwoerd's version is that he listened politely but advised Smith that such a rash act would be unwise. Smith on the other hand recalled later that while Verwoerd indicated that it would be unfortunate if the issue were not solved through negotiations, he had wished Rhodesia well "whatever the decision" (Barber and Barratt, 1990:135). In 1964 South Africa had signed a trade agreement with Southern Rhodesia, which lowered the tariff barriers between the two countries and this sign of cooperation and friendship probably added to Smith's belief that at least South Africa would not prove to be a foe, should he declare independence (Cockram, 1970:175).

The British government regarded UDI as illegal. No other country formally recognised it either. The UK imposed diplomatic and economic sanctions on Rhodesia and requested the rest of the international community to follow suit. Notably South Africa did not impose sanctions (Europa World Year Book, 2002a:4484). Although Verwoerd used the moral issue of adherence to the principles of non-interference and non-aggression as the reason for not supporting UN-imposed sanctions, practical considerations also influenced his decision. If South Africa were to enforce sanctions against Rhodesia, it would seal its own fate. South Africa could not support sanctions

against a fellow white-ruled country that was being punished for an offence analogous to South Africa's own negation of political rights to the black majority (Geldenhuys, 1994:265). Therefore, South Africa provided much of Rhodesia's economic support throughout Rhodesia's period of sanctions from 1966 to 1980.

At the time of UDI, African nationalist movements had been active in Zambia, Malawi and Rhodesia for a while. However, the repressive measures implemented by the Smith regime severely weakened the opposition, which split in 1963 into the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) with Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole as its leader. Mr Robert Mugabe was appointed Secretary-General of ZANU¹ (Europa World Year Book, 2002a:4484).

In the 1960s ZAPU and ZANU began a "people's war" to overthrow the Smith regime, culminating in a full-blown liberation war during the 1970s. ZAPU, which had its base in Zambia, received armaments and training from the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). ZANU nurtured ties to the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) movement (which was fighting its own anti-colonial war against the Portuguese in Mozambique) and with the People's Republic of China (Sithole, 1997:425). From 1976 onwards an uneasy alliance sprang up between ZAPU and ZANU known as the Patriotic Front (PF), backed also by the frontline states of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia (Brown, 2002:1133). The Rhodesian government responded to the violence of the African nationalists by trying to eliminate the threat they presented. Apart from pre-emptive and retaliatory military strikes against insurgents, Smith renewed detention and other restrictive policies, declared the movements illegal and established a mandatory death sentence for certain kinds of political violence (Hirsch, 1973:45).

South Africa's military cooperation with Rhodesia began in 1966 after the President of the exiled ANC, Oliver Tambo, and the Vice President of ZAPU, James Chikerama, announced that their parties had entered into a military alliance to march into Rhodesia. In the first stages of the operation, it was planned that certain ANC groups led by ZAPU guides would penetrate South Africa's borders while others would fight alongside ZAPU in Rhodesia (Cockram, 1970:180). South Africa responded immediately by despatching paramilitary police to Rhodesia (since the provision of troops could be considered waging war in a foreign territory and South Africa did not want to be

1. See Chan (2003) for more on Mugabe's life and political career.

seen as interfering).

The British government protested this move by South Africa, declaring that Rhodesia was still a British colony and, as such, no foreign security forces could operate there without permission from Britain. Verwoerd's successor, Mr BJ Vorster, responded to British and international criticism by announcing that the South African police would remain in Rhodesia for as long as they were required, citing concern for South Africa's own security. He said that South Africa had sent policeman to Rhodesia "to fight terrorists who were destined for South Africa" (quoted by Cockram, 1970:180-181). Later the South African delegate to the UN stated that the police (in Rhodesia) were only there to "deal with terrorists of South African origin infiltrating from the north through Rhodesian territory to commit acts of subversion and terrorism in South Africa" (quoted by Cockram, 1970:180-181).

South Africa viewed all guerrillas (in South West Africa, Mozambique and Rhodesia) as being directly linked to communist-inspired assaults in which South Africa was the target. Vorster later declared, "I know of no terrorism in southern Africa which, in final analysis, is not directed against South Africa... The ultimate aim of all terrorists is to take South Africa away from us" (Barber and Barratt, 1990:139-140). The result of this thinking was that the South African presence in Rhodesia steadily increased over the years, so that by 1974 there were more than 2 000 policemen (and by then also military units including aircraft).

In 1970, Foreign Minister Hilgard Muller declared that South Africa was the most developed state in Africa and consequently had a responsibility to the continent. This attitude was embodied in the South African government's co-called "outward policy", aimed at diversifying trade links and diplomatic ties, reducing political isolation and demonstrating to the world that South Africa could form new relationships in Africa. While efforts were undertaken to establish missions in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Wellington and in Latin America, the main initiative was in Africa and particularly southern Africa. The South African government had two broad objectives, namely to "promote peace based on cooperation and mutual respect", and to develop material interests in the region through shared technical and economic activities. At the time there was also a firm declaration to avoid interfering in the internal affairs of African states since Pretoria was determined to show that it could work with them (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 125-126).

South Africa also began to employ transport or railway diplomacy in its relations with its neighbours. Transport diplomacy was based on the notion that a country's transport infrastructure is among the main elements from which it draws its bargaining power. Mr J.G.H. Loubser, Manager of South African Railways and Harbours (1970–1983), defined transport diplomacy as “the art of applying the transport potential of the country to perform a maximum role in its relations with other countries for its own benefit as well as that of others” (Loubser, as quoted by Barber and Barratt, 1990:132). He viewed transport links as the best measure to counter isolation. Loubser advocated a number of goals, namely the promotion of stability in neighbouring states which would lead to reduced hostility; the promotion of common interests, which would lead to political cooperation with black neighbours; and, perhaps most importantly, it would be useful in applying direct pressure should the first two goals be less than successful (Loubser, as quoted by Barber and Barratt, 1990:132). South Africa was well aware of black African states' suspicions about its motives, and as a result only offered assistance when requested to do so and then it was in the form of a business transaction (Geldenhuis, 1984:154).

During the first few years of UDI, there was a relatively good relationship between South Africa and Rhodesia as they stood together against the sanctions of the international community and the onslaught of black guerrillas. However, as regional changes began to occur in the early 1970s, this relationship began to falter. Vorster persisted in using railway diplomacy throughout the 1970s, but political relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate. When Smith closed the Zambian border to try to curb Zambian support for guerrilla fighters without consulting Vorster, the South African leader made his unhappiness about the issue clear to Smith who then retracted his original decision (Barber and Barratt, 1990:138-139). Smith's actions had endangered South Africa's attempts at railway diplomacy and improving links with black Africa.

Despite these periodical displays of strength, Vorster was not willing at that stage to “force Smith's hand” (quoted by Barber and Barratt, 1990:138). Although the South African government was eager to find a Rhodesian settlement, they also wanted it on their terms. Publicly, Vorster stated: “I am neither prepared to twist Mr Smith's arm nor prepared to dictate to him” as that would constitute interference in Rhodesia's internal affairs (quoted by Barber and Barratt, 1990:139). Muller added that “South Africa's attitude has always been to avoid the escalation of violence, to create a climate for negotiation, to give advice whenever possible and to point out the alternatives and the dangers therein” (Sobel, 1978:89). Vorster continued to argue that South Africa would not prescribe to any of its neighbours what their policies should be. As it was, South Africa enjoyed a fairly successful

period by proving sanctions ineffective (and profiting at the same time); emphasising its regional leadership by occupying a “middleman” role, and fighting alongside Rhodesia in a guerrilla war, which they seemed to be winning (Barber and Barratt, 1990:138-139).

However, when it became clear that the Rhodesian issue was negatively affecting South Africa, Pretoria, began to try to solve the crisis. The Republic was aware that Rhodesia’s situation was jeopardising its outward policy in Africa and consequently could not afford to be regarded as the sole supporter of the rebel regime in Rhodesia any longer. Rhodesia was also damaging South Africa’s foreign relations since the Republic was facing increasing international pressure and condemnation over its continued economic support of Rhodesia (Geldenhuys, 1984:213-214).

The South African government hoped that a peaceful political settlement of the Rhodesian dispute with South Africa’s help, and in agreement with black Africa, could serve as a cornerstone on which a new regional stability could be built. In pursuit of this objective, South Africa began to rapidly transform the role of white Rhodesia from that of a vital defence outpost to that of a “sacrificial lamb for a new regional order” (Tamarkin, 1990:23).

There was also a concern that armed conflict in Rhodesia might escalate to the point where communist forces would be drawn in and South Africa would have to intervene (Tamarkin, 1990:23). South Africa wanted a multiracial government in an independent Rhodesia/Zimbabwe so as to ensure that the country continued to be a buffer state on South Africa’s border. In 1975, Vorster and Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda undertook a diplomatic initiative known as *détente* with the aim of resolving the Rhodesian conflict. Behind-the-scenes diplomacy and carefully organised public gestures by the two countries resulted in the Victoria Falls Conference between the Smith regime and the black nationalist movements in 1975 (Bond, 2002:15).

However, Mugabe did not trust Vorster, was opposed to Smith and was unimpressed by Kaunda. As a result, he was not committed to the *détente* proposals and had no serious interest in the negotiations. Mugabe later asserted that they had only decided to agree to *détente* as a tactic to gain enough time to organise and escalate the armed struggle. He also maintained that the other black Rhodesian leaders were being led into a “sell-out” (Barber and Barratt, 1990:183-184). Although pressure from Kaunda, Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) and Samora Machel (Mozambique) forced a united nationalist front to be formed, consisting of ZANU, ZAPU, UANC (United African National Council) and Frolizi (Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe), it had little impact as each movement

continued on its own way, with ZANU (under Mugabe) in particular gaining increased strength from its position in Mozambique.

It was clear that Rhodesia was moving inexorably towards black rule and South Africa increased pressure on Smith to reach some kind of settlement (Millar, 1985:7). In 1976, Vorster and US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger summoned Smith to Pretoria and told him that his goal of delaying black majority rule in Rhodesia for “a thousand years” was inconceivable and that he needed to accommodate the liberation movements in Rhodesia immediately (quoted by Millar, 1985:7). In truth, Vorster and Kissinger were also hoping to bolster the struggle against the USSR. By the late 1970s, the South African government had become convinced that it was the subject of a “total onslaught” undertaken by Moscow through African states and liberation movements, “using terrorism, economic boycotts, and psychological warfare and designed to destroy white power in southern Africa” (Millar, 1985:7).

Kissinger noted that Vorster played a crucial role in settling the Rhodesian issue. As he put it, Vorster “put the screws on” (quoted by Bond, 2002:15). South Africa cut off oil and military supplies and withdrew helicopter pilots and mechanics, greatly debilitating Rhodesia’s capacity to fight the war against the African nationalists and resulting in Smith’s branding of South Africa’s actions as “The Great Betrayal” (Bond, 2002:15; Geldenhuys, 1984:213-214). Vorster was also under the incorrect impression that the new government in Rhodesia would be moderate and receptive to Pretoria’s political attitudes (Millar, 1985:8).

This rather optimistic view might have been a result of the South African government’s covert attempts to influence the future government in Rhodesia. In 1978 South Africa embarked on a secret information project in Rhodesia known as “Operation Chicken”. The project revolved around providing R800 000 to the UANC. It was based on the notion that although Bishop Abel Muzorewa was the leader of the UANC, Mr James Chikerama, a senior office-holder, was the actual power and would inevitably replace Muzorewa. Chikerama therefore became the focal point of South African support, hence the name of the operation. The money was to be used to help the UANC win the election after Rhodesia’s internal settlement in 1978. Increasing international pressure, economic difficulties, intensifying guerrilla war and declining white morale led to Smith finally fashioning what was termed an “internal settlement”, which meant that a black surrogate regime led by Muzorewa took over until all parties to the conflict agreed to take part in the Lancaster House

Constitutional Conference in 1980. This conference foreshadowed Zimbabwean independence (Geldenhuys, 1984:118-119; Sithole, 1997:425).

Should the UANC win and rule over an independent Zimbabwe, it was expected in Pretoria that Chikerama, appreciative of the financial backing, would ensure that Zimbabwe would maintain trade and diplomatic ties with South Africa. While the UANC did win the election in 1979, Chikerama left to form another party, the Zimbabwe Democratic Party. Furthermore, the UANC was temporary as, following the Lancaster House Agreement, ZANU and Mugabe won a landslide election victory that crippled the UANC (Geldenhuys, 1984:118-119).

3.1.2. CONSAS and SADCC

In 1974, Vorster began to speak about a power bloc of independent states developing in southern Africa. Later he referred to a regional “constellation of politically completely independent states” sustaining close economic links (Geldenhuys, 1984:39). South Africa was seen as assuming the lead in bringing this about because it was the most developed country in Africa (Geldenhuys and Venter, 1979:49). The grand constellation of southern African states (CONSAS) would mean that South African corporations would be at the core of regional technical and developmental plans. It would also aid South Africa in its attempts to assert its power in the region and maintain economic dependence by its neighbours on South Africa’s rail routes, ports and high-technology products. South Africa already had a large presence in Rhodesia’s economy, having established a base for itself since UDI, with at least 43 South African firms operating in Rhodesia (Sylvester, 1991:167).

After Vorster, P.W. Botha developed the constellation proposal by suggesting a confederation of sorts with the expectation that an independent Rhodesia/Zimbabwe under Bishop Muzorewa and an independent Namibia would be non-Marxist and “broadly sympathetic” to South Africa. In 1979 Mr Pik Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, visualised that the constellation would be composed of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Transkei, Bophuthatswana (and other homelands which became independent), Rhodesia and Namibia. Botha hoped that these countries would unite under a common economic, security and political outlook. He based his hopes on a number of assumptions (Geldenhuys, 1981:2).

Firstly, South Africa implied that both whites and blacks in the southern African region needed to join forces in the fight against the one true threat of Marxism. Secondly, it was thought that a

constellation would offer an excellent opportunity for finding regional solutions to regional problems. It was also assumed that common economic, political and security issues were inexorably pushing most countries in the region towards a tighter and more formal relationship. Such an unrealistic outlook was bound to fail since South Africa's ideological and political views were so far from those of the black states, which were naturally unwilling to join any kind of association with a country practising racial discrimination (Geldenhuys, 1981:4). Furthermore, South Africa's neighbours obviously did not enjoy being so dependent on South Africa (for example, by the end of 1983, 65-70% of Zimbabwe's foreign trade was sent through South Africa) and although Western economic aid had been helpful, it was only marginally so. Aid from the USSR had been predominantly military in nature. Therefore, from 1977 onwards, the frontline states began to discuss the establishment of their own regional economic association (Millar, 1985:8-9).

The emergence of an independent Zimbabwe under Mugabe was the nail in the coffin for the constellation plan ever including African neighbours. Mugabe made it clear that Zimbabwe would never enter into the constellation. He also distanced himself politically from South Africa by joining the other frontline states in their endeavour to develop an economic grouping that would allow for less dependence on South Africa's economic, transport and communication systems (Geldenhuys, 1981:4). The result was the formation of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in April 1980. SADCC included the frontline states and was expanded to include Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Seven of the nine member states were dependent on South Africa for trade and transport links. SADCC was dubbed the "counter-constellation", which in itself intimated the black states' opposition to South Africa's proposed constellation (Geldenhuys, 1984:41).

While SADCC's intention to reduce dependence on South Africa was clearly desirable on paper, it was much more difficult to implement in practice. The economic organisation made slow progress in reducing member states' economic dependence on South Africa (Barber and Barratt, 1990:268). Meanwhile the "constellation" was left with only South Africa and its homeland states (Millar, 1985:7). With this last attempt at regional unification extinguished, "South Africa alone was left, a target of black nationalism at home and of black liberation abroad" (Millar, 1985:6).

Despite its preoccupation with its immediate neighbours, apartheid South Africa was always mindful of the rest of the continent. South Africa's awareness that its relations with the rest of the world were determined by its relationship with Africa was reflected in a declaration made by a government

backbencher in 1974, D.J. De Villiers: “South Africa is an indissoluble part of Africa” and not “ an untouchable island in the sea of nations of Africa” (Barber and Barratt, 1990: 143). South Africa viewed itself as the leader on the continent and when another African state, Nigeria, emerged as potential competition for that position, South Africa was wary. Furthermore, Nigeria’s anti-apartheid stance meant that the relations between South Africa and Nigeria were characteristically antagonistic. The next section will analyse the relationship between South Africa and Nigeria.

3.1.3. Nigeria’s relations with South Africa, 1960-1966

Great Britain colonised the territory that is present-day Nigeria during the late 1800s and early 1900s. In 1914, Britain merged Northern and Southern Nigeria into a single territory, which was administered for the most part by traditional native rulers (while still under the supervision of colonial authorities). In an attempt to mollify religious and regional tensions as well as to accommodate the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, particularly the Ibo (in the east), the Yoruba (in the west) and the Hausa and Fulani (in the north), Britain introduced a new Nigerian Constitution in 1947. The Constitution established a federal system of government based on three regions: Eastern, Western and Northern (Synge, 2001:744). The Eastern region, which was controlled by the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), had predominantly Ibo support and was led by Dr Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe. In the west, the Yoruba people backed the Action Group (AG) led by Obafemi Awolowo. The largest area, the Northern region, was dominated by the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) and represented the Hausa-Fulani elite. The sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello (later Sir Ahmadu), was the formally recognised leader but the NPC’s political and later parliamentary spokesman was Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (later Sir Abubakar) (Matthews and Solomon, 2002:12-13; Synge, 2001:744).

The Federation of Nigeria became self-governing in 1954 and in 1957 Balewa became the first Prime Minister. At a constitutional conference in 1958, it was agreed that Nigeria should become independent and so elections for an extended federal legislature took place in December 1959. Despite lacking an overall majority, the NPC became the largest party in the new legislature (Europa World Year Book, 2002b:3020). Balewa led a coalition government of the NPC and the NCNC. Nigeria achieved its independence on 1 October 1960 and operated initially as a constitutional monarchy. Dr Azikiwe of the NCNC became the Governor-General while Balewa remained Prime Minister (he exercised executive power) and also took charge of Foreign Affairs. The Northern, Western and Eastern regions formed the tripartite structure until the Mid-Western Region was

created in 1963 (Ndibe, 1999:1436). In October 1963, the country was renamed the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Azikiwe became Nigeria's first (non-executive) President.

Before the general election in Nigeria in 1964, a number of electoral malpractices manifested themselves in political opponents being harassed, assaulted and intimidated. Tensions increased with such ferocity that it prompted President Azikiwe to invite all party leaders for talks in Lagos in late 1964. A peace treaty was eventually agreed upon and signed by all the participants (Akinboye, 2001:4).

Despite this treaty, the agreement was breached on several occasions. The electoral process was not duly followed and as a result the electoral figures were manipulated in favour of the ruling party (Akinboye, 2001:4; Ndibe, 1999:1436). This was most evident in the Western Region where the parliamentary elections were rigged by the ruling party, resulting in arson, numerous killings and a general breakdown of law and order (Akinboye, 2001:4; Ndibe, 1999:1436). The politicians and their supporters did not want to compromise or even show restraint in their actions and many politicians began to use their positions to enrich both themselves and their followers. Nigerian political parties were expected to integrate the people but as the parties themselves were tribally oriented they failed to bridge the ethnic and linguistic divide and instead reinforced the existing social cleavages (Akinboye, 2001:4). Ethnic politics, intolerance and the acquisition of power as well as the overwhelming desire to dominate opponents, bribery, corruption, misuse of power, electoral malpractices and violence characterised the entire period and culminated in destroying democracy and subsequently the collapse of the First Republic as conditions became ripe for a military *coup d'état* in January 1966 (Akinboye, 2001:4; Ndibe, 1999:1436).

Balewa was killed and the civilian government was overthrown largely by Ibo junior army officers from the Eastern Region. Those federal ministers who survived the *coup* handed power over to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (an Ibo), who then established a Supreme Military Council, suspended the constitution and imposed emergency rule (Synge, 2001:744).

At this time, the primary issue that concerned the white government in South Africa was that of security, because despite the suppression of black nationalists domestically, there were disturbing events elsewhere on the continent. Among these were the Rhodesian crisis next door and the military *coups* in Ghana and Nigeria (discussed above). While these *coups* did not pose a direct

military threat to South Africa, the white government was nevertheless worried, particularly since they were steadfast on preserving white minority rule in South Africa and the existence of militant black regimes that were hostile to the Republic was unnerving (Barber and Barratt, 1990:107). The government responded to these events with the message that South Africa's future depended more than ever on a strong and determined government that would not surrender the rights of whites (Barber and Barratt, 1990:107).

Moreover, the South African government was depending on its economic dominance in the region to facilitate regional cooperation. However, the new military regimes in Ghana and Nigeria regarded South Africa with nothing short of hostility. While the South African government had planned, as a part of its African policy, to offer economic and technical cooperation on the continent, the newly emerging states such as Nigeria were in the middle belt of Africa. They had few links with South Africa and were not willing to establish new ones since they did not view South Africa as a potential economic partner, only as a racist state (Barber and Barratt, 1990:76).

3.1.4. The Biafran Civil War and South Africa's involvement, 1967–1970

Six months after the first *coup* in 1966, northern army officers launched a counter *coup*, killing Aguiyi-Ironsi and transferring power to the Chief of Staff of the Army, Lt.-Colonel Yakubu Gowon. Gowon reintroduced the federal system. Throughout his nine-year term, Nigeria experienced several violent events beginning with the mass slaughter of Ibo people throughout the Northern Region. Following a dispute between the federal government and the military governor of the Eastern Region, Lt-Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, over the distribution of petroleum revenues, Gowon announced the creation of a 12-state structure to replace the four existing regions. Ojukwu responded by announcing the secession of the Eastern Region from the Federation and proclaiming its independence as the Republic of Biafra. A civil war began (Europa World Year Book, 2002b:3020; Ndibe, 1999:1436).

Biafra was formally recognised by Tanzania, Zambia, Gabon, the Ivory Coast and South Africa (ICE, 2004: Internet source). South Africa offered to aid Biafra in the earliest stages of the secession attempt, but it was rejected at first. However, Ojukwu agreed to accept Vorster's help later on, justifying his acceptance by stating that for Biafra's cause he would receive aid from "the devil himself". White-ruled Rhodesia and Portugal also offered their support to Biafra. These three white-dominated countries (which were sworn enemies of African independence movements) hoped

that by sustaining an exhausting war in Africa's potentially strongest black state, that they could "weaken African unity, delay the day of more effective African intervention in southern Africa, and contribute to their own propaganda in the West of an unstable, turbulent and risky black continent" (Legum, 1974:77). In addition, the fragmentation of Nigeria would have weakened Africa and hindered its efforts to rid the continent of colonialism and racism (Obasanjo, 1981:154).

According to some sources, South African Military Intelligence believed that the Republic needed to gain a diplomatic foothold in an English-speaking state in the core of black Africa. When the Ibo people tried to establish an independent state of Biafra, Military Intelligence saw an opportunity to win friends for South Africa by supplying the secessionists with arms and providing moral support. If Biafra was to successfully gain its independence, then it would be heavily indebted to South Africa. Vorster agreed to provide Biafra with clandestine military support (whether or not Foreign Affairs and the cabinet were consulted on the issue is unclear). There were also reports that South Africa delivered a wide variety of modern weapons to Biafra, although these reports were understandably denied by the then South African Defence Minister, Mr P.W. Botha. Botha insisted that South Africa's support was limited to humanitarian aid, which included a government gift of 5 000 Pounds to the International Red Cross Committee (Geldenhuis, 1984:84; Legum, 1974:77).

Biafran sources, however, asserted that South Africa and Rhodesia continued to supply arms and a small contingent of military advisors throughout the civil war. By 1968, more than 20 South African and Rhodesian airmen based in London had taken over as the principal conveyers of Biafra's military supplies. When it became clear that the Biafran rebellion was not going to succeed, South Africa stopped its military support (Geldenhuis, 1984:84).

The Biafran war lasted for 30 months and cost around one million lives, the majority of whom were civilians who died of famine as a result of blockades in the east. The civil war ended in January 1970 when federal forces eventually suppressed the rebellion. Ojukwu fled into exile and Biafran forces formally surrendered (Ndibe, 1999:1436).

The Biafran Civil War changed Nigerian foreign policy significantly. Whereas pre-civil war Nigeria tended to be pro-Western in most international issues (given its legacy as an ex-British colony), the actions of various countries during the war "increased awareness of the alignments within Africa and appreciation of the positive role that the OAU could play in African affairs" (quoted by Country Studies, 2004a: Internet source). White-dominated African countries had supported the Biafran

movement while the OAU sided with the Federal Government for Unity. It ensured that Africa henceforth remained high on Nigeria's foreign policy agenda (Country Studies, 2004a: Internet source).

3.2. South Africa's coercive diplomacy: regional destabilisation

Domestic and regional threats to South African security continued to escalate in the 1980s and as a result concern for security began to take precedence over South Africa's rather ambitious plans for dialogue and cooperation in the region. While the plans for CONSAS were fading rapidly, African liberation movements were gaining increased support from South Africa's neighbours. South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha (he was Prime Minister from 1978-1984 and then State President 1984-1989) resolved that the only way to extinguish the ANC threat was to have its armed wing forced out of its sanctuaries in surrounding states (Venter, 1993:14-15).

Therefore, South Africa began to follow a pro-active and aggressive interventionist policy aimed at establishing a more hospitable regional environment. A campaign of pre-emptive and punitive strikes, some covert and some overt, was launched against those neighbouring states that were offering sanctuary to anti-government guerrillas (Venter, 1993:14-15). It included direct military attacks on ANC and ZANU-PF targets. For example, a bomb exploded at the ZANU-PF headquarters in 1981 during a top-level party meeting. While no ZANU-PF leaders were actually injured, 150 civilians were injured and six killed and although no one claimed responsibility for the blast, the tensions between ZANU-PF and South Africa were greatly increased as a result (Astrow, 1983:172). The manipulation of bilateral economic links; the sabotage of infrastructure; and military support and training for dissidents opposing Mugabe's government were also characteristic of this coercive diplomacy. These interventionist policies were carried out throughout the 1980s and became commonly known as "destabilisation" (Geldenhuys, 1994:281; Millar, 1985:8; O'Meara, 1996:266).

Destabilisation had two major objectives. Firstly, it acted to deter neighbouring countries from providing support, whether through physical bases, weapons or funding, to South African liberation movements. Secondly, it intended to weaken the opposition of states in the region to the South African government (Osaghae, 1996:49). A consequence of the destabilisation policies was that South Africa's domination of the southern African region was artificially increased because

communication routes (apart from those actually passing through South Africa) were damaged (Roelofse-Campbell, 1997:18).

Mugabe charged South Africa with sponsoring anti-government forces to engage in all manner of interventionist activities. Apart from the economic pressure, especially on transport networks, South Africa's use of propaganda, assassinations, espionage, the induced defection of top Zimbabwean white officials from the police and armed forces, and the incursion of SADF (South African Defence Force) personnel into Zimbabwean territory, all contributed to a general sense of vulnerability in that country (Grundy, 1987:299). Zimbabwe also faced severe threats from South African-backed dissidents. Apart from those whites who had aligned themselves with the defeated Rhodesian Front regime, there were also many rival ZAPU militants in the west and conservative supporters of Muzorewa in the east who all bitterly opposed Mugabe. Some of these groups could have been mobilised with support from South Africa. Five thousand dissidents trained in South African camps in the Northern Transvaal were alleged to have engaged in numerous clandestine raids and killings in Zimbabwe. Mugabe displayed proof of this connection when, in 1982, a Zimbabwe army patrol killed three white SADF soldiers inside the Zimbabwean border. The group had apparently been on a mission, together with a unit of black troops, to sabotage the rail link to Mozambique (Davis, 1987:42).

A large amount of Zimbabwe's total external trade passed through South Africa's transportation network and this dependence of Zimbabwe on its southern neighbour made it extremely vulnerable to South Africa's destabilisation policies. Examples of South Africa's power included slow-downs in the transport of products and straightforward refusals to accept Zimbabwean exports or imports (Tamarkin, 1990:129-130).

South Africa has always had economic advantages over the rest of southern Africa rooted in its large mineral wealth, high industrial technology, vast primary producing capacity and its efficient capital, communications and marketing structures. This clear economic dominance of the region was often exploited and used as an instrument of political influence. In 1981, for example, South Africa threatened to withdraw 25 locomotives and 150 railway technicians from Zimbabwe and later to terminate its preferential trade agreement with Zimbabwe. Acts of sabotage reinforced this persuasion function. The railway line between Mutare on Zimbabwe's eastern border and Beira and the line between Harare and Bulawayo in Zimbabwe to Maputo was bombed, closing the natural trade route through Mozambique and greatly increasing regional dependence on South African

railways (Geldenhuys, 1984:154; Millar, 1985:8). Moreover, Zimbabwe was forced to spend about 5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) guarding the Beira Corridor as a result (Stoneman, 1998:78).

South Africa's economic strength combined with its military supremacy meant that the view that "the guns and the maize train will speak louder than a hundred speeches at the United Nations" began to dominate state policy decisions (Jenkins, as quoted by Barber and Barratt, 1990:268). While South Africa's DFA continued to conduct diplomacy in southern Africa, it was predominantly in the form of coercive diplomacy with the threat of economic measures a strong reality (Barber and Barratt, 1990:268; Zimmerman, 1987:195).

In June 1980, the ANC sabotaged three SASOL refineries and followed this up with equally devastating raids on other strategic targets including a crippling attack on the Koeberg nuclear reactor in December 1982. The South African government drew a direct link between these threats and South Africa's neighbouring states and presented these events as symptoms of a supposed Marxist threat or total onslaught. They were used to generate a "war psychosis" as well as bolstering domestic support for the South African government (O'Meara, 1996:266).

Establishing permanent bases for insurgents on South Africa's frontiers would be lethal policy for both the ANC and the host country. As a consequence, the ANC created a two-tiered approach to its guerrilla campaigns against apartheid. The outer arc was composed of the so-called "sanctuary states", namely Angola, Zambia and Tanzania. The ANC would set up its military camps, administrative offices and educational institutions there. The inner tier consisted of the "transit states" of Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho. The ANC would only set up temporary bases here as well as covert infiltration routes through which to funnel its guerrillas into and recruits out of South Africa as quickly as possible (Davis, 1987:46).

Davis (1987:47) contends that in every neighbouring state, the influential black elites approved and were supportive of ANC goals and were eager to be on the right side if it were to succeed in overturning apartheid. They managed to persuade authorities to "look the other way". Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs for Zimbabwe in 1983, Mr Eddison Zuobgo, asserted quite candidly, "it's very easy to cross from Zimbabwe to South Africa, and if they (ANC guerrillas) do, fine. We're not paid by South Africa to be their policemen" (Davis, 1987:47).

In May 1985, bombing raids on Gabarone and Lusaka and an ANC building in Harare prompted Mugabe to accuse South Africa of aggression and terrorism and resulted in Mugabe calling for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa (Barber and Barratt, 1990:331; Sylvester, 1991:172). Throughout the late 1980s, Mugabe used his position as chairman of the frontline states in southern Africa, to speak out constantly against the policies of apartheid in South Africa and frequently called on the other regional leaders to impose economic sanctions on Pretoria (Political Risk Services, 2002a:65). When P.W. Botha instituted a state of emergency in 1986 in an effort to eradicate anti-apartheid organisations and activities, Mugabe became especially forceful in his efforts. Together with Zambian President Kaunda, Mugabe made a compelling case for instigating comprehensive regional sanctions, including cutting air links with South Africa. However, the other regional states responded equally vigorously by stating unequivocally that they could not afford the economic losses (lost revenues and even retaliation by South Africa) that such an action would provoke (Sylvester, 1991:171-172). They also pointed out that terminating air links would simply encourage an escalation in South Africa's destabilisation policy in the region.

South Africa also financed and supplied the insurgent guerrilla group *Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo/MNR), whose members were waging a bloody war against the Frelimo government in Mozambique (Davis, 1987:43). Throughout the 1980s Renamo was successful in many cross-border operations, disabling vital pipelines and railways to Zimbabwe and threatening Zimbabwe's alternate route to the sea via the Beira corridor. Mugabe responded by providing military assistance to the Mozambique government (Brown, 2002:1139). This support for the Mozambique government as well as Mugabe's leading role in championing economic sanctions against South Africa spurred greater retaliatory action by the South African government. In May 1987, the SADF launched two raids in the same week on alleged bases of the ANC in Harare. In June 1988 a South African commando unit attempted to release five South African agents awaiting trial in Zimbabwe for similar bomb attacks on ANC targets, but was unsuccessful (Brown, 2002:1139).

3.3. Zimbabwe's and Nigeria's anti-apartheid stance

3.3.1. Mugabe and South Africa, 1980-1989

In the Zimbabwean elections of February 1980 Robert Mugabe was at the helm of ZANU and Joshua Nkomo led ZAPU. ZANU won an overwhelming 57 out of 80 black seats in the 100-

member parliament, ZAPU won 20 and the UANC gained three seats (Gregory, 1981:63). While Reverend Canaan Banana became President (a ceremonial post only), Mugabe became Prime Minister. Adopting a conciliatory tone, Mugabe immediately argued the need for reconciliation, emphasised non-alignment in foreign affairs and even included two whites in his cabinet (Brown, 2002:1133). In December 1989, Mugabe and Nkomo signed a “unity accord” which amalgamated ZAPU and ZANU into the one party, ZANU-PF (Sithole, 1997:427).

Zimbabwe established diplomatic relations with other African countries, Western countries, the People’s Republic of China as well as the USSR and its allies, but severed diplomatic links with South Africa to be replaced later by mutual trade representation. When Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, South Africa announced its desire to terminate the trade agreement established in 1964. However, Zimbabwe requested that the agreement remain in force. With a few exceptions, the agreement was honoured by both countries (Geldenhuys, 1984:132-133).

An early indication of the new Zimbabwean government’s attitude towards South Africa was the Republic’s exclusion from the independence ceremony and the presence instead of the ANC, Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and SWAPO (Geldenhuys, 1984:41). Moreover, Mugabe made it abundantly clear that he would offer political and moral support to all black opposition movements in South Africa (Brown, 2002:1133). While he officially denied providing military and logistical aid to South African liberation movements, Mugabe did admit to giving humanitarian assistance to South African refugees.

Almost immediately after Mugabe came into office following Zimbabwe’s independence, South Africa began to manipulate its economic links with that country by threatening not to renew the preferential trade agreement (Barber and Barratt, 1990:268). Although South African businesses constantly put pressure on Pretoria to stop damaging their prospects in Zimbabwe, the South African government began to back acts of sabotage against Zimbabwean ammunition storage buildings and army vehicles and bombed ZANU-PF headquarters. Tensions eased however when US Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker warned Pretoria against destabilising Zimbabwe and urged Mugabe to “modify his rhetoric” slightly considering that Zimbabwe needed South African foreign investment (Barber and Barratt, 1990:268, Southall, 1999:23). Consequently, Mugabe’s government tried to coexist with South Africa while maintaining a strong anti-apartheid posture. Officially, Mugabe maintained a “gentlemen’s agreement” with South Africa not to harbour ANC guerrillas in return for South Africa’s promise not to conduct “serious military actions against

Zimbabwe” (Sylvester, 1991:77-78). The result was that tentative trade relations and transport diplomacy continued despite political and diplomatic tension (Osaghae, 1996:48).

As a member of the frontline states, Zimbabwe constantly spoke out in condemnation of apartheid in international forums. However, pragmatism ensured that while pursuing an activist approach, Zimbabwe nevertheless signed a technical agreement with South Africa (and Botswana and Mozambique) on the establishment of the Limpopo Basin Permanent Technical Committee in 1986 (Van Wyk, 1999:73).

The South African issue dominated Zimbabwe’s foreign relations throughout the 1980s. Mugabe strongly supported mandatory sanctions against South Africa, which, although placing him in a bad light with the UK and US, nonetheless strengthened Zimbabwe’s position in NAM. Between 1986 and 1989, Mugabe’s “hard-line” stance on South Africa had a large influence on the agenda in NAM (he was serving as chair of NAM during this period). Mugabe used his position to constantly criticise the West for not doing enough to “bring down the apartheid regime”. He especially criticised the US’s constructive engagement with the South African government (Sylvester, 1991:172-173).

3.3.2. Nigeria’s anti-apartheid activity



When Nigeria became independent it was amidst hopes of becoming a great political and economic leader in Africa (Adebajo and Landsberg, 1996:64). However, under the Balewa regime Nigeria’s foreign policy was passive and subservient to the West (Babawale, 1995:112). Owing in part to the rather conservative nature of the coalition that formed the first national government, Nigeria proclaimed a policy of non-alignment and stayed close to Britain on many of its foreign policy issues – except that of white rule in southern Africa. Initially Nigeria did not want to stray too far from its old coloniser since Great Britain remained an important trading partner as well as aid donor (Ndibe, 1999:1436).

Following this rather docile approach, Nigeria’s initial plan of action with regard to South Africa was one of moral suasion. In 1960, Balewa refused the idea of boycotts to try to force a change in South Africa. He argued that boycotts “might make South Africa unduly bitter and there would be no end to the trouble which might then arise” (quoted by Fasehun, 1979:362). In addition, Balewa said he would be willing to exchange ambassadors with South Africa and even visit South Africa if

invited. He argued that an exchange of representation with South Africa did not mean that Nigeria agreed with the policies of the South African government at all. While this was true, and while diplomatic ties do not always confer legitimacy on domestic orders, an exchange of diplomatic representation would nevertheless create an impression of an affable relationship which would weaken the unity of African states on the South African issue – a division that, in Africa's view, South Africa could exploit to its advantage (Fasehun, 1979:362-365).

Balewa's strategy failed since it assumed that the white government in South Africa would be willing to give up its political and cultural dominance to a black majority. Verwoerd refused to invite Balewa to South Africa and accused him of being a fanatic and not at all moderate on the question of relations between white and non-white. Verwoerd's response to his overtures humiliated Balewa and together with increasing pressure from the Nigerian press and parliamentarians, Balewa demanded a diplomatic boycott of South Africa by all African states (Fasehun, 1979:362-365).

On 5 April 1960, a bill was passed in Nigeria urging the government to "take appropriate steps to ban the importation of South African goods". Although this motion was a direct result of the Sharpeville killings in South Africa (Nigerians had demonstrated vigorously against the massacre), it was also a reflection of the antagonism felt by the Nigerians towards everything connected with the South African government. The head of the Ministry of External Affairs, Brigadier Joseph Garba, made it clear that Nigeria regarded the liberation movements in southern Africa as "oppressed brothers" who were fighting for their freedom. He added that Nigeria would not be diverted from its responsibilities to Africa in this matter (Fasehun, 1979:362). Moreover, the Minister of Commerce, Zanna Bukar Dipcharima, made a promise that no white South African would be employed by the Nigerian government (Phillips, 1964:119). In effect, trading between the two countries did continue until 1969, which undermined Nigeria's role as an active liberation supporter. However, the amount was so small that it constituted less than 1% of total Nigerian trade.

In March 1961, Balewa went to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference with the principal objective of challenging South Africa's race policy and ended up joining other Afro-Asian prime ministers in forcing South Africa from the organisation (Fasehun, 1979:362). Verwoerd (who was at the Conference applying for continued membership for South Africa after its establishment of a republic) spoke at the time of the "unbridled attacks made by the Prime Ministers of India, Nigeria and Ghana" against the Republic (quoted by Geldenhuys, 1994:263). At a press conference later, Balewa noted that at one stage he threatened to withdraw Nigeria from the Commonwealth if South

Africa was not willing to modify its racial policies (Phillips, 1964:119). In order to avoid the humiliation of having his application rejected in a vote, or having the other Commonwealth members impose conditions on South Africa in return for its membership, Verwoerd withdrew his request. South Africa was effectively driven out of the Commonwealth (Geldenhuys, 1994:263).

In mid-April 1964, Nigerian Foreign Minister F.M. Wachuku expressed concern to the British High Commissioner in Lagos over the fate of those accused in the Rivonia trial in South Africa. Nigeria had received an appeal from the accused. While the Nigerian government still hoped for a peaceful settlement in South Africa, they had no diplomatic contacts with the South African government and could not therefore pursue diplomatic channels to that end. Therefore, they made a special request to the British government to try to influence South Africa on this matter. The Nigerian government also made a similar appeal to the US. Up to this point, the British government had refused to intervene but the Nigerian request induced them to take action, albeit cautiously. On 23 April the UK Ambassador to South Africa, Sir Hugh Stephenson, met with South African Foreign Minister Muller to convey the Nigerian message that “the execution of Mandela and the others would greatly weaken the position of those like the Nigerian Government who tried to counsel moderation” (Lissoni, 2000: Internet source).

The South African response to this informal representation led Stephenson to remark, “if we let it be known that we have made any sort of representations to the South African government on this subject, we shall gravely prejudice the chances of their commuting the death sentences” (quoted by Lissoni, 2000: Internet source). The official British stance remained therefore not to take action while the trial was in progress.

3.3.2.1. UN actions against apartheid

The UN Special Committee against Apartheid was established in 1962 and became the UN’s focal point and instrument for developing and overseeing a comprehensive plan of action against apartheid (Barber and Barratt, 1990:85). The Committee was established by the General Assembly and while the Western powers refrained from joining, the President of the General Assembly appointed eleven members: Algeria, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Malaya (now Malaysia), Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines and Somalia. The Committee began working officially in April 1963. Nigeria dominated the Committee over the years with a total of six Nigerians serving as chair, including Edwin Ogebe Ogbu (1972-1975); Leslie O. Harriman (1976-1979); B. Akporode Clark

(1979-1981); Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule (1981-1983); J.N.Garba (1984-1990) and Ibrahim A. Gambari (1990-1994) (Reddy, 1998: Internet source).

The primary goal of the Committee was to press for effective international sanctions against the South African government. It also took responsibility for arranging assistance to the victims of apartheid and to the liberation movements, and attempted to secure the widest possible support for action by constantly providing publicity of apartheid in South Africa and the “inhumanity” to the majority of people as well as their ongoing resistance to apartheid (Reddy, 1998: Internet source).

The Committee aided anti-apartheid movements and other organisations in organising public campaigns such as oil embargoes against South Africa, and financial, cultural, consumer and sports boycotts. In 1976, for example, Nigeria warned that it would organise a boycott of the 1976 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Alberta, should any Commonwealth country participate in sporting events with South Africa (they subsequently did boycott the event) (Fasehun, 1979:379). The Committee also lobbied for the release of political prisoners in South Africa. In a statement made at a Committee meeting on 20 June 1973, the Nigerian Chairman of the Committee, Edwin Ogebe Ogbu, spoke out against a South African court decision to sentence six anti-apartheid activists to terms of imprisonment from five to 15 years under the Terrorism Act. He declared apartheid to be a “crime against humanity” and argued that the criminals and terrorists were not those fighting for freedom and justice in South Africa but the South African regime itself (Ogebe Ogbu, 1973: Internet source).

In 1962, the General Assembly asked member states to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa, to boycott its goods, terminate all exports (particularly in the area of arms and ammunition) and close access to South African ships and aircraft. The resolution was passed by 67 votes to 16, with 23 abstentions (Barber and Barratt, 1990:81). Certain members of the Security Council did not want to impose such sweeping sanctions, but in 1963 the Council asked all states to embargo the sale of arms (including materials for arms manufacture), military vehicles and ammunition to South Africa. Despite this, however, the Special Committee on Apartheid submitted a report in 1970 criticising the ineffectiveness of the arms embargo. According to the Committee, various loopholes, interpretations and other violations had actually strengthened South Africa’s military capabilities (Bennett, 1995:130).

Ogebe Ogbu commended the anti-apartheid movement for its campaign to cease all military cooperation with the South African government. The Special Committee itself proposed a worldwide campaign to persuade all governments to participate in the arms embargo, to terminate all forms of military cooperation with the South African regime and to take measures to try to prevent any of their domestic corporations from undertaking any activities that would assist the South African regime in its military build-up. The Special Committee also put forward a resolution to the General Assembly and the Security Council calling for the abolition of the Simonstown Agreement, which they argued had become a pretext for the continued naval cooperation between the UK and South Africa (Ogebe Ogbu, 1973: Internet source).

Eventually in October 1977 the Security Council gained the cooperation of the US, UK and France in proposing a six-month mandatory arms ban against South Africa (Bennett, 1995:130). The African group of the UN argued that full mandatory sanctions should be imposed and while the West vetoed this they did concede that the arms ban should be indefinite and supported a resolution calling for the release of political prisoners in South Africa and the abolition of the homelands policy. The African group then requested that all states cease supplying arms to South Africa (Barber and Barratt, 1990:228).

Ogebe Ogbu urged the members of the UN not only to exert economic and other pressures on South Africa but also to support the liberation movements (Ogebe Ogbu, 1973: Internet source). The Committee did work closely with the ANC and PAC, which were represented at its meetings, and the OAU through which it channelled financial and military aid to liberation movements and which was also permanently represented at its meetings (Reddy, 1998: Internet source). In 1982, then President of the ANC Oliver Tambo commended the Committee for its work, declaring that it had been a “fighting weapon of the people of South Africa” and had helped to unite the international community in its support for the struggle of the people of South Africa (quoted by Reddy, 1998: Internet source).

The Special Committee organised a series of anti-apartheid seminars and conferences, most notably the UN Anti-Apartheid Conference, also referred to as the World Conference for Action Against Apartheid, which was held in Lagos, Nigeria, in August 1977. The conference was a collaborative effort of the UN, the OAU and Nigeria and was arranged in consultation with the recognised South African liberation movements (Reddy, 1994: Internet source).

The Committee also promoted world-wide adherence to international days as a way to demonstrate support for the liberation struggle, including the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Sharpeville Day), 21 March; International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa (Soweto Day), 16 June; International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women of South Africa and Namibia, 9 August; and the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners, 11 October (Reddy, 1998: Internet source).

3.3.2.2. Military rule in Nigeria and response to apartheid

The military has played a dominant role in Nigeria, considering that almost 75% of the forty-odd years of Nigeria's independence have been under military rule (Matthews and Solomon, 2002:14). Following the Biafran Civil War, Gowon overtly embarked on a policy of reconciliation, reconstruction and recovery. He announced plans for a gradual transition to civilian rule, while covertly he was attempting to derail the transition process so that he could keep himself in power. He funded the reconstruction of the country's war-damaged infrastructure with money from the vast amount made from crude oil exploitation. Between 1973 and 1974 oil revenues and foreign exchange earnings increased dramatically (Political Risk Services, 2002b:63).

Many new "white elephant" projects were undertaken. However, in its reconstruction activities the government almost entirely neglected agriculture, so while the economy experienced remarkable growth it also began to rely more heavily on imported food, capital goods and foreign loans. As Adeyemi (1998:83) notes, "what was once the bread basket of West Africa, (Nigeria) became a net importer of food". Moreover, the bulk of new wealth was consolidated in relatively few hands, and much of the state funding for development projects was channelled toward the north. This inequitable distribution of wealth caused much resentment among Nigeria's smaller and less politically influential ethnic groups (Ndibe, 1999:1436).

Gowon continued to hang on to power by using the excuse that "the Nigerian Armed Forces would not hand over power in chaos" (quoted by Akinboye, 2001:5). Gowon's real intentions became evident in 1976 when he proclaimed the hand-over date to be "no longer realistic". In an Independence Anniversary broadcast to the nation on 1 October 1974, Gowon declared that it would indeed amount to a betrayal of trust to adhere rigidly to the date. He claimed that those who would have the responsibility of leading the nation in the transition to civilian rule had not learned from past experiences (Akinboye, 2001:5).

Despite the domestic rumblings, Nigeria's foreign policy began to take off. With the military *coup* in 1966, a new foreign policy characterised by greater activism replaced the previously timid policy. The Federal Military Government (FMG) made it clear that it was opposed to white minority rule in Africa and committed to apartheid's elimination (allReference, 2004: Internet source). Consequently, Nigeria began increased intervention in regional and continental affairs (Babawale, 1995:112).

In 1973, Gowon (who was OAU Chairman at the time) asked the UN to "join hands in an effective and total isolation of the colonial and racist regimes in southern Africa" (quoted by Fasehun, 1979:369). Moreover, Gowon urged the members of the UN to provide the liberation movements with material assistance (arms and ammunition) to help them in their cause. Not all members of the OAU, however, agreed with Nigeria on the arms issue. Those states in disagreement (for example, the Ivory Coast) wanted the OAU to turn from the policy of confrontation to one of accommodation and dialogue, which Vorster had been pushing (Fasehun, 1979: 369-371). Vorster initiated the policy as a way to try to persuade African states of the viability of separate development in South Africa. The policy failed due to passionate resistance of most African states who saw dialogue as a way to persuade South Africa to abolish apartheid and were disenchanted with Vorster's view of it (Geldenhuys, 1994:270).

Gowon opposed dialogue, insisting, "unless the South African regime abrogates its obnoxious policy of apartheid any dialogue with it would be futile" (quoted by Fasehun, 1979:369). When the OAU met in 1971, 26 states agreed with Nigeria that dialogue was simply appeasing South Africa, while six states voted for dialogue and five abstained. The vote was a clear victory for Nigeria and showed the world that it was becoming an active liberation supporter (Fasehun, 1979:369-371).

Gowon's vigorous campaigning against the white regime in South Africa did not rule out his engaging in talks with parliamentarians from the opposition Progressive Party in South Africa. At the meeting, Gowon stressed that the African states were not against white people, but against the policies of apartheid (Ogebe Ogbu, 1973: Internet source).

After postponing the restoration of civilian rule indefinitely, Gowon was removed from office (in a bloodless *coup* this time) in 1975. He was replaced as head of state by Brigadier Murtala Ramat Muhammed (Europa World Year Book, 2002b:3020). The new leader immediately set out to reform the government and stop corruption by dismissing several public servants. He also engaged in a

bold new foreign policy centred mainly on the Angolan war and South Africa's intervention there. In November 1975, Nigeria (having only two weeks before denounced Soviet intervention in Angola) announced its recognition of the government of Agostinho Neto's Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), citing South Africa's intervention as the reason and alleging that there was an American-South African plot to "destroy a sister African country" (Barber and Barratt, 1990:195). Muhammed urged other African nations to show solidarity and back the MPLA too.

After only a few months in office, Muhammed was assassinated and replaced by his Chief of Staff, Lt-General Olusegun Obasanjo. In 1976, the FMG lent its weighty support to a privately sponsored Southern African Relief Fund, providing it with \$3,75 million. Obasanjo personally contributed \$3 000 and each member of his cabinet \$1 500. The purpose of the Fund was to "alleviate the plight of victims of racist oppression in Southern Africa" and to assist in their educational development (quoted by Fasehun, 1979:396-398). Muhammed also lifted Nigeria's earlier ban on liberation movements opening bases there, allowing Mr Sam Nujoma (leader of SWAPO) to open a base of operations in Nigeria in 1976. This move by Obasanjo increased Nigeria's status as a liberation supporter (Fasehun, 1979:396-398).

In the late 1970s, Nigeria began to focus increased attention on liberating southern Africa. This goal was even enshrined in the 1979 Nigerian Constitution. The promotion of African unity and the elimination of racial discrimination were also entrenched in the constitution (Country Studies, 2004a: Internet source). Although Nigeria had threatened to join the fight for southern African liberation, it did not go that far. Instead, Nigeria provided military and financial aid to the ANC in its efforts against the apartheid regime. Nigeria also provided military equipment to Mozambique in its struggle against South African-backed guerrillas (Country Studies, 2004a: Internet source).

Obasanjo handed power over to a democratically elected government in October 1979 and inaugurated the second Republic. Under President Shehu Shagari, foreign policy became once again largely subservient to the West. Despite this placidity, the Shagari regime remained active in the "rhetorical condemnation of apartheid and monetary donations to liberation movements" (Babawale, 1995:112).

Unfortunately there were no significant domestic changes and the politics of ethnicity, intolerance, misuse of power, corruption and electoral fraud continued to characterise Nigerian society. Corruption was so rife that the national treasury was almost emptied. In the 1983 presidential

elections, the Shagari government attempted to hold onto power by rigging the voting (Akinboye, 2001:4). Shagari was overthrown in another *coup*, and replaced by military officer Muhammadu Buhari. The military remained in power for the next 15 years (civilians gained control again in May 1999 after a successful political transition programme by General Abdulsalami Abubakar) (Akinboye, 2001:4).

When Buhari assumed power in 1983 he indicated that Nigeria's foreign policy would be guided by four key principles, namely the development of the continent through a regional economic grouping, ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States); the peaceful resolution of continental conflicts; the extinguishing of all remnants of colonialism; the liberation of South West Africa (now Namibia), and the destruction of apartheid in South Africa. The Buhari regime criticised South Africa over its stubborn attitude and slow pace of progress on South West Africa's independence and questioned America's policy of constructive engagement in South Africa, declaring it to be an erroneous approach (Babawale, 1995:112-113). Another *coup*, this one led by Ibrahim Babangida, overthrew Buhari in August 1985. A new military administration was then established - the Nigerian Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) with Babangida as President (Europa World Year Book, 2002b:3021).

Babangida declared that the solution of Africa's problems would constitute the basis of Nigeria's foreign policy. While Nigeria seemed committed to African liberation, there were inconsistencies within its own government over foreign policy issues. For example, during the 1985 Commonwealth Summit in the Bahamas, Nigeria's External Affairs Minister Bolaji Akinyemi and President Babangida's Second-in-Command, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe, clashed over Nigeria's participation in the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) established by Commonwealth nations to "investigate and mediate in the political crisis in South Africa". While Akinyemi said "no", Ukiwe supported the EPG. Eventually, Nigeria participated and General Olusegun Obasanjo became the co-chairman (Babawale, 1995:115).

3.3.2.3. The Eminent Persons Group

At its summit in Nassau in October 1985, the Commonwealth decided to establish a small group of eminent Commonwealth persons whose objective would be to encourage political dialogue in South Africa. The mandate of the EPG was set out in the Commonwealth Accord on Southern Africa or

the Nassau Accord (Fraser and Obasanjo, 1986: Internet source). The Accord called on the South African government to:

- a) Declare the apartheid system terminated and take specific steps to fulfil that intent.
- b) End the state of emergency in place at the time.
- c) Immediately release Nelson Mandela and others imprisoned on the basis of their opposition to apartheid.
- d) Create political freedom by lifting the bans on the ANC and other political parties.
- e) Suspend all violence and initiate dialogue across all lines of colour, politics and religion with a view to establishing a non-racial and representative (therefore democratic) government (Cay, 1985: Internet source).

The EPG consisted of seven members, including Obasanjo (Nigeria), Malcolm Fraser (Australia), Lord Anthony Barber (Britain), and John Malecela (Tanzania). Obasanjo and Fraser were co-chairmen. The EPG was responsible for trying to open a dialogue between the South African government and “true representatives” of the black majority. It was intended to pave the way for the introduction of a democratic and non-racial South Africa (CHOGM, 2003: Internet source).

Pretoria responded to the creation of this group with much scepticism. P.W. Botha did not want to participate in an exercise initiated by the Commonwealth, which he regarded as interference in South Africa’s domestic affairs (Geldenhuys, 1998:77). It was also felt that the group did not have “sufficient clout” to persuade Botha to introduce meaningful political change in South Africa (Barber and Barratt, 1990:328-329). However, the threat of sanctions was an ugly reality, the economy was in trouble and both Thatcher and Reagan were in favour of the EPG and simultaneously pressured P.W. Botha not to reject the initiative. Consequently South Africa changed its position on the EPG. Moreover, P.W. Botha suggested in a letter to the EPG that it could actually be useful if it could promote peaceful political dialogue that was unbiased. He even went as far as to say that all of the communities in South Africa needed to cooperate “in constructing an alternative system of government for South Africa” (Barber and Barratt, 1990:328-329).

Even the ANC was initially sceptical of the power the EPG could wield, viewing it as a repetition of the ineffective Western contact group in Namibia. However, the ANC needed the frontline states for their bases and support and came to favour the EPG mission to South Africa (Barber and Barratt, 1990:328-329).

Over a period of six months, members of the EPG met with P.W. Botha, Foreign Minister Pik Botha and other government ministers as well as members of the black population, including Nelson Mandela (in Pollsmoor Prison), Oliver Tambo and other exiled leaders of the ANC and PAC, and members of the frontline states. On the basis of the meetings and the premise of the Nassau Accord, the EPG developed a “possible negotiating concept” intended to facilitate a dialogue between the South African government and the black majority. The concept was presented to the government in March 1986 and also to the ANC, United Democratic Front (UDF) and other South African groups (Black and Klotz, 1995:8; Fraser and Obasanjo, 1986: Internet source).

However, on the morning of 19 May 1986, when the EPG was due to meet with the Cabinet Constitutional Committee, news broke that the SADF had raided Gaborone, Harare and Lusaka (three Commonwealth capitals) the previous night. The South African government defended its actions by reaffirming its commitment to combat terrorism. South Africa asserted that neighbouring countries could not “plead ignorance regarding the presence of terrorists in their countries” (Barber and Barratt, 1990:331).

The members of the EPG met in London in August 1986 to consider their final report. They noted that while the South African government had claimed to be willing to negotiate (in truth, while Foreign Minister Pik Botha had favoured negotiations, P.W. Botha and his generals had not) it was not prepared to negotiate fundamental change “nor to face the prospect of the end of white domination and white power in the foreseeable future” (Fraser and Obasanjo, 1986: Internet source; O’Meara, 1996:341).

The failure of the EPG’s final mission marked the end of the EPG initiative in South Africa and its “negotiating” concept. In its final report, the EPG argued in favour of imposing the economic measures set out in the Nassau Accord, as they believed that the South African government was greatly concerned about economic sanctions. The proposed measures included a ban on the sale and export of oil to South Africa; no government funding for trade missions to South Africa or for participation in exhibition and trade fairs in South Africa; an embargo on all military cooperation with South Africa; the discouragement of all cultural and scientific events (except where these might contribute towards the ending of apartheid), and a ban on the promotion of tourism to South Africa (Cay, 1985: Internet source).

UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stood alone in her refusal to implement comprehensive sanctions. Nigeria protested by leading a 32-nation boycott of the 13th Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Scotland, in July 1986 (Babawale, 1995:115). Thatcher did however agree (albeit reluctantly) to a voluntary ban on new investment and the promotion of tourism to South Africa. She also agreed to a ban on future imports of coal, iron and steel. The other Commonwealth leaders approved the measures accepted at Nassau and called on the rest of the 49-member Commonwealth and the wider international community to implement them (Barber and Barratt, 1990:332).

In 1987 the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa (CFMSA) was established. Once again Nigeria was among the Commonwealth countries appointed to the Committee, which was tasked with finding ways to keep the pressure on Pretoria. Despite a rather dubious start, the CFMSA's attempts to strengthen financial sanctions became its central strategic focus and one in which it carved itself a position of intellectual leadership. The CFMSA consulted with a range of representatives of South African opposition groups both within the country and those campaigning externally, including the ANC, PAC, trade unions, churches and the UDF (Vale and Black, 1994:10).

The CFMSA also commissioned a series of expert studies on trade and financial sanctions, security requirements of the frontline states and South Africa's destabilisation of its neighbours. While the CFMSA did not achieve as much in practice as they would have liked, they contributed to the increasing international pressure, through unremitting sanctions, on the South African regime to institute negotiated political change (Vale and Black, 1994: 10-11).

Apart from its position as a member of the CFMSA, Nigeria intensified its support of the struggle for African liberation. In 1987, Nigeria initiated a movement to expel South Africa from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) because of Pretoria's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This campaign was resisted by the major powers as they wanted South Africa to remain a member of the IAEA so they could monitor developments in that country more closely and continue to exert pressure on it to sign the NPT (Barber and Barratt, 1990:242).

Babangida gave both rhetorical and monetary support to liberation movements in southern Africa throughout his term in government. Reverend Jesse Jackson, the African-American leader, visited the frontline states with the help of the Nigerian government and then Akinyemi also embarked on a tour of the frontline states. In addition, Nigeria donated 10 million naira to liberation movements

and pledged an additional 50 million naira throughout the 1980s. In 1989, Nigeria gave \$1,5 million to SWAPO, \$1 million to the ANC and \$600 000 to the PAC (Babawale, 1995:115-118).

3.4. South Africa's transitional period and changing relationships, 1990-1994

Throughout the period 1980 to 1989, the Zimbabwean government maintained its policy of non-recognition of the South African government, with formal representation restricted to trade missions. However, reforms introduced by President De Klerk from 1990 began to change Zimbabwe's perception of South Africa (Engel, 1994:367).

The issue of sanctions became less important as the South African government unbanned the ANC and began to move towards negotiated constitutional change. When Mandela spoke in Harare in March 1990, he assured white South Africans that their black compatriots understood the suffering that racism had caused and "would not turn the tables on their oppressors any more than Mugabe had done in Zimbabwe". However, the letter bomb sent to Zimbabwean Reverend Michael Lapsley a month later, carried with it the message that South Africa continued to expect Zimbabwe to abide by its old "gentlemen's agreement" of not harbouring ANC members on its soil (Meldrum, as quoted by Sylvester, 1991:172).

Although Mugabe was hesitant to comment on the political changes in South Africa, the creation of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC - including NP and ANC functionaries) in 1993 in South Africa signalled the moment when Zimbabwe began slowly to shift its policy away from diplomatic isolation to more relaxed relations with South Africa (Engel, 1994:367).

Between 1990 and 1994 bilateral relations between the two countries slowly improved in the areas of trade, transport and security. In addition, many high-level exchanges took place in this same period, including:

- A visit from the South African Director General of Foreign Affairs, Mr Rusty Evans, to the Zimbabwe Minister of Foreign Affairs in Harare in August 1990 to discuss the repatriation of illegal immigrants.
- A visit, in 1990, by a delegation of South African Members of Parliament to Zimbabwe.
- The attendance by three ZANU-PF Ministers of the funeral of PAC President Zephania Mothopeng in Johannesburg in November 1990.

- The attendance by the Speaker of the Zimbabwean Parliament of a graduation ceremony at the University of Cape Town in 1990, where Nelson Mandela was awarded an honorary degree.
- The reception Mugabe hosted in April 1991 for the special advisor of the South African Reserve Bank (marking the first time Mugabe received a South African official).
- A meeting in 1992 between Mugabe and the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs at the signing of the Rome Peace Accord on Mozambique.
- A first meeting between a Zimbabwean Foreign Minister (Dr Nathan Shamuyarira) and his South African counterpart (Pik Botha) in 1993 to discuss ways of improving bilateral ties (Van Wyk, 1999:71).
- The first public meeting between De Klerk and Mugabe in January 1994 when they, together with Botswana's President Quett Masire, met to try to resolve the military mutiny in Lesotho (Country Studies, 2004b: Internet source).

With these and more contacts continuing, it was becoming impossible for Zimbabwe to maintain its policy of non-recognition towards the South African government. In addition, a massive drought in 1991 meant that food production and the generation of hydroelectric power in Zimbabwe were negatively affected. By the end of the year Mugabe had approved imports of 150 000 tonnes of maize from South Africa. There was an initial problem in the transportation of the maize as South Africa insisted on pre-shipment payment but an agreement was reached that the South African transport corporation Spoornet would handle 75% of all maize imports, Zimbabwean road haulers 16,67% and South African road haulers 8,33%. Although maize and later power supply were imported from South Africa (50 megawatts through Beit Bridge), official cooperation on a political level was still needed. It was only by mid-1993, when the South African government and the liberation movements had begun firm negotiations for transition in the country, that President Mugabe announced that Zimbabwe's official non-recognition policy towards South Africa could be changed (Engel, 1994:368-384).

In 1993, Zimbabwe mediated talks between the military wing of the PAC, Apla, and the South African Minister of Law and Order for a simultaneous cessation of hostilities as well as the lifting of sanctions against South Africa (Engel, 1994:368-384). In early 1994 De Klerk and Mugabe met in Gaborone to discuss the problems in Lesotho. South African and Zimbabwean Foreign Ministers also met in Messina to discuss areas where bilateral relations could be improved. Among the results

of this meeting was the establishment of the Joint Economic Committee (JEC). The committee's primary goal would be to ensure cooperation in the areas of transport, industry, trade, customs, agriculture and immigration (Van Wyk, 1999:75). The 1994 elections in South Africa ended Zimbabwe's policy of restricting diplomatic links with South Africa and laid the foundation for South Africa's integration into regional organisations, among them SADC (formerly SADCC).

Zimbabwe has, as is evident from the above, played an important role in supporting the liberation struggle in South Africa. Because Mugabe had been such a strong advocate of majority rule in South Africa, Nelson Mandela made Harare one of his first stops after his release from prison in 1990 (Sylvester, 1991:165), and in so doing indicated to the rest of the world where South Africa's future friendships would lie.

Nigeria upheld its hostile attitude towards South Africa for more than 30 years, speaking out loudly for African concerns during the continent's long war against apartheid (Adebajo and Landsberg, 1996:66). Even with the new political atmosphere created by De Klerk's government in the early 1990s, Nigeria was cautious about offering praise. President Babangida stated that while Nigeria welcomed the release of Mandela and other reform initiatives by De Klerk, "a lot more" still had to be done (quoted by Landsberg, 2004:93).

President De Klerk declared in his speech at the opening of the South African Parliament on 2 February 1990 that southern Africa now had a tremendous opportunity to "set aside its conflicts and ideological differences and draw up a joint programme of reconstruction". He asserted that hostile attitudes needed to be replaced by cooperation, confrontation by contact and disengagement by engagement. He declared that the violence and tensions felt on the continent for so long were over, making way instead for reconstruction and reconciliation. Shortly after his speech, De Klerk embarked on a whirlwind diplomatic tour, visiting a host of African countries including Nigeria (Venter, 1993:38-40).

When it was clear that South Africa was well on its way to fundamental reform, Nigeria warmed to De Klerk. In April 1992, De Klerk again visited Nigeria as Babangida's guest to discuss improving bilateral relations and trade. Babangida actually praised De Klerk for his efforts in South Africa and likened him to Mandela and Tutu. Although Mandela criticised the visit, the Nigerians informed the ANC that they would "not be dictated to by anyone's business but our own". In fact Babangida expressed his excitement that there "was at last someone in South Africa with whom we can do

business” (quoted by Landsberg, 2004:127). Nigeria also provided its “good offices” for a meeting between UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Pik Botha and Constitutional Development Minister, Roelf Meyer, in 1992 to discuss South Africa’s transitional process (Landsberg, 2004:127-128).

De Klerk was following a neo-realist approach based on the notion that South Africa was the regional power while also realising the limits to that power. The policy was markedly different from the coercive diplomacy exercised during the 1980s, employing instead the non-coercive instruments of diplomacy, economic cooperation and trade. As a result, De Klerk’s new Africa policy began to target specific regions on the continent that were commercially and geographically significant. De Klerk envisaged the division of Africa into four regional groupings each centred on an engine of growth “to help pull the continent out of its economic woes” (Geldenhuys, 1994:287). In West Africa, the focus was on Nigeria (Venter, 1993:38-40). In 1994 Nigeria and South Africa established diplomatic links.

Conclusion

The chapter intended to examine three main areas: firstly, South Africa’s foreign policy towards Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Nigeria at the height of the apartheid era; secondly, the response of these countries to South Africa’s apartheid practices; and thirdly, the nature of the relationships between South Africa and the countries in question from 1990-1994 when it was beginning its democratisation process.

The relationship between South Africa and Rhodesia in the 1960s, the Republic’s support of Rhodesia following UDI, and the subsequent economic sanctions of the international community were explored first. To understand the historical relationship between South Africa and the anti-apartheid movements the chapter also investigated South Africa’s support of the Smith regime against nationalist guerrillas in Rhodesia at the time. It was also recorded that while South Africa attempted to establish a cooperative constellation of states, Mugabe and South Africa’s other neighbours rejected it and initiated a coalition of their own in the form of SADCC. While this “counter-constellation” meant to reduce dependency on South Africa, the latter’s economic power proved too great for any practical success. The chapter then proceeded to discuss Nigeria’s bilateral relations with South Africa in the same time frame applied to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. It was found

that South Africa assisted the Biafrans during their civil war in the hopes that it would weaken Nigeria and delay its assistance of liberation movements in southern Africa.

Therefore, it can be said that South Africa's foreign policy during the period discussed was focused on self-preservation. Because of the geographical realities, South Africa did initially attempt regional co-operation and integration, but only on its own terms. In addition, the Republic was only relatively successful because although its neighbours were economically dependent on South Africa they were also extremely sensitive to its apartheid policies. It is also evident that growing antagonism towards South Africa by its neighbours prompted the Republic to abandon its outward policy in favour of far more coercive measures.

Mugabe's role, following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, in fighting apartheid was also analysed. South Africa employed many destabilisation policies in the form of cross border raids and bombings, which resulted in increased dependence on South Africa's transportation systems by its neighbouring countries. Nonetheless, Mugabe's support for South African liberation movements, the ANC and PAC, was constant. When De Klerk began to change South Africa's domestic policies for the better in 1990-1994, Mugabe kept up the pressure, only abandoning Zimbabwe's policy of non-recognition when the process of change in South Africa became irreversible.

The analysis indicated that Nigeria progressed from being a passive liberation supporter under Balewa's regime to assuming a far more active role as an anti-apartheid campaigner under Nigeria's military leadership. Nigeria's almost permanent chairmanship of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, its active role in the OAU and its chairmanship of the Anti-Apartheid Conference in 1977 all indicated to the world that Nigeria was a leader in this field. Nigeria was among the countries that forced South Africa out of the Commonwealth and also co-chaired the EPG established to investigate the possibility of a dialogue in South Africa. Although the EPG failed, Nigeria kept up its support of liberation movements in South Africa and pressured the UN to place a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, which it eventually did.

The chapter then discussed the early 1990s where it became clear that the South African government under De Klerk had to pursue a foreign policy aimed at ensuring its reacceptance into the regional and global community.

Having established the historical context of the bilateral relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe and Nigeria respectively, it is now pertinent to examine their post-1994 relationships, bearing in mind that the past has an influence on the future. The next chapter will analyse the new South Africa's attempts at conflict resolution in Nigeria in 1995 and its use of quiet diplomacy.



Chapter 4

South Africa's quiet diplomacy during the Nigerian crisis, 1995-1996

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with apartheid South Africa's relationships with Zimbabwe and Nigeria. Although this dissertation is exploring events in both of these countries, the chronological time frame of the Nigerian incident (1995-1996) gives Nigeria precedence. Therefore this chapter will analyse South Africa's response to the Nigerian crisis.

In international relations theory, the individual level of analysis emphasises the importance of the personal characteristics of people in positions of leadership, including those responsible for making foreign policy decisions on behalf of the state and of non-state actors (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2002:3). Therefore it is relevant to examine the symbolic status of Nelson Mandela, as the father figure in Africa, because of his central role in the Nigerian situation.

It was necessary to explore the old South Africa's relations with its African counterparts prior to 1994 to provide some foundation for analysis of the new South Africa's response to Africa after 1994. It is now pertinent that South Africa's new foreign policy be explained. Given that the purpose of the chapter is to analyse South Africa's response to an African crisis, attention will be paid only to South Africa's African policy. The chapter will then describe the events in Nigeria that led to the crisis of 1995-1996. This will be followed by an application of the relevant indicators of quiet diplomacy (previously presented and described in full in Chapter 2) to South Africa's reaction.

4.1. Nelson Mandela: South Africa's miracle man

States place significant value on status and prestige since both these can translate into power and influence. Throughout history, states have sought these goals primarily through military might and conquest. However, times have changed and as the international environment has adapted and developed, so too have the criteria for status and prestige. Now military might has taken a back seat to leadership in any number of fields from science and technology to diplomacy and political leadership. Nelson Mandela is an example of the latter. He is recognised and celebrated for his "vision, drive and determination" and has "revealed himself to be a man of dignity, humanity, charm and humour" and as such has become something of an icon throughout the world (Barber, 2004:58;

Van Niekerk, 2002:222). Mandela's heroic image really began during his long period of incarceration (almost 28 years) by the apartheid government. This long confinement together with his involvement in the liberation struggle contributed to how he was perceived by the world¹ (Gastrow, 1995:140). In 1982 an enormous "Release Mandela Campaign"² was launched by the domestic and international anti-apartheid movement. Winnie Mandela, his former wife, later recalled that "a deliberate decision was taken by the ANC to use him (Mandela) as a symbol of resistance" so that the people could have someone to fight for (quoted by Sitas, 2001:23). So it was that Mandela became the "apex" and "medium" of South Africa's liberation. The steady increase of international support for the liberation struggle and Mandela in particular meant that by the time he was finally released on 11 February 1990 he had become the most famous political prisoner in the world³ (Gastrow, 1995:140).

When the ANC won the first democratic election in 1994, the global community was astounded at Mandela's reconciliatory tone towards the opposition. Instead of taking revenge on the old South African government, he "extended the olive branch of cooperation" to all racial and ethnic groups in South Africa (quoted by Schraeder, 2001:236). Mandela was so revered for his attitude and forgiving demeanour that the international community raised him to a position of saviour and saint so that he has been referred to as "the visionary conciliator", "the man of forgiveness" and "the father of the nation" (Schraeder, 2001:236; Tait, 1995:11). Some even extolled that "in President Mandela the world has...found the ultimate symbol of freedom, reconciliation and moderation" (quoted by Tait, 1995:11).

Mandela has been referred to as a "world figure, a symbol of personal tolerance and South Africa's political miracle" (Barber and Vickers, 2001:339). Vale and Taylor (1999:2) go on to state confidently that Mandela's moral stature has "no real equals in the contemporary world". He also seems to exude an aura of something that cannot be described exactly, except to say that this

1. At the Rivonia trial, which began in October 1963, Mandela was tried along with eight others for conspiracy to overthrow the South African government (Gastrow, 1995:140). Mandela's statement from the dock after his conviction captured the world's attention. He declared that he would devote his life to "the ideal of a democratic and free society in which persons live together in harmony and with equal rights" (Stols, 2002:34). See Barber, J., 2004. Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution 1990-1999.

2. The Campaign organised many events, most notably the massive worldwide celebrations of Mandela's 70th birthday. The Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Concert was a 12-hour music concert that was broadcast to over fifty countries and was held on 11 June 1988 at Wembley Stadium in London (Ketchum, 1988: Internet source).

3. Mandela's magnetic personality and the cause that he represented meant that doors opened for him all over the world. In June 1990 he went on a six-week tour of Europe, the UK, the US and Africa. He was met with admiration by many heads of state and was applauded and cheered as a hero by hundreds of thousands of citizens in the countries he visited. This reception reinforced Mandela's growing prominence as a respected leader (Barber, 2004:58; Gastrow, 1995:141).

magnetism has yielded the use of the expression “Madiba Magic” (Madiba meaning “the old man”) (Vale and Taylor, 1999:2). In accordance with this magic, “all things are possible if and when President Mandela becomes involved” (Vale and Maseko, 1998:276).

Both South Africa’s successful transition to a democracy⁴ and Mandela’s personal stature contributed to South Africa’s prestige on the world stage (Saunders, 2003:972). Van Niekerk (2002:222) goes so far as to declare that Mandela “single-handedly established the status of South Africa in the international arena as a peacemaker and as a diverse state able to cope peacefully with a changing environment”. This newfound status, together with his standing in the international community and the reverence that people both within and without South Africa seem to hold for him, has meant that Mandela, the person has often been used as an instrument of foreign policy. This has most frequently been the case in conflict situations, where South Africa’s, and particularly Mandela’s, ability as a peacemaker has been highly sought after throughout the world and notably on the African continent (Vale and Taylor, 1999:2). For example, in June 1997 Mandela was the principal broker in organising the transfer of power in former Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Barber and Vickers, 2001:339).

4.2. The South African context: a new African policy

When a democratic South Africa came into its own, the UN and Western powers in general welcomed the arrival of a political and economic giant in Africa that they hoped could act not only as a model for the rest of Africa, but also as an economic engine⁵ to propel the rest of Africa forward and to facilitate peacemaking on the continent (Barber, 2000:65; Beinart, 2001:305; Mtimkulu, 1996: Internet source). South Africa was expected to assume the lead in both Africa’s internal affairs and in representing Africa on the global stage. It seemed natural that South Africa should help Africa by championing its areas of concern with respect to trade, socio-economic development and the environment in the international arena (Barber and Vickers, 2001:350; Mills, 2001:255; Venter, 1997:77). Moreover, Mandela, as South Africa’s first democratic president, found himself

4. As South Africa’s first democratically elected President, Mandela worked tirelessly to enunciate a philosophy of reconciliation and cultural pluralism in a new rainbow nation, a phrase first coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Beinart, 2001:289; Venter, 1997:77).

5. South Africa remains the pre-eminent economic power in southern and sub-Saharan Africa (Geldenhuis, 1990:81; Mills, 2001:4-5). South Africa accounts for almost 29% of the GDP of the whole continent and 41% of sub-Saharan Africa’s Gross National Product (GNP) and is the most industrialised economy in Africa. Its regional dominance is obvious with its economy alone being three times larger than the combined economies of all members of SADC (Van der Westhuizen, 1998:436).

catapulted into a role as the symbol of African leadership. As such he was personally placed under a lot of pressure to take on a wide range of responsibilities (Clapham, 1994:47).

The world's hope that South Africa would be Africa's saviour was a heavy responsibility for a country only recently emerging as a democracy and with many pressing internal responsibilities. However, it also appeared that South Africa was willing to take on the mantle offered to it. Mandela himself noted with some urgency, "if we (South Africa) do not devote our energies to this continent, we too could fall victim to the forces that have brought ruin to its various parts" (Mandela, 1993: Internet source). When Mandela was inaugurated in May 1994, then Secretary General of the UN, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, stated that South Africa had "regained its rightful place in Africa", the UN and the rest of the international community (quoted by Race Relations Survey, 1994/1995:422). At a meeting of the UN Security Council in the same month, Deputy President Mbeki confirmed that the new South Africa was dedicated to playing a role in international peacemaking, particularly in Africa (Race Relations Survey, 1994/1995:422).

During apartheid the South African government viewed the Republic as a Western-orientated state rather than as an African one. Moreover, as a target of opposition from other African states, South Africa was excluded from African organisations such as the OAU. When the new South African government came into power, it immediately reversed the situation (Barber and Vickers, 2001:349). Mandela declared that South Africa was "first and foremost an African country with responsibilities on the African continent", and especially southern Africa (Schraeder, 2001:241). South Africa became a member of the OAU on 23 May 1994 and joined SADC on 29 August 1994 (Venter, 1997:81). In an address to the UN General Assembly in October 1994, Mandela declared:

We (South Africa) are part of the region of southern Africa and the continent of Africa. As members of the SADC and the OAU, and an equal partner with other member states, we will play our role in the struggles of these organisations to build a continent and a region that will help to create for ourselves and all humanity a common world of peace and prosperity (Mandela, 1994a:8).

The new South Africa burst onto the international scene after apartheid as a moral authority on the continent, and consequently placed a hefty weight on moral values and principles in its foreign policy⁶ (Barber and Vickers, 2001:343). Furthermore, while South Africa had long been a middle

6. Considering the ANC's long campaign, together with other local and global partners, to liberate the South African majority and pursue human rights, it is understandable that the new government immediately began to promote the values it had crusaded for so long (Barber and Vickers, 2001:343).

power, it was only after 1994 that it was in a position to play roles typical of this position (Barber and Vickers, 2001:34; Van der Westhuizen, 1998:436). As a strong middle power on the continent, South Africa recognised its responsibilities in this regard.

The new government's attachment to idealism or a moral outlook in foreign relations was expressed in the ANC's foreign policy blueprint of December 1994 called Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa. In the document the first principle of foreign policy declared "a belief in, and preoccupation with, human rights which extends beyond the political, embracing the economic, social and environmental" (quoted by Olivier and Geldenhuys, 1997:364). The document went on to state that South Africa would "hold human rights central to foreign policy" and that it was absolutely committed to playing a "central role" in a "worldwide human rights campaign". It stated plainly that South Africa would not be afraid to nor would it be selective in raising human rights violations "with countries where our own or other interests would be negatively affected". In support of these statements, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo informed the Eleventh Conference of Foreign Ministers of NAM in 1994 that human rights would be the cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy and that the country would not hesitate to "carry the message to the far corners of the world". He added, "South Africa has suffered too much not to do so" (quoted by Olivier and Geldenhuys, 1997:364).

Mandela was also widely quoted as stating that human rights would be the "light that guides (South African) foreign affairs" (Crawford, 1995:96). Throughout his presidency he continually emphasised human rights and non-violent strategies in foreign policy and used his personal presence to pursue these (Beinart, 2001:305). The ANC document reinforced the pledge that South Africa, conscious of its experiences under apartheid, would continue its quest for human rights, vowing that "South Africa (would) immediately become a fully-fledged and vital member of the family of nations who hold human rights issues central to foreign policy". However, having expressed this, the document did go on to stipulate that certain of these steps would be symbolic only (ANC, 1994: Internet source).

The 1994 document also expressed a belief that the lasting problems of humankind could only be resolved through the promotion of democracy (ANC, 1994: Internet source). Mandela made it clear that democracy was especially important in Africa, and that South Africa's concern would be to secure a "spirit of tolerance and the ethos of (good) governance throughout the continent" (quoted by ANC, 1994: Internet source). He proclaimed that if there was a single lesson to be drawn from Africa's post-colonial history, it was that a good government was an accountable one. Based on this

vision, South Africa established the following as the basic principles of its foreign policy: promoting human rights, democracy and good governance; developing political and socio-economic potential; establishing productive and mutually beneficial connections with all African countries, and searching for lasting solutions to environmental degradation, arms proliferation, drug trafficking, discrimination against women, mass migration, drought and other natural disasters (Pahad, 1995:27).

At this point it is important to note that often a state's "commitment to human rights or ethical principles as the base-line of policy implies an on-going expectation to intervene, by force of arms if necessary, to prevent wrongdoing" (Evans, 1999a:12). This is an especially difficult policy to implement anywhere, but particularly because African leaders have an entrenched dedication to the preservation of state sovereignty⁷ and to the doctrine of non-intervention. African solidarity is very strong on this issue, which is why a human rights-based foreign policy is regarded with suspicion by many African states (Evans, 1999a:12). Given the above-mentioned statement, it seemed inevitable that when the new South African government began to espouse the promotion of democracy and human rights, other African leaders would have become uneasy "due to its inevitable clash with the cherished principle of sovereignty" (Schraeder, 2001:233).

While committed to human rights and democracy, the ANC government was also keen to promote itself as the leader of the so-called "African Renaissance" (the concept of an African Renaissance became universally known when Mbeki began to use it repeatedly) (Schraeder, 2001:241). This objective was also expressed in the ANC's 1994 document with the belief that "South Africa's foreign policy should reflect the interests of the African continent" (ANC, 1994: Internet source).

Mandela proclaimed unequivocally that South Africa would be guided in its foreign policy by a sense of African identity and "destiny". Obviously South Africa's geographic proximity with the rest of southern Africa meant that the southern region of the continent would be of primary concern to the new South African government (South Africa's regional policy will be discussed in Chapter 5). However, Mandela also made it clear that "because (he is) an African" the emphasis of South Africa's foreign relations would be on the promotion of peace and greater unity throughout the rest of the African continent as well (Crawford, 1995:97).

7. Sovereignty is highly valued the world over but has a particular resonance among African states because of their persistence in demonstrating independence from their former colonial "masters" and because it provides poor and weak states with the same formal equality as all other states (Barber, 2004:113).

The South African government's African approach was initially prompted by several key factors:

- Firstly, South Africa felt a sense of obligation to repay its debt to those countries that aided the liberation struggle.
- Secondly, it viewed its new position in Africa as an opportunity to promote a revival on the continent and to pursue the vision of an African Renaissance, including the establishment of democracy throughout Africa and the economic recovery of the continent.
- Thirdly, South Africa wanted to use its considerable moral authority. Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad stated that the most important contribution South Africa could make was “the moral authority (South Africa) derived from (its) own processes of national reconciliation and democracy” (quoted by Barber and Vickers, 2001:350).
- Finally, South Africa firmly believed that a stable continent with thriving economic possibilities could serve the country's own needs (Barber and Vickers, 2001:350).

At the OAU Meeting of Heads of State and Government in Tunis in June 1994, Mandela announced that South Africa was determined to remain true to the vision of a successful and democratic country, which the member states of the OAU held out for South Africa as they had rallied behind the liberation movements during apartheid (Mandela, 1994b:24). He added, “thus must we build the common victory of the total emancipation of Africa to obtain new successes for our continent as a whole” (Mandela, 1994b:25).



Despite South Africa's repeated declarations of its commitment to continental development, it also appeared weary of assuming the lead in that development process. The government emphasised its newness on the world stage and its relative inexperience because it was worried about being accused of pursuing a “big brother”⁸ status on the continent. This was a very real fear because, as Olivier and Geldenhuys (1997:372) warned, “the spectre of giantism” and South Africa throwing its weight around could easily have caused strains in the region. This was particularly the case with the strong regional actors Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe, who could have easily become indignant if South Africa tried to monopolise “the role of continental peace agent or keeper of the [democratic] faith” (Olivier and Geldenhuys, 1997:372).

In order to stress that the new South Africa's policy would be friendly towards the region in obvious

8. See Ahwireng, F. and P.J. McGowan, 2001. “Partner or Hegemon? South Africa in Africa”, in Broderick, J., Burford, G., and G. Freer, (eds.), South Africa's Policy: Dilemmas of a New Democracy.

contrast to the destabilisation policies the apartheid government utilised in the 1980s, Mandela argued that a democratic South Africa would “resist any pressure or temptation to pursue its own interests at the expense of the subcontinent” (Barber and Vickers, 2001:351; Herbst, 1995:149). The government also habitually stressed that South Africa would not act paternalistically or attempt to dominate the region but would accept its responsibilities towards the region through mutual respect and cooperation (Venter, 1997:76; Williams, 2001:99).

This view changed very quickly, however. In November 1996 Pahad explained that while initially South Africa did not see itself playing a leading role in the region because of the aforementioned reasons, it did come to realise that Africa and the world expected South Africa to take on many responsibilities (Barber and Vickers, 2001:351).

It is important to remember that whereas a state’s power was traditionally defined by population size, natural resources, economic prowess, military capabilities and political stability, power is now also defined by a state’s intangible resources such as ideology, culture and institutions (Nye, 1990:168). While it is evident that the new South Africa had considerable hard power given its aforementioned size and economic domination of the southern African region, South Africa also possessed vast soft power or symbolic influence since it had transformed its 50-year long institutionalisation of racial discrimination into a liberal democracy through a mostly peacefully negotiated settlement (Van der Westhuizen, 1995:74).

South Africa had been transformed from a pariah state during the Cold War years to become “the paragon of the 1990s” (Geldenhuys, 1990:98). This successful political transition meant that South Africa had a special voice in democratisation and ethical issues (Mills, 2001:4-5). Moreover, as Olivier and Geldenhuys (1997:369) note, Mandela’s immense prestige gave South Africa an enlarged sense of international importance.

It was argued that since the ANC demanded a high moral standpoint from the international community against apartheid, it should then follow through and apply similar principles in its foreign policy (Ratcliffe, as quoted by Dixon, 2003: Internet source). However, Suttner (1996:16) argues that the promotion of human rights and democracy in foreign policy is easier to state as an aspiration than it is actually to implement. The problem lies in what must actually be done in the realisation of this ideal. Should the state simply speak out forcefully against human rights

violations, break off diplomatic relations with offending countries altogether, apply sanctions or blockades or engage in multilateral action?

Before South Africa's actual employment of its foreign policy strategy towards Nigeria can be analysed, there needs to be an understanding of how the situation in Nigeria reached the point where it came to be referred to as a "crisis".

4.3. The Nigerian context: oil and the Ogoni uprising

In July 1987, after years of unrest and ethnic conflict, the AFRC, which replaced the Supreme Military Council, announced that power would be transferred to a civilian government in 1992 (already two years later than originally scheduled). In August, the AFRC initiated a programme to provide political education so that civilians would then be prepared for the transition (Synge, 2003:775).

In August 1990, President Babangida (former Chief of Staff of the Army) reshuffled the government. He replaced nine ministers and abolished the position of Chief of General Staff. Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomu, who had occupied the position, was then appointed to the newly created post of Vice-President. In preparation for the transition to civilian rule, Babangida announced that the entire presidency would be restructured and he reduced the size of the armed forces. Following this process, and as a way to restrict military influence in government, three ministers were made to retire from the armed forces. As a result, the Minister of Defence, Lt-General Sani Abacha, remained as the sole serving military officer in the Council of Ministers. Legislation introduced in November 1990 paved the way for an open ballot system in order to minimise electoral malpractice in the coming elections (Synge, 2003:775).

Despite the appearance of progress towards democracy on the electoral front, the government was confronted by numerous instances of ethnic and religious conflict (Synge, 2003:775). This conflict was largely associated with the anger of the ethnic minorities over the oil production in Nigeria.

The MNC Royal Dutch/Shell entered into a joint venture with the British government in 1956 when Shell discovered the first commercially viable Nigerian oil field in the Ijaw town, Oloibin, in Rivers State where Ogoniland is situated. Ogoniland is an area of 650 square kilometres on the Niger River Delta. Oil production began in 1958 and Shell continued its production after Nigeria gained its

independence in 1960. While Ogoniland⁹ was not the only source of oil in Nigeria - other fields had been discovered throughout the country - the Niger Delta region provided an estimated 90% of Nigeria's oil. An energy campaigner with Greenpeace, Steve Kretzmann (quoted by Cayford, 1996:184), stated that Shell's Nigerian subsidiary, the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC), managed the biggest joint venture in Nigeria that included the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Elf and Agip. By 1996, the SPDC was Shell's largest producer outside the US (accounting for close to 14% of Shell's production) and the dominant oil company in Ogoniland (Cayford, 1996:184).

In the early 1970s, the vast increase in the volume and price of Nigeria's crude oil meant that its political economy no longer centred on the traditional agricultural exports in the ethnic majority regions. Instead, petroleum export revenues, which were derived disproportionately from the southern minority states of Rivers, Bendel (now Delta and Edo) and Cross River, became the most important part of the Nigerian economy (Suberu, 1999:122-123).

Shell became the source of 90 to 95% of Nigeria's foreign exchange and contributed roughly 80% of the government's revenue. By 1994 Ogoniland had produced around \$30 billion worth of oil with the SPDC operating five large oil fields at Bomu, Korokoro, Yorla, Bodo West and Ebubu (Cayford, 1996:185).

The local environment of Ogoniland, which became known as the Drilling Fields because of all the oil extraction, was adversely effected by the vast production. A major network of above-ground pipes was poorly maintained so that there were habitual spills of crude oil on farmland. Many environmental groups estimate that in the years between 1976 and 1991 there were more than 3 000 oil spills across the Delta as well as gas flares that burned 24 hours a day. The flares resulted in constant noise and the by-products of soot and air pollution caused respiratory problems in the nearby Ogoni villages (Fay, 1999:678).

Moreover, acid rains caused destruction to farmland, the rivers became depleted of fish and the drinking water became polluted (Fay, 1999:678). Shell alleged that the majority of spills in

9. Ogoniland had a population of 500 000 Ogoni people, which meant that there were more than 1 200 people per square mile. Consequently, it was among the most densely populated regions in Nigeria (Cayford, 1996:184). Despite this, though, the rich soil and sufficient waterways traditionally sustained the Ogoni fishing and farming economy (Fay, 1999:678).

Ogoniland in 1992 were due to acts of sabotage by farmers who sought compensation money. Shell also blamed the Nigerian government, which was required (in its capacity as a majority partner) to pay 55% of any environmental costs. This environmental destruction contributed to an already growing resentment by the Ogoni¹⁰ (New York Times, 13/02/96).

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the profusion of different ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria meant that the issue of centralised as opposed to devolved power had been pertinent since the country gained independence. The traditionally dominant Northern Region, which had a preponderance of political and military power, also maintained control over the natural and economic resources of the Southern Region (Cayford, 1996:186).

While Nigeria was eventually divided into 30 states as well as the Federal Capital Territory, this division did not do enough to alter the regional foundation of the Nigerian political system and resulted instead in providing only the elites from the smaller groups access to federal power. Moreover, the separation of power along regional and ethnic lines contributed to the obvious lack of stability in the Nigerian government, manifesting in a “sequence of unstable, ineffective, and illegitimate governments” (Oginrunde, as quoted by Cayford, 1996:186). The military governments restricted the establishment of “wider political movements” and strengthened those already in power (Cayford, 1996:186).

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The minority ethnic groups living in the Niger Delta, particularly the Ogoni, felt that the major ethnic groups had exploited them (Matthews and Solomon, 2002:16). This marginalisation by the government, combined with the environmental deterioration caused by oil companies, “contributed a great deal to the eventual uniting of the majority of the Ogoni in a common cause” (Cayford, 1996:187). There was a need for solidarity among the Ogoni themselves since traditionally, the Ogoni were made up of three subgroups in the areas of Khana, Gokana and Tai-Elleme which did not historically share a close ethnic bond. Although a movement towards greater unity began as early as 1945 when the Ogoni Central Union was formed, the increasing costs of environmental destruction and underdevelopment prompted quicker cohesion since the Ogoni people came to understand that they faced common threats and therefore had a shared interest in challenging them (Cayford, 1996:187).

10. According to Suberu (1999:126), the Ogoni people in Rivers State “have been the most vociferous and vigorous agitators” for the political and economic rights of the ethnic minorities living in oil-producing areas.

Dr Ken Saro-Wiwa was among the Ogoni leaders who formed the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)¹¹ in October 1990. MOSOP was formed to “coordinate opposition to the exploitation of petroleum reserves in the territory of the Ogoni ethnic group”. They opposed the SPDC of Nigeria because despite the enormous wealth generated from the area, the infrastructure in Ogoniland was far from acceptable due to inadequate schooling and health facilities, roads, and electricity. Saro-Wiwa linked these economic and environmental problems discussed above directly to the Ogoni’s “lack of political voice” since the military regimes had done very little to protect the “rights of minority ethnic groups” (Fay, 1999:678; Synge, 2003:775).

MOSOP promised the clans “material progress and lump sum monetary compensation if the struggle succeeded” in the form of royalties for oil and damages for the environmental devastation (Cayford, 1996:188). Its first official act was the presentation of its seven-page manifesto, the Ogoni Bill of Rights, to the Nigerian government and people in 1990. The manifesto made clear MOSOP’s commitment to non-violence and voiced several demands, most notably political autonomy for the Ogoni people “within a wider Nigerian confederation”, the protection of local Ogoni languages and “control of a fair share of the economic resources derived from Ogoniland” (Cayford, 1996:188). The Bill also emphasised the ecological devastation of the Ogoni environment as a result of oil exploration and demanded environmental protection (Suberu, 1999:126).

The Nigerian government never recognised Ogoni claims as being legitimate and did not receive the Bill well since it basically constituted an attack on the Nigerian political system. Firstly it called for a decentralised confederation of almost completely autonomous states and secondly it attempted to subvert the primary source of government revenue, namely oil and mineral rights (Cayford, 1996:188).

Apart from his official role as the spokesman for MOSOP, Saro-Wiwa was also a well-known writer and he used his international connections to present the same Bill to among others the UN, the African Human Rights Commission, the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD), the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples, the Unrepresented Nations and People’s Organisation (UNPO), the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group,

11. This movement inspired the formation of the Ethnic Minority Rights Organisation of Africa (EMIROAF) and the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP) soon after, both of which participated in the later uprising (Cayford, 1996:187).

Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the London Rainforest Action Group and the Community of the Peace People (which is a league of Nobel prize winners) (Suberu, 1999:126).

MOSOP requested help from these organisations in pressuring the oil companies (especially Shell) and the Nigerian government to recognise Ogoni rights. For the next two years, MOSOP continued in its campaign to raise awareness and promote its agenda both within Nigeria and internationally. When, by December 1992, it had not received a reply from the Nigerian government, MOSOP sent letters of complaint directly to Shell, NNPC and Chevron. In the letters MOSOP demanded that the companies pay US \$6 billion in royalties due since 1958 (backdated), US \$4 billion in compensation for damage done to the environment, refrain from causing any more environmental destruction, cover all above-ground high-pressure pipes, and institute an efficient and productive environmental protection programme together with a negotiated settlement with the Ogoni on further oil production (Cayford, 1996:189).

MOSOP informed the companies that if they did not meet the demands they would face mass protests. The oil companies responded by increasing security and the Nigerian government declared a ban on all public demonstrations and ordered that any demands for self-determination and any interference in oil production were illegal and punishable by death as acts of treason (Cayford, 1996:189).



The Ogoni people's demands for compensation from the oil companies and from the Federal Government went unanswered, except for violent attacks on Ogoni villages. Although Shell stopped its operations in Ogoniland in 1993 and attempted to placate the Ogoni by building hospitals, schools and roads in the area, it was steadfast in its refusal to take responsibility for cleaning up the environment (Fay, 1999:678).

At the start of the UN Year of Indigenous Peoples on 4 January 1993, a mass demonstration was held at Bori. Roughly 300 000 people, including a significantly large number of Ogoni, attended the protest. At the rally, the Ogoni repeated the demands laid out in the Ogoni Bill of Rights and while there was no immediate physical conflict with the police, the leaders were later arrested and then released (Cayford, 1996:190).

Throughout February and March continuing mass demonstrations ended with arrests and escalating police persecution. The situation was becoming steadily worse. At the end of April 10 000 Ogoni

paraded at a construction site of a Shell pipeline in Biara where the American company, Willbros, had bulldozed farmland. In response to the rallies, Willbros called in government troops who subsequently opened fire on the masses, wounding eleven people and killing one (Cayford, 1996:190; Suberu, 1999:130).

In May 1993, the FMG announced a new law designed to severely clamp down on ethnic movements and agitators. The Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree imposed the death penalty on “advocates of ethnic autonomy who conspire with groups within or outside the country and profess ideas that minimise the sovereignty of Nigeria” (quoted by Suberu, 1996:42). The decree was announced after rumours that the Ogoni were designing their own flag and writing their own national anthem in preparation for declaring Ogoni autonomy (Suberu, 1996:42).

When the Nigerian elections approached in June 1993, Saro-Wiwa argued that any participation in the election would actually be endorsing the constitution, which did not guarantee minority rights. He moreover asserted that Babangida’s “elaborate orchestration of the political setting” meant that the election was basically a façade (Cayford, 1996:190). These pronouncements resulted in Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders being arrested later in June and charged with treason. Although Saro-Wiwa was released on bail in July, the charges of treason remained (Cayford, 1996:190).

In the elections, held on 12 June, wealthy publisher Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola reportedly obtained 62% of the vote in 19 states. This was verified by international observers who viewed the elections as being free and fair (Fadopé, 1997: Internet source). The US Congress even recognised the legitimacy of Abiola’s win. However, the elections were marred by allegations of sabotage made by the Nigerian National Defence and Security Council (NDSC). It was immediately charged by critics that the military simply did not want to hand over power to a civilian government (Geldenhuys, 2004:280). On 23 June the NDSC declared the election results to be invalid, with Babangida citing corruption and numerous other irregularities. He also prevented Abiola’s inauguration and new electoral regulations prohibited Abiola from contesting another presidential poll. Abiola, however, continued to claim that he had been legitimately elected as president (Synge, 2003:776-777).

After the annulment of the elections, mass fighting occurred throughout Ogoniland, resulting in the deaths of over a thousand people, the complete destruction of several villages and at least 30 000 people left homeless. The military were apparently also involved in instigating violence between

Ogoni and Okrikas in Port Harcourt where 40 people were killed. This large-scale violence¹² stopped most of the mass demonstrations of the Ogoni (Cayford, 1996:191).

As a result of these large-scale protests as well as pressure from leading members of the NDSC, particularly the Minister of Defence General Sani Abacha, Babangida resigned in August. An Interim Federal Executive Council was installed, with Ernest Shonekan heading the new administration. Shonekan invited MOSOP to talks, but these were scuppered when Abacha took power in November 1993 (Cayford, 1996:191; Synge, 2003:777).

Abacha promptly dissolved all organs of state that had been created to oversee the transition to democracy and replaced the state governors with military administrators. He also formed the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC), which consisted of senior military officials and the main members of a new Federal Executive Council (Geldenhuys, 2004:281; Synge, 2003:777). Abacha promised that he would restore democracy by the start of 1996 (later postponed to 1998), but his “relentless persecution of political opponents” and his generally brutal rule over Nigeria indicated a movement even further away from democracy than under Babangida’s rule (Geldenhuys, 2004:281).

Abacha initially attempted to generate public support by unbanning some media organisations and establishing a “rainbow” cabinet that included a diverse range of politicians from the Second Republic and pro-democracy supporters. However, his moves were denounced by a furious group of Third Republic senators who asserted that “every military administration justifies its takeover with claims to have the ability to clean up the society, but ends up being more corrupt than the preceding one” (New York Times, 21/11/93; Suberu, 1997:296). This proved to be true when, despite his declared support for freedom of speech and association, Abacha consistently increased his intimidation of the press by either directly taking over newspapers or shutting down others completely. The independent media that survived were routinely harassed and many journalists were forced to operate from makeshift offices that security forces found difficult to trace. Those newspapers critical of the Abacha regime were intercepted and re-published once the “offending” pieces had been removed and new pro-government items inserted in their place (Kakwenzire, 2000:83).

12. While it first appeared that the violence was caused by ethnic clashes between the Ogoni and Andoni (another group living in an oil producing area), later investigations revealed this to be unlikely since there was no clear dispute between the two groups. Additionally, two soldiers later interviewed by Human Rights Watch/Africa described how they had been ordered to shoot everyone who crossed their paths (Cayford, 1996:191).

Following Abacha's *coup*, ethnic and religious violence erupted throughout the country, while other minority groups followed MOSOP's example and began protesting for greater autonomy and revenue from oil production in their regions. These included the Movement for the Survival of the Izon Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta, the Movement for the Reparation to Ogbia, the Council for Ikwerre Nationality and the Southern Minorities Movement, among others. Just as in the Ogoni case, the Abacha regime used violent repression to quash the protests (Cayford, 1996:193).

In June 1994 Abiola declared himself head of state and President. He was arrested and charged a month later with treason. His detention prompted further protests and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association went on strike, demanding that Abiola be released. The strikes resulted in an "effective suspension of economic activity" as oil refineries were shut down and fuel supplies were interrupted (Europa World Year Book, 2002b: 3023).

Nigeria's political situation under Abacha was becoming steadily worse with Abacha increasing public executions. As he clamped down on dissidents, the list of victims of torture, disappearance, intimidation and murder grew longer (Edie, 2003:106). Abacha jailed and in other instances ordered the killing of thousands of pro-democracy and human rights activists, labour leaders, journalists and anyone else who opposed him (Geldenhuys, 2004:281).

Out of Nigeria's long history of military dictatorships, its human rights record was the most appalling under Abacha.¹³ Nigerians suffered from a range of abuses including genocide; detention and imprisonment; inhuman conditions of imprisonment; torture; unfair political trials; extra-judicial killings; trials of civilians before military or quasi-military tribunals, and public execution of persons convicted through unfair trials (Falana, 1997:196).

Despite growing criticism from every sector of civil society, Abacha began to employ ever more repressive tactics in an attempt to maintain power. Before 4 January 1994 many MOSOP leaders were temporarily arrested, probably in order to avoid a repeat of the mass demonstrations of 4 January 1993. Later the same month, Shell, Chevron and the NNPC stated that they had lost \$200 million in 1993 due to the protests and what they termed "unfavourable conditions", and called on

13. The Nigerian government had different views as to what constituted human rights abuses. Army spokesman General Fred Chijuka claimed, "Nigeria very much respects human rights" (Keesings, 1995a:40490).

the Nigerian government to take urgent measures (Cayford, 1996:191).

Colonel Dauda Komo headed up the new Rivers State administration and ordered increased punitive measures against the Ogoni. Soldiers were ordered to deal harshly with aggressive communities and “if necessary shoot trouble makers”. In a memorandum dated 12 May 1994, head of the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Okuntimo, disclosed the strategy behind their low intensity campaign against MOSOP: “Shell operations still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence”. The memo also advised the “wasting” of Ogoni leaders (Cayford, 1996:192; Mayibuye, 1995: Internet source).

On 21 May 1994, Chief Edward Kobani and three other pro-government Ogoni leaders were beaten to death by a mob (Suberu, 1996:44). The following morning Saro-Wiwa (who was by that time President of MOSOP) and his Deputy President Ledum Mitee were arrested. The Task Force was enlarged and began raiding Ogoni villages habitually throughout the summer months. Okuntimo referred to the raids quite blatantly as “psychological warfare” and involved police and soldiers shooting at random, beating villagers, raping women, stealing, taking so-called “settlement fees” and arresting hundreds of Ogoni (Cayford, 1996:192). Fifty people were executed by security forces and at least 600 were detained without trial. In an effort to suppress the flare-ups of violence in the area, the military administration of Rivers State decreed that the death sentence would be in force for any “civil disturbances occasioning death” (Kakwenzire, 2000:77).

Saro-Wiwa, Mitee and the other Ogoni leaders were held for eight months¹⁴ before eventually being charged with having incited the mob that killed the four Ogoni chiefs (Cayford, 1996:192). Saro-Wiwa declared his innocence and claimed that he and his colleagues were being framed for their opposition to Abacha’s military regime and to the oil industry (Maclean’s 20/11/95). After the charges were made, the government set up a three-man tribunal under Justice Abraham Auta to preside over their trial (Suberu, 1999:130). The tribunal was established in accordance with the Special Tribunal Edict (Offences Relating to Civil Disturbances), which allowed for the death penalty in instances where capital offences were committed “in connection with civil disturbances as well as previously non-capital crimes including attempted murder” (quoted by Cayford, 1996:192). Not being a part of the conventional judicial system, the tribunal’s rulings could not be appealed. Its

14. This method of detention without trial was not uncommon. Abacha also had prominent activist Sylvester Oidion-Akhaine, who was General Secretary of the Campaign for Democracy (an alliance of pro-democracy groups) as well as a staff member of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), arrested in 1995 (Kakwenzire, 2000:79).

verdict went directly to the PRC for ratification (Cayford, 1996:192).

There were numerous irregularities throughout the trial that contributed to widespread domestic and international condemnation. The Nigerian government appointed the tribunal itself and then only after the government had already declared that the defendants were guilty. The court was therefore clearly neither impartial nor independent of government influence. One of the three judges was actually a lieutenant colonel in the army. Defence lawyers were often denied access to their clients and on one occasion police physically attacked the lawyers outside the courthouse in Port Harcourt (Time, 13 November 1995:35).

Furthermore, the courthouse was routinely besieged by troops who threatened and often physically attacked the family and friends of those on trial. Evidence of corruption later came to light when two of the prosecution's witnesses signed affidavits stating how they had been bribed by security agents to testify against the defendants. They said that they had been offered large amounts of money, employment by the local government and contracts from Shell, to lie in court. The government faced other challenges in its efforts to prosecute the Ogoni leaders since MOSOP had always emphasised non-violent methods and had taken numerous documented steps to "quell acts of violent retribution by its members"(quoted by Cayford, 1996:193).

On 31 October 1995 Saro-Wiwa and eight others were sentenced to death. Despite intense criticism from the international community, the PRC confirmed the death sentences on 8 November. On 10 November the nine activists were executed by hanging (Cayford, 1996:194).

4.4. South Africa's quiet diplomacy in the Nigerian crisis

Since 1960, Nigeria's ruling generals pursued their "historic quest for *Pax Nigeriana*" or continental leadership (Adebajo, 2002:92). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Nigeria created ECOWAS in 1975 and provided military and diplomatic support to liberation movements in southern Africa, among other activities on the continent, all with a view to promoting itself as the peacemaker, the "big brother" and "giant" of Africa (Adebajo, 2002:92). However, after 1994 Nigeria was suddenly confronted with the reality of a new and democratic South Africa and could no longer play the role of benefactor of the anti-apartheid movement. Its importance dwindled in the shadow of the new darling of the continent.

This meant that there were now two strong leaders in Africa, with Nigeria acting as the economic and political giant in West Africa and South Africa in southern Africa (Black, 2003:3). Apart from being rivals for continental leadership, both South Africa and Nigeria aspired to a permanent African seat on the UN Security Council (Van Aardt, 1996:115).

The unstable situation in Nigeria was already beginning to snowball when the ANC-led government came to power (Black, 2003:40). Given the obvious tension that existed between the two countries because of the above-mentioned rivalry and given the vast range of human rights abuses under Abacha's regime as well as the new South African government's oft-stated dedication to promote human rights, it was inevitable that a clash would arise between them. What remained to be seen was how South Africa would deal with Nigeria. In examining South Africa's response, the features of quiet diplomacy – explored in Chapter 2 – need to be recalled:

- Personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state or government or senior officials.
- Avoidance of media exposure.
- The appearance of limited action or even inaction.
- Calm and tactful but persistent negotiation or dialogue in a non-threatening atmosphere.
- Constructive engagement with the target country in an effort to help solve the problem as quietly as possible.
- Diplomacy often carried out in the context of bilateral or multilateral efforts.

Those characteristics relevant to the Nigerian situation will now be applied. Certain features will be combined to avoid repetition.

4.4.1. Personal or direct diplomacy, persistent dialogue and constructive engagement

While Abiola was incarcerated and the military tribunal was trying the Ogoni Nine, the South African government began to play a mediating role with three aims in mind: to prevent the execution of the Ogoni activists; to encourage a return to democratic, civilian rule; and to secure Chief Abiola's release. In pursuit of these objectives, South Africa sent emissaries to Nigeria and hosted Nigerian representatives in Pretoria, most notably Nigeria's Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi (Barber, 2004:109; Van Aardt, 1996:11).

South Africa's diplomatic activity was thus conducted very much at state level. The South African government did not officially respond to any non-governmental representations, such as the appeals to Mandela by Nigerian author Wole Soyinka and Saro-Wiwa's son, Ken (Time, 27 November 1995:46; Van Aardt, 1996:112). Mandela first met Abacha briefly, then sent Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Foreign Minister Nzo and Deputy President Mbeki (who had served for three years as the ANC representative in Nigeria in the early 1970s) (Economist, 18/11/95).

Tutu went to Abuja in April to petition the release of Abiola as well as former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo (Adams, 1995:45). Obasanjo (who had stepped down as head of state a few years earlier in favour of a democratically elected civilian government) was arrested and charged with attempting a *coup* in March 1995. He and his former Vice-President General Shehu Yar'Adua (who had also been arrested) had both campaigned loudly for the restoration of an elected civilian government. Although Obasanjo was later released, he remained under house arrest (Keesings, 1995b:40442).

During a visit by Tutu to Abiola in prison, Abiola reportedly told him that he was now prepared to contemplate the conditional release which had been offered to him in August 1994 but which he had refused at the time. However, the Nigerian government made it abundantly clear that it was too late for Abiola to accept the earlier offer. Moreover, in a later meeting between Abacha and Tutu, Abacha declared that in view of the serious charges laid against Abiola he would not be allowed out on bail. Regarding Obasanjo's position, Tutu was informed that the restrictions would not be lifted until Obasanjo had been "cleared of involvement in a *coup* plot" earlier that year (Keesings, 1995b:40442).

Despite claims that Abiola had informed Tutu of his willingness to consider accepting conditional release, Abiola apparently rejected bail terms proposed by the military government a month later.¹⁵ On 14 July, the Nigerian Defence Ministry confirmed that Obasanjo and 39 others had been convicted. Shehu Yar'Adua was one among 14 accused sentenced to death, while Obasanjo received a life sentence. The news of the sentencing from the secret tribunal caused an international

15. Whether Tutu's attempts to persuade Abacha worked or Abacha had bail in mind is unknown, especially given Abacha's statement to Tutu that bail was not an option. Nevertheless, an anonymous source close to the presidency asserted that in May, senior government members approached Abiola again with a set of conditions. These included that Abiola accept "as irrevocable" the government's annulment of the presidential election results; that Abiola be placed under house arrest and that he would not be allowed to attend political meetings or give interviews to local or foreign journalists. Furthermore, he would be required to ensure that "nothing in his behaviour should be detrimental to Nigeria's vital interests, contribute to the destabilising of the country or tarnish its image" (Keesings, 1995c:40537).

uproar,¹⁶ with responses ranging from urgent expressions of concern to furious condemnation of the trial. Mandela remained adamant that ongoing dialogue would work and sent Mbeki to try to deal with the unfolding crisis (Keesings, 1995d:40630).

It seemed that Abacha's regime was showing signs of capitulation when, in a commentary broadcast on local radio, they announced that there might be a possible reprieve for the suspected plotters. However, it was stressed that any such decisions were not as a result of threats by "bullying Western nations", but that the Nigerian government was taking into consideration the requests of prominent domestic figures including former heads of state General Yakubu Gowon and Shegu Shagari as well as African leaders including Nelson Mandela, Jerry Rawlings from Ghana and Idriss D'eby from Chad (Keesings, 1995d:40630).

On his return from a meeting with Abacha in July 1995, Mbeki stated "Western countries must accept the capacity of African countries to set an African agenda" (Venter, 1997:94). He also emphasised continued dialogue and urged that Nigeria's regime should not be isolated. Effectively, South Africa wanted a policy of constructive engagement with Abacha's government (the very thing which the ANC criticised the West of doing with the apartheid government) (Economist, 18/11/95). However, Pahad later asserted that the DFA was not applying the same kind of policy as the West had done *vis-à-vis* white-ruled South Africa, claiming that Western states had hidden behind constructive engagement to avoid pressing for real and lasting change in South Africa. He added that there was nothing wrong in using constructive engagement as long as it was not weak (Mail and Guardian online, 1995: Internet source).

Despite mounting international pressure from the continent and the rest of the world for the Nigerian government to restore civilian rule and show clemency towards Obasanjo and others, Abacha still gave no sign of softening his position. Instead, he appeared to be stepping up his violation of human rights when, in August, the independent daily A.M. News reported that two of its editors had been given sentences of life imprisonment by the military tribunal for publishing stories covering the failed *coup* attempt in March 1995. Kunle Ajibade of the weekly News and George Mbah of Tell newspaper had already been arrested as "accessories to treason" in May (Keesings, 1995e:40668).

16. The Commonwealth and European Union (EU), as well as the US, UK, French and Canadian governments were shocked at the news (Keesings, 1995d:40630).

On 1 October Abacha announced that the death sentences imposed on the 43 alleged *coup* plotters earlier that year would be commuted to prison terms and that life sentences, including Obasanjo's and Abiola's, would be reduced (Keesings, 1995f:40758). He also declared that the military government would remain in office until 1 October 1998, by which time reforms would have been completed in preparation for democratic elections. While many accused Mbeki, Nzo and Tutu of having downright failed to achieve any success in their low-key negotiations, Mandela later defended the use of quiet diplomacy towards Nigeria. He was quoted on SABC Radio as saying that due to Mbeki's intervention in Nigeria, they had managed to prevent the execution of the 43 political prisoners (ANC news briefing, 1995: Internet source). The South African government was pleased that they had achieved some success with at least two of their three desired objectives: a promise to return to democracy and the commuting of the death sentences of Obasanjo and others to life imprisonment (Venter, 1997:93).

While this presented some reason for hope, South African foreign policymakers still wanted more tangible results which they believed would be forced on Abacha at the 30th biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) to be held in Auckland, New Zealand, in November. Prior to the meeting Mbeki tried, without success, to contact Abacha to ensure that he would personally attend the summit. Abacha, however, sent Ikimi in his place (Van Aardt, 1996:112).

Traditionally, African leaders have often looked the other way when their colleagues abused their positions in power (Time, 27 November 1995:46). This appeared to be the case once again when, on the Summit's opening day, Commonwealth leaders were divided over how critical a stance to take in public over the death sentences which had been imposed on Saro-Wiwa and his co-accused.¹⁷ Heads of government individually appealed for clemency, but those who spoke on the first day did not mention Nigeria explicitly (Keesings, 1995g:40806; 1995h:40850).

At the CHOGM Mandela did not speak out in protest against the Nigerian situation, disappointing many human rights activists. He chose instead to continue his soft line in his initial dealings with Nigeria and told New Zealand television that he was correct in trying to persuade the Abacha regime to consider clemency (Matloff, 1995:1). When asked whether or not it was necessary to act against Nigeria, he replied: "if persuasion does not succeed it will be time enough to consider options"

17. The other Ogoni accused were Baribor Bera, Saturday Dobee, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbokoo, Barinem Kiobel, John Kpuinen, Paul Levura and Felix Nuate (Keesings, 1995g:40806).

(Barber, 2004:109). He also urged the other leaders present to “take a diplomatic line” with Abacha’s military regime, even after the Nigerian government sanctioned the tribunal’s decision to sentence the Ogoni Nine to death on 31 October 1995 (Time, 27 November 1995:46). Mandela remained confident that South Africa’s policy of quiet diplomacy would be effective.

4.4.2. The appearance of limited action or even inaction and media involvement

Despite the general expectation that South Africa would lead the campaign against Nigeria for its slow transition to democracy and its human rights abuses, South Africa did not appear to act quickly and decisively enough. It did not seem to want an angry confrontation with Nigeria (Venter, 1997:92).

Thembi Majola, Deputy President Mbeki’s international affairs advisor, admitted that the South African government did not have any defined policy guidelines towards Nigeria although there was intense pressure from the US and UK on South Africa to condemn Nigeria and even to employ coercive measures (Majola, 1998:51).

The Human Rights Initiative also called on all members of the Commonwealth to impose sanctions against Nigeria. They published a report in September, which stated, “by almost every human rights criterion, Nigerians are excluded from the guarantees which any Commonwealth citizen should expect” (quoted by Keesings, 1995i:40711). They demanded the prohibition of all foreign aid to Nigeria, with the exception of humanitarian assistance, including an embargo on oil exports, the ending of military cooperation and denial of visas to members of the military regime (Keesings, 1995i:40711). However, Mbeki declared that sanctions would have little if any impact on the situation, except the detrimental effect of further isolating Nigerian civilians from their military government (Majola, 1998:51).

Given the various instruments of foreign policy that states employ in their interactions with others (mentioned in Chapter 2), it bears questioning why South Africa resorted to quiet diplomacy. After all, as the anointed leader in Africa’s search for political stability as well as the bearer of considerable moral authority, it seems appropriate to assume that South Africa could have used any number of other, more coercive instruments. Van Aardt (1996:112) suggests that diplomacy might have been chosen because there may not have been sufficient information on which to base a definite decision on what other action to take.

South Africa's High Commissioner to Nigeria, George Nene, served there between 1989 and 1994 as the ANC's main representative and preferred the use of constructive engagement (Cornwell, 1995:210). Nene was criticised for having had very little, if any, contact with opposition leaders in Nigeria and limited access to the leadership in the Nigerian government (Van Aardt, 1996:113). In an interview with Nene, published in The Sunday Independent on 19 November 1995, he said that while he was disappointed about the timeframe of three years for democratic transition announced by Abacha on 1 October, he thought that its sentiment was encouraging, implying that he believed Abacha's statement (Cornwell, 1995:210).

There was a considerable amount of confusion within the DFA over the Nigerian crisis. Pahad announced that Nene had been given instructions to keep up communications with the Nigerian "dissidents". However, Nene, after being recalled by Mandela for consultations following the executions, argued that he had not understood his duty to be maintaining contact with the opposition but rather primarily to liaise on a government level. He added that the real responsibility for contact had been on the Nigerian opposition and that "not one of the civil liberty or pro-democracy groups has knocked on my door and said, let's discuss things" (quoted by Davis, 1995: Internet source). Actually Nene was not the only one to come under fire in this regard. Mbeki and the other emissaries who had met with Abacha and other representatives of the military regime were also criticised for not meeting with members of the pro-democracy forces (Davis, 1995: Internet source).

When the South African civil liberties group, Lawyers for Human Rights, heard that the PRC had confirmed the death sentences, they frantically called the DFA to try to get them to take some action to save Saro-Wiwa and the others. They spoke to Johann Marx, head of the section working on the Nigerian issue, who informed them that the DFA could do nothing without official confirmation of the PRC's judgment. Marx contacted Nene, who remarked that he was "in no position to confirm the PRC decision" and proposed they hold off until confirmation came in the Nigerian media. The following morning, Nene did find out the sentences had been confirmed and attempted to contact senior Nigerian government officials with the appeal, "Don't do this" (quoted by Mail and Guardian online, 1995: Internet source). However, he failed to make contact. Even when the Ogoni Nine were executed, the DFA received the news before Nene did (Mail and Guardian online, 1995: Internet source).

Nene's somewhat half-hearted response has since provoked a number of questions. It has been argued that the appointment of Nene to a high profile diplomatic posting in Abuja was perhaps a

mistake considering that Nene had served an extended term there as the ANC representative immediately before he was made High Commissioner. It is questionable whether he was really in a proper position to provide the foreign policy decisionmakers in Pretoria with objective assessments of the views and possible intentions of the military rulers as Nigeria had assisted the ANC during the exile years (Spence, 1996:121). These were the same people to whom he might personally have felt indebted, given their considerable support during the apartheid struggle. One might ask how influential this “indebtedness” could have been in the ANC’s own decision not to take a firm stand on democracy and human rights in Nigeria (Venter, 1997:93).

Another reason for the failure of its quiet diplomacy could have been South Africa’s choice of actors involved in the Nigerian crisis. Tutu’s warnings and calls for sanctions were played down and the South African Parliament had no involvement up until mid-December 1995 (Van Aardt, 1996:113). Even while events were being played out, the ANC’s policymaking National Executive Committee never discussed the issue nor was it briefed on what was taking place in Nigeria (Mail and Guardian online, 1995: Internet source). Raymond Suttner, who was chair of Parliament’s Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1995, said that Pahad would report to the Committee at a routine meeting on 27 November. Baleka Kgositsile, Chair of the ANC parliamentary caucus, expressed shock at what had occurred, stating that “we never really believed they (Abacha’s regime) would do it” (Mail and Guardian online, 1995: Internet source). Other government departments and NGOs were not involved and the issue was not even brought up for discussion at the SADC summit in late August 1995. Moreover, no attempts were made to request Shell’s assistance in taking a firm stand on the Saro-Wiwa issue (Van Aardt, 1996:113).

The South African media covered the Nigerian situation very thoroughly, making a concerted effort to report on the Mandela government’s actions and providing the public with information on the course of events. Despite the intense pressure brought about by the media and activists in the weeks prior to the executions, the South African government clearly did not pay much attention, except to continually defend its use of quiet diplomacy (Van Aardt, 1996:113-116). This dismissive response prompted the accusation in the South African media that foreign policymaking was continuing in the same “old style” of apartheid secrecy (Weekly Mail and Guardian, 17-23/11/95). However, the ANC government’s response to the Nigerian crisis was reflective of the statement of the DFA that “diplomacy is by its very nature ‘quiet’ diplomacy and not diplomacy through the media” (quoted by DFA, 1996: Internet source).

Apart from the fact that Nigeria had supported the ANC during apartheid, it also appeared that the ANC did not want to pressure Nigeria because of a rumoured R15 million given to it by Nigeria to help fund its election campaign in 1994 (Van Aardt, 1996:113). Because of these financial and political links, the South African government felt compelled to avoid public disputes with the Nigerian government and also to rely on inadequate information on the developing situation in that country (pointedly avoiding contact with most of the opposition groups in Nigeria). These inclinations can help to account for South Africa's complete failure to foresee Abacha's disregard for human rights and the rule of law in following through with the executions (Black, 2003:45).

Given his status as Africa's "saviour", Mandela was under intense pressure to solve the Nigerian crisis. His initial cautious diplomatic approach was based on the hope that his reputation would be enough to solve the crisis and that following this policy would also serve Africa's interests of avoiding being perceived abroad as a continent divided over its own problems (Spence, 1996:121).

The personal humiliation that Mandela suffered was aggravated when opponents of the Nigerian regime charged him with "doing too little, too late" and argued that his quiet diplomacy was simply complacency – no better than the policy of constructive engagement that the West had used towards the apartheid regime in the 1980s. In a letter to Mandela, a supporter of Saro-Wiwa went so far as to say that if the opponents of apartheid had used only quiet diplomacy, "I doubt if you (Mandela) would be alive today" (Barber, 2004:109).

The pro-democracy organisation, Democratic Alternative, based in Lagos, also struck out at Mandela's cautious behaviour and blamed him outright for Saro-Wiwa's death. An official of the group, Imme Edigeji, argued that Mandela "had the opportunity to save the lives of the nine human rights activists, but he opted to fold his arms while they were being slain. We are disturbed that our appeal to Mandela to take decisive steps against the military regime had fallen on deaf ears" (Matloff, 1995:1).

4.4.3. Bilateral and multilateral efforts to handle the Nigerian crisis

When the news broke that the Nigerian government had hanged Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni activists, in blatant defiance of appeals made by Commonwealth members, Mandela was outraged at what he saw as a betrayal and admitted being "hurt and angry" at the dire behaviour of an "insensitive, frightened dictator" (quoted by Time, 27 November 1995:46). He immediately

abandoned his previous conciliatory stance and referred to the killings as a “heinous act” (Time, 27 November 1995:46). He then called for the “immediate severing of diplomatic ties”, Nigeria’s expulsion from the Commonwealth and the imposition of sanctions (Barber, 2004:109; Keesings, 1995g:40806).

Mandela reminded fellow Commonwealth leaders how invaluable pressure from the international community had been in contributing to apartheid’s demise. Hence, the CHOGM leaders voted for Nigeria’s suspension from the organisation for two years. They warned Nigeria that it could very well be expelled unless the country complied with the principles laid down in the Harare Declaration of 1991, which obliged all member states to nurture democracy and promote human rights and judicial independence. They also called for the immediate release of the 43 other alleged *coup* plotters and Abiola (Sklar, 1997: Internet source).

South Africa, the UK, US, France, Germany, Austria and the EU recalled their diplomatic representatives from Nigeria in protest against the executions. Further international revulsion grew when, in the days following Saro-Wiwa’s execution, the gory details were published in Nigerian newspapers. It was also reported that 19 other Ogoni activists had been charged in connection with the same murders as Saro-Wiwa and that the Nigerian government had employed widespread military repression in its hunt for more suspects (Keesings, 1995g:40806).

The Commonwealth set up a Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) to follow up on the Nigerian question. The Commonwealth watchdog group was created to review and monitor the human rights records of Nigeria and consisted of the foreign ministers of eight countries, including South Africa, Britain, Canada and Zimbabwe (Black, 2003:41; Van Aardt, 1996:114). The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative also sponsored a fact-finding mission to Nigeria in 1995. The mission report, entitled Nation Stolen by Generals, accused Abacha’s military dictatorship of vast atrocities and provided the framework for future action against Nigeria (Geldenhuys, 2004:281).

Mandela’s influence swayed Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, who had lobbied with Mandela against expelling Nigeria from the Commonwealth before the executions took place. Moi declared that he was “horrified” at what had occurred and protested, “even if you are my friend and you turn out to be a murderer, you are no longer my friend” (quoted by Time, 27 November 1995:46). This kind of talk is rare among African rulers and seemed at the time to indicate a growing awareness that

African heads of state could perhaps come to realise that certain human rights abuses would no longer go unnoticed (Time, 27 November 1995:46).

In response to the international community's disgust at the executions, Abacha declared that Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth was grossly unfair and unjustified. On 14 November, Nigeria recalled its own diplomatic representatives from South Africa, the US and all 15 EU countries (Keesings, 1995g:40806). In his first statement following the executions, Abacha told his supporters, "we will do everything possible to maintain our unity, stability and security" (quoted by Time, 27 November 1995:46). He simultaneously launched a propaganda offensive, including pro-government rallies and a TV documentary called Not in Our Character: Enough is Enough in This Calculated Attempt to Smear Our Image as a People and Nation (Time, 27 November 1995:46). Upset over Mandela's criticisms, Abacha also declared "the same people we assisted (during apartheid) are the same that are determined to undermine our existence as a nation...even our lives" (The Citizen, 22/12/95).

Mandela's indignant sense of personal betrayal, while understandable given the circumstances, indicated a particular trait in his foreign policy leadership style, namely "a tendency to make policy on the fly, relying heavily on his personal instincts and judgments" (Black, 2003:41). Despite this, the ANC ministers back home, who had wavered over what to do in the Nigerian crisis, backed the President, resulting in a unanimous endorsement by the Cabinet of Mandela's call for sanctions against Abacha's regime (Time, 27 November 1995:46). In Johannesburg protesters carried placards with the names of the executed Ogoni activists and laid wreaths outside the Nigerian consulate. The local media was outspoken, with The Sowetan calling on the South African government to "get tough" with Abacha's regime (Economist, 18/11/95).

This sudden change in policy seemed indicative of the South African government's apparent willingness to leave behind past "sensitivities" that had prevented it from applying its comparative advantage in power and authority in the past. The ANC had (as previously mentioned) countenanced a non-hegemonic and "consultative" foreign policy position, which it now appeared to discard (Venter, 1997:93).

On his return home, Mandela recalled Nene from Nigeria, summoned the local Shell manager to "ram home the message" and asked that a special SADC meeting be set up to decide what other steps needed to be taken against Nigeria (Barber, 2004:109). Arms sales were banned and the South

African Football Association barred Nigeria from playing in an upcoming tournament. Even the Miss World contest being held at Sun City (a northern resort in South Africa) was affected when Miss Nigeria was forced to withdraw (Time, 27 November 1995:46). Mandela later personally invited Miss Nigeria, Toyin Raji, to his home in Houghton to, as he expressed it, “give her support and a message that the anger of the people of South Africa is not directed against her; it is directed against the Abacha regime” (ANC news briefing, 1995: Internet source).

In support of Mandela’s campaign and as an expression of disgust with the executions, Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC, Cheryl Carolus, ANC Member of Parliament Carl Niehaus, the Deputy General Secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), Jeremy Cronin, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) led the formation of a non-governmental group, the South Africa-Nigeria Democratic Support Group (SANDSG). They wanted to join hands in a common cause with those opposing the Abacha regime and in exile and to campaign for democratic transition in Nigeria (Black, 2003:42-47).

It seemed apparent that by displaying solidarity, the ANC and its alliance partners were trying to provide support along the lines they received from abroad during the apartheid years (Black, 2003:42-47). Yet Carolus contended that South Africa was morally obliged to act, especially on the African continent. She added that South Africa’s own experience “reminds us that an extra day under dictatorship is a day too long” (Time, 27 November 1995:46). MOSOP and other Nigerian pro-democracy groups contacted SANDG on a visit to South Africa and declared, “of all the pressure so far put on the Nigerian military regime none has so far been as remarkable as the people and government of South Africa” (Speed, 1995: Internet source).

Human Rights Watch called on South Africa particularly to assume the lead among fellow African states in forcing the Nigerian government’s speedy return to civilian rule (Human Rights Watch, 1996: Internet source). It appeared that South Africa was going to have to take responsibility anyway, given the widespread apathy in the rest of Africa over the Nigerian situation. Despite the show of support for Mandela’s demand for Nigeria’s suspension at the CHOGM, African countries soon began to waver over their initial decision. SADC gave a relatively weak response to the executions. The OAU was also deafeningly silent on the issue. Its unconvincing position on Nigeria reflected the “seriousness of Nigeria’s threat to pull out of OAU-sponsored West African peacekeeping operations”, which the OAU felt it could not afford (Venter, 1997:95). Moreover, the OAU’s Secretary-General at the time, Salim Ahmed Salim, failed to stand up to Abacha in a face-to-

face meeting. Salim came out of the exchange with a view similar to that of Mbeki months before, namely that dialogue was the best route (Venter, 1997:94).

Mandela's strong position on Nigeria and his pro-democracy attitude did not gain him the support he needed throughout the rest of Africa – or, as it soon turned out, among members of his own government and party (Barber, 2004:114). The first difficulty arose when South African officials tried to discuss the Nigerian issue at a SADC meeting in December 1995 (Venter, 1997:94). Given South Africa's economic and strategic standing in the group, it was expected that Pretoria would be able to exert significant influence there. However only four other heads of state attended and they decided to leave any decisions on Nigeria to the CMAG and the UN (Black, 2003:42).

Mandela seemingly did not consult with any of his African neighbours before his scathing attack on Abacha. Up until that point, Mandela had apparently habitually consulted with other leaders, often on the telephone, as was the case with the successful 1994 diplomacy regarding the “King's *coup*” in Lesotho. The obvious lack of support from his regional neighbours in the Nigerian crisis could be an indication that Mandela may not have consulted with them before publicly taking action (Muller, 2003: Internet source).

While Mandela was exercising his considerable moral authority, other African leaders were upholding their notion of “African solidarity” as the reason for refusing to turn against Abacha. Liberia's interim government commented as follows on South Africa's reaction:

To see President Mandela, who had been in jail for 27 years...set out a campaign against Nigeria...is very shocking... (Liberia is)... calling on ECOWAS and other African countries to prevail on President Mandela not to allow South Africa to be used in the division and undermining of African solidarity (Venter, 1997:94).

Others accused Mandela of behaving as though he were “the keeper of the continent's conscience” (quoted by Barber, 2004:115). Nigerian Minister of Information, Walter Ofonagoro, bitterly complained that Mandela was the black president of a white state and could not be trusted, implying of course that he had assimilated Western as opposed to African values and was being led by white Commonwealth leaders (Barber, 2004:115; Evans, 1999a:12). Fellow Nigerian Adebayo Adedeji also spoke of “the emerging reality (which) indicates that South Africa appears to be increasingly distancing itself from continental Africa”, while drawing closer to the West (Barber, 2004:173).

Additionally it has been argued that Mandela “overranked his influence in international *realpolitik*” by presuming that his personal position would automatically prompt others to follow him. Instead, other African leaders showed him that they were leaders in their own right. Evidently Mandela did not recognise African specificities in that far from “injecting *Ubuntu* (humanity to others) into a bedevilled situation”, he was perceived by his fellow Africans to have behaved in the manner of *Ubulungu* or “the white man’s way” (Diescho, 1996:10).

South Africa’s DFA was also showing less enthusiasm to stand firm on its policy because it did not want to isolate South Africa from the rest of Africa, particularly as it needed Africa’s support in South Africa’s bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat. Following the SADC summit South Africa became more cautious on Nigeria and espoused the importance of multilateralism and unity among African states (Black, 2003:42). Within the ANC itself, there was a feeling that South Africa needed to act in collaboration with fellow African states as they came to place greater worth on sovereignty and the brotherhood of African states than on individual human rights. The ANC once again emphasised Nigeria’s contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle as well as its large financial contributions to the ANC. This move prompted Tony Leon, leader of South African opposition party, the Democratic Party (DP), to comment, “our whole foreign policy is based on the electoral debts of the ANC” (Barber, 2004:110-114).

The convention of African solidarity could not be challenged, as Mandela found out. The OAU concluded that to ask for sanctions to be imposed on Nigeria “was not an African way to deal with an African problem”. In Mbeki’s speech to the National Assembly on Nigeria, he likewise declared “the sense of being an African had an impact which went beyond the merely rhetorical level” (Barber, 2004:114). He affirmed that because Africans share historical experience, “Africans in one part of the continent had some kind of claim or obligation on those in another” (Barber, 2004:114).

So it was that, contrary to Mandela’s hopes, the South African government quickly back-pedalled on its earlier position and resumed its low-level or quiet diplomacy with the Abacha regime, staying in contact through telephone calls (Majola, 1998:51). Nzo was reported to have told a parliamentary committee that Mandela had backed away from his hard line very reluctantly but necessarily because the issue was rapidly turning into a conflict between Nigeria and South Africa (Sklar, 1997: Internet source).

Mbeki informed the National Assembly that although South Africa should do what it could to aid Nigeria's return to democratic rule, it could not dictate the terms for that return. Instead, he accused the Western states with the real power of failing to act and of using Mandela, subsequently exposing him to intense ridicule. Mbeki argued that unlike the Western powers South Africa had no leverage since it did not buy Nigerian oil and did not provide Nigeria with money and those countries who did had pushed Mandela forward "knowing he would fail". He concluded: "we (South Africa) should not humiliate ourselves by pretending that we have a strength which we do not have. The aim must be to understand Nigeria, not confront her. Slogans are not going to help" (quoted by Barber, 2004:110). Mbeki had therefore directed the issue away from an attack on Nigeria's values and principles to an attack on the West and its apparent exploitation of the situation to serve its own ends (Barber, 2004:110).

In April 1996, CMAG proposed eight other punitive measures (besides the threat of expulsion) against Nigeria, including an arms embargo, sports boycott, downgrading of diplomatic missions as well as denying Nigerian government members and their families entry into other Commonwealth nations. Britain and Canada carried out all eight measures. South Africa and Jamaica only implemented half while other states enforced less than that and Ghana did not apply any of the measures at all (Geldenhuys, 2004:281-282).

In the same month, at a meeting of the UNHRC, South Africa helped to water down a resolution on Nigeria in the hope of gaining as much African support for it as possible. Inside CMAG itself, South Africa backed off by assuming a middle-of-the-road position, leaving Canada as the only real advocate of stronger measures against Nigeria (Black, 2003:42). South Africa subsequently withdrew from CMAG in favour of neighbouring Botswana. The reason for the withdrawal is not certain, but a foreign diplomat resident in South Africa (as quoted by Black, 2003:53) depicted it as a strategic pulling back from a rather tricky situation and necessary for South Africa to return to its quiet diplomacy.

SANDSG also began to lose some of its drive and within a few months of its creation, the ANC, SACP and COSATU withdrew. Those members that remained became increasingly frustrated with the directionless strategies of their Nigerian counterparts and after two rather low-key meetings with Nigerian exiles in 1996, SANDSG became moribund (Black, 2003:43).

After its humiliation at the SADC meeting, South Africa wanted to assume a more cautious position on Nigeria hence its backing down from its initially strong policy stance. Despite this though South Africa did not abandon its original position completely. Mandela declared a continued commitment to human rights protection at the OAU Summit in July 1996 in Cameroon, pledging that South Africa “would not shrink from its responsibility to help resolve conflict and advocate human rights on the continent” (Seymour, 1996:88).

In addition, at the UN General Assembly in December 1996, South Africa was one of the six African countries (the others were Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe) out of the 86 who approved a resolution urging Abacha’s government to “release all political prisoners, trade union leaders, human rights activists and journalists” as well as to take “immediate concrete steps” to return Nigeria to democratic rule (SAPA, 1996: Internet source). In the 1997 session of the UNHRC South Africa and Uganda were the only African countries to vote in favour of a resolution to appoint a Special Country *Rapporteur* to investigate human rights abuses in Nigeria (Sklar, 1997: Internet source). Moreover, in October 1997 at the CHOGM in Edinburgh, Mandela reportedly urged his colleagues to take stronger measures against Nigeria (Black, 2003:43).

4.5. Hard diplomacy: South Africa’s use of economic “sticks”

On 1 August 1995, the same day that Abacha had the two editors from A.M. News jailed for life, South Africa placed a ban on the export of arms to Nigeria, stating that it was unhappy about Abacha’s refusal to release Abiola, concerned over the trial of the alleged *coup* suspects and worried about other increasing human rights abuses in Nigeria (Keesings, 1995e:40668). Given that Mandela was following quiet diplomacy at the time, this ban was the extent of South Africa’s “hard” tactics.

It was the execution of the Ogoni Nine that galvanised Mandela into pursuing a harder line with a personal campaign to isolate Abacha’s regime economically. He called on all Commonwealth members to impose sanctions and used his immense prestige to press for oil sanctions from Britain and the US since they were Nigeria’s largest overseas partners (the US invested more than \$5 billion annually in the Nigerian oil sector) (Barber, 2004:109). Then Secretary General of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa, backed all-out sanctions against Nigeria and criticised Shell for its role in the crisis (Black, 2003:42). Tutu also demanded economic, diplomatic and sports sanctions against Nigeria (Matloff, 1995:1).

In November 1995 Mandela announced that he had spoken to US President Bill Clinton over the telephone the previous day and had received a positive response to his (Mandela's) call for oil sanctions against Nigeria. On the basis of these talks, Mandela affirmed that he would also put pressure on British Prime Minister John Major to institute economic sanctions against Nigeria (ANC news briefing, 1995: Internet source). However, US officials rejected the request for the oil embargo as the US already had oil embargoes in force against Iraq, Iran and Libya, and sanctions against Nigeria would "disrupt markets and put up prices in the US" (Keesings, 1995g:40806).

Apart from the refusal of Western states to implement sanctions, SADC member states led by Namibian President Sam Nujoma also publicly opposed South Africa's call for sanctions against Nigeria at the SADC Summit meeting in December 1995 (Black, 2003:42). At the CMAG meeting in April 1996, South Africa, Canada and Jamaica expressed the need to adopt stronger measures, but Britain did not want to jeopardise its trading partnership with Nigeria. The CMAG quickly became divided over what to do and finally reached a feeble compromise in which they would hold punitive sanctions in reserve while engaging in further discussions over possible stronger actions such as freezing financial assets and bank accounts of members of the Abacha regime (Black, 2003:42; Sklar, 1997: Internet source). These did not materialise and South Africa eventually withdrew from CMAG.

Although South Africa's multilateral sanctions campaign was directed at the US and UK, since they were Nigeria's biggest trading partners and powerful economic actors internationally, it also meant that "failure to persuade many African countries to impose sanctions left South Africa exposed to attacks of collusion with imperialists" (Venter, 1997:95). Abacha appeared then as a hero, not a villain.

The African states thought of Nigeria less as a violator of human rights than as a continental leader, which had been a resolute opponent of apartheid, a firm supporter of liberation movements and supplier of up to a third of the OAU's income (Barber, 2004:109-110). They did not want to criticise Nigeria given its hegemonic status in West Africa and they wanted to demonstrate African unity, not highlight its divisions. The fact that Abacha had just been elected as chair of ECOWAS in July 1996 also added to their reasoning (Sklar, 1997: Internet source). Hence they criticised Mandela "for undermining the continent's solidarity", for being "disloyal", "un-African" and "a lackey of the West" (Van Aardt, 1996:115).

Mandela was disappointed at his failure to persuade countries with real economic power to impose meaningful sanctions against Abacha. After all, his fellow Africans played a huge role in creating the “Mandela magic” and therefore his “towering stature”. However, it is well worth remembering that power politics was and is at play in Africa just as it is elsewhere, and there are those who “resent how much influence Mandela has come to have as the world’s favourite democratic leader” (Venter, 1997:95).

Conclusion

Before recapping what was discussed in this chapter, it is worth drawing up a table of the principal points to remember:

Table 1. South Africa’s use of quiet diplomacy during the Nigerian crisis	
Key factors to consider	Explanation of factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towering South African leader at time of crisis (1995-1996) • South Africa’s African policy at time • Description of crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Nelson Mandela – world icon and symbol of reconciliation and peacekeeping • Value-driven, moralistic and principled. Human rights are flagged as the most important “light” to guide foreign affairs. The promotion of democratic governance is also emphasised. • Nigeria: military dictatorships; violent suppression of ethnic minorities, especially the Ogoni, and violation of human rights contribute to an overall lack of democracy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African objectives • South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal or direct diplomacy ➤ Constructive engagement ➤ Appearance of limited action/inaction ➤ Media involvement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent execution of Ogoni activists. 2. Encourage return to democratic rule. 3. Secure Abiola's release. <p>(South Africa failed to achieve objectives).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mandela meets Abacha personally; Emissaries are sent: Tutu, Mbeki, Nzo – no success. ➤ Purpose: to engage with the Nigerian government. The South African government is accused of practising the same policy that they criticised the international community of following with the apartheid government. However, the ANC contend that there is nothing wrong with the policy as long as it is not “weak”. ➤ No clear/defined policy guidelines; advice of public figures ignored; questionable choice of actors involved; lack of adequate information; economic links and historical ties make a hard line difficult to sustain; little or no contact with opposition in Nigeria. ➤ Despite media attention and public outcry, the South African government defends its quiet diplomacy.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bilateral and multilateral efforts • Hard diplomacy • Policy results • Lessons learnt by South African government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nigeria suspended from Commonwealth on Mandela's insistence; South Africa recalls high commissioner from Abuja; CMAG set up; SADC does not back Mandela; continued disapproval from Africa causes South Africa to back-pedal; South Africa withdraws from CMAG. • Following execution of Ogoni Nine, Mandela goes beyond quiet diplomacy to coercion and presses US and UK to impose oil sanctions - unsuccessful. • Mandela's quiet diplomacy fails and South Africa does not achieve its initial objectives. Moreover, Mandela's attempts at hard or coercive diplomacy merely result in increasing antagonism from African states. • African solidarity is given far more weight than human rights; African states place a high value on sovereignty.
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The chapter began by sketching the context required to analyse the Nigerian crisis of 1995-1996. It was necessary to explore the world's captivation with Mandela as a symbol of peace and reconciliation because it was expected of him to act upon this "greatness" in Africa. It was also important to examine the new South Africa's foreign policy towards Africa to identify the key issues on which the new ANC-dominated government would be focusing. These included the promotion and protection of human rights; the preoccupation with democracy and good governance, and the firm belief that South Africa was first and foremost an African country and therefore had a responsibility to the rest of the continent.

The reasons for the Nigerian crisis needed investigating. The chapter described events in Nigeria, including the tension between the military regimes and ethnic minorities, particularly the Ogoni, which culminated in the execution of nine Ogoni activists.

The second section of the chapter was dedicated to analysing South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy in its response to the Nigerian crisis. Applying a number of quiet diplomacy indicators it was found that Mandela employed personal diplomacy by persistently sending special envoys in the persons of Mbeki, Tutu and Nzo to plead with Abacha. It is also evident that while Mandela believed fully in the efficacy of this soft dialogue approach, and indeed felt that Abacha's commuting of the *coup* plotters' death sentences to life imprisonment was a direct result of that approach, Abacha was not influenced to stay his hand in executing the Ogoni activists. It was also evident that the ANC-led government could not bring itself to take a forceful stand against Nigeria, which had contributed hugely to the liberation struggle.

Following the executions, Mandela exploded in a rage of betrayal and personally led a much harsher campaign against the military regime, consequently going beyond quiet diplomacy to coercion. In the context of multilateral relations, in the CMAG, South Africa fought for Nigeria's suspension and proposed numerous other punitive measures. However it was also clear that the rest of Africa would not stand by Mandela, choosing instead to back the tradition of African solidarity over human rights protection. Mandela's call for sanctions only exacerbated the issue, exposing him to accusations of acting as a puppet of the West. This lack of support for Mandela quickly made South Africa backtrack and adopt once again a subtler, quiet diplomatic approach to Abacha's regime.

The Nigerian crisis was the new South Africa's first real foreign policy test, one in which South Africa failed to meet the world's expectations and which underlined South Africa's apparent inability to follow up on its proposed foreign policy objectives.

South Africa's response to the Nigerian crisis has been examined. It is now necessary to analyse South Africa's relationship to its closer regional neighbour, Zimbabwe.

Chapter 5

South Africa's quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe, 1999-2004

Introduction

The crisis in Nigeria was among the most difficult and potentially controversial African foreign policy challenges the ANC government has had to face and is widely regarded as South Africa's number one foreign policy failure in its early democratic years (Black, 2003:43; Venter, 1997:91). This disappointment meant that South Africa lost a significant amount of prestige and as a result was forced to rethink its diplomatic strategy, especially towards Africa. Consequently, the government began to favour a more discreet consultative and collective regional approach (Olivier and Geldenhuys, 1997:372).

South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy in its dealings with Nigeria was discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter will discuss South Africa's response to the critical situation in its northern neighbour, Zimbabwe, so that a comparison can be made. If Mandela was the key figure in the Nigerian crisis, then Mbeki is the most prominent figure when analysing South Africa's relations with Zimbabwe. Therefore, Mbeki's leadership characteristics will be discussed briefly at the outset.

It was important to describe South Africa's African policy in order to gain an understanding of its attitude towards Nigeria. Similarly, it is necessary to examine South Africa's southern African or regional policy since it has been established that a country's immediate environment will have an impact on the manner in which that country chooses to act. South Africa's regional policy since 1994 will therefore also be discussed in this chapter. Thereafter, a background to the situation in Zimbabwe will be provided, followed by the application of the quiet diplomacy indicators identified in Chapter 2.

5.1. Thabo Mbeki: assuming the mantle

Initially, the international community viewed the inauguration of Thabo Mbeki with considerable interest because of the obvious differences between him and the iconic Nelson Mandela. While Mandela was reading law books on Robben Island, Mbeki was being groomed in exile as a future leader of the ANC and was studying economics at the University of Sussex in England. Moreover,

while Mandela was becoming the anti-apartheid prisoner of conscience, Mbeki was travelling freely throughout the international community as a diplomat championing the ANC's cause¹ (Time, 1 March 1999: Internet source).

South African diplomats abroad referred to the WHAM question, that is, What Happens after Mandela? This question reflected the mood at the time and the somewhat imagined expectation that somehow the new South Africa was "too good to be true", that it had only happened because of one "magic" man and that following his retirement, it would most certainly fall apart (Sparks, 2003:25).

Inside South Africa, the outlook was not so dire because although Mandela would indeed be difficult to follow, Mbeki had proved himself to be highly competent in his post as Deputy President. During Mandela's last three years in office, as he gradually began to withdraw and assume a symbolic role, Mbeki was already acting as *de facto* President and espousing his vision of Pan-African development in the world market (Sparks, 2003:251; Stols, 2002:34).

Nyatumba (as quoted by Stols, 2002:34) explains the relationship between the two during South Africa's first democratic years as "somewhat similar to that between a chief executive and a managing director in the private sector: Mandela has been the distant CEO who has kept a watchful eye over government, while Mbeki has been the more hands on MD". While it was difficult for many South Africans to see Mandela go, most agreed that although Mandela was the only one to have "sown the seeds of the post-apartheid democracy", Mbeki was the one to "nurture its growth" (Stols, 2002:34; Time, 1 March 1999: Internet source).

Mbeki is a pan-Africanist and as such is extremely high-minded about race and Africa's position in world affairs. He has a record of skilful diplomatic manoeuvring because, as Deputy President, he operated behind-the-scenes and fixed diplomatic deals. In many of his speeches², Mbeki has made it clear that South Africa's future is "inextricably linked to that of the rest of the southern African

1. Mbeki was the most well known ANC leader of the younger generation in his capacity as Oliver Tambo's personal assistant and in practice as the ANC's "foreign minister". Mbeki's presence in Swaziland during the 1970s contributed largely towards attracting important activists into the Black Consciousness Movement. In the 1980s, Mbeki was mainly responsible for fostering a working relationship between the ANC and certain Western governments, which had previously dismissed African liberation movements (Lodge, 2002:44). For an in-depth account of Mbeki's years in exile and his training in diplomacy, see Hadland, A. and J. Rantao, 1999. The Life and Times of Thabo Mbeki; Jacobs, S. and R. Calland, (eds.), 2002. Thabo Mbeki's World: The Politics and Ideology of the South African President and Sparks, A., 2003. Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa.

2. See Mbeki, T., 1998. Africa, The Time has Come: Selected Speeches and Mbeki, T., 2002. Africa: Define Yourself.

region in particular and the African continent in general”, a choice that shows clearly in his foreign policy (Landsberg, 2004:160).

In his time as president Mbeki has drawn much criticism from the international community, particularly of his HIV/AIDS policy and his stance on Zimbabwe. However, as Stols (2002:34) points out, simply because Mbeki has become the target of criticism does not mean that he necessarily has made more mistakes than Mandela. Mbeki came under such intense pressure because he had to follow in the footsteps of a world icon, which in itself could not have been an easy task. Previous chapters referred to how the environment³ and time periods influence how a person acts in his capacity as a leader. As discussed in Chapter 2, domestic and international changes have an impact on the conduct of South African diplomacy, which is in itself a dynamic process that will continue to evolve and adapt. This was true of Mandela and is equally true of Mbeki (Stols, 2002:34).

5.2. South Africa’s southern African policy

South Africa’s foreign policy in southern Africa is largely the same as its African policy in general (discussed in Chapter 4), except that the issues in southern Africa are more urgent since they are within South Africa’s immediate vicinity. South Africa’s principal aim is to help “build a stable and prosperous region” so that South Africa and its neighbours can benefit (Barber and Vickers, 2001:354).

As president, Mandela assured the region that reconstruction would be a collective enterprise and that South Africa would participate with mutual cooperation and respect as opposed to displaying paternalism or dominance (Barber and Vickers, 2001:354; Cape Times, 20/03/95). Even prior to the 1994 elections the ANC was already espousing a non-hegemonic foreign policy in southern Africa. They stated that “the construction of a new regional order will be a collective endeavour of all the free peoples of southern Africa and cannot be imposed either by extra-regional forces or any self-appointed regional power”. The new Minister of Trade and Industry, Trevor Manuel, vowed in 1994 that South Africa would cooperate with its neighbours to “promote economic growth across the region, partly out of obligation arising from years of damaging destabilisation and partly out of self-

3. Geldenhuys (1984:1) points out that foreign policy is not made in a vacuum since those who formulate it are constantly affected by a vast range of stimuli in their surrounding environment.

interest” (quoted by Ralinala and Saunders, 2001:54).

In the ANC’s discussion document entitled South Africa’s Foreign Policy, Mandela was quoted as saying:

We are part of the region of southern Africa and of the continent of Africa. As members of SADC and the OAU, and an equal partner with other member states, we will play our role in the struggles of these organisations to build a continent and a region that will help to create for themselves and all humanity a common world of peace and prosperity (quoted by Ralinala and Saunders, 2001:55).

These were strong words and cultivated an atmosphere of hope in the world that South Africa would lead the region given its powerful status (Barber and Vickers, 2001:355).

South Africa soon engaged in preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution in the region when it played a leading role in resolving disputes in Lesotho and Mozambique in 1994-95. Importantly, South Africa was careful to act under the authority of SADC to ensure that it was not seen to be coercing its neighbours into solving disputes. The Director-General of Foreign Affairs at the time, Rusty Evans, emphasised that “South Africa (had) no intention of getting involved in conflict resolution on its own” (quoted by Mills, 2000b:276). The government pledged that they would act multilaterally since they did not wish to be seen to be acting as a “big brother” on the continent (Mills, 2000b:276). Moreover, the government continued to reaffirm its principal maxim of peacefully resolving conflicts, that is, not resorting to military force.⁴ Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo argued that “only all-inclusive negotiations involving all parties to a conflict can lead to lasting peace” (Barber and Vickers, 2001:354).

While South Africa’s espoused commitment to becoming a true partner in the region is apparently sincere, it must also be said that in practice South Africa cannot help but dominate the region economically. As Barber and Vickers (2001:355) assert, “if South Africa is a giant in Africa, it is a super giant in the region”. South Africa is the dominant power in a region plagued by a history of

4. South Africa did actually use its troops once in September 1998, when a SADC military task force intervened in Lesotho to suppress a brewing *coup d’état* there. The intervention, known as “Operation Boleas”, came in response to Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili’s plea for help and consisted of 800 soldiers from South Africa and Botswana. Later, more troops were sent in to help keep order until the kingdom was stable enough for inter-party talks to be resumed. SADC troops withdrew fully in early 1999. South Africa portrayed its involvement in the intervention as part of a SADC-sanctioned operation and argued that intervention was legitimate and necessary since it was based on the principle that “the region and the continent (would) not tolerate the overthrow of democratically elected governments” (South African Government Media Circulation, as quoted by Barber and Vickers, 2001:355).

wars, famines, droughts and failed governments and home to some of the world's poorest nations (Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania).

Vale and Maseko (1998:12) argue that South Africa's obvious power makes deep inequalities an inevitable outcome. South Africa's own prosperity is tied to the whole region's welfare because, as Venter (1997:83) notes, "the country cannot be an island of prosperity surrounded by a sea of poverty". Moreover, there is a moral argument compelling South Africa to be fully involved in the region: South Africa could not have been liberated from apartheid without the contributions from its neighbouring countries and is expected to acknowledge this "debt" (Ajulu, 1995:52). While the black majority in South Africa experienced repression and racial discrimination, those in the surrounding countries were subjected to destabilisation policies (previously discussed in Chapter 3) which resulted in deaths, mass displacement of peoples as well as causing an estimated \$65 billion in damage to their economies (Daniel, 1995:33; Southall, 1995:39; Van Niekerk, Van der Walt and Jonker, 2002:236).

Despite this debt of gratitude, there were increasing tensions between Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Mandela following South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994. Chapter 3 explored Mugabe's central role in the alliance of the frontline states against South Africa's apartheid regime. When Mandela was released in 1990 and especially when he became President in 1994, Mugabe's status in the region was severely diminished. The support and financial aid that Mugabe had claimed from Western governments on the basis of this bold stance against apartheid was no longer forthcoming. Furthermore, Mandela's accommodating style of leadership was regarded by the international community as far more preferable than Mugabe's "increasingly wayward dictatorship" (Abiodun, 1998:125; Barber and Vickers, 2001:352; Meredith, 2002:147).

This feeling of resentment was at the core of the more overt disputes between Zimbabwe and South Africa over trade, investment and SADC's institutions of governance. The growing tension was made worse by South Africa's decision not to renew its preferential bilateral trade agreement with Zimbabwe in 1992. South Africa imposed tariffs on many Zimbabwean goods, including duties as high as 90% on garments and textiles. This move was not well received by Mugabe who saw it as a selfish move by South Africa. Zimbabwe responded in 1996 by implementing its own wide-ranging tariff increases on South African exports (Alden and Le Pere, 2003:59; Ralinala and Saunders, 2001:56).

Mandela and Mugabe also engaged in a prolonged public argument over the role, function and political control of the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security (Rupiya, 2003:16; The Times, 11/09/97). The issue became so heated that Mandela actually threatened to resign as chairman of SADC unless the Organ's status and autonomy were clarified. Mandela and Mugabe were also at loggerheads over the conflict in the DRC. Mandela wanted the rebels to participate directly in peace talks whereas Mugabe did not, stating that it would set a bad precedent if a group of rebels was recognised through an invitation to participate (Business Day, 11/01/99).

By 1999, the worldwide acclamation and special treatment that South Africa had experienced under President Mandela had largely deflated and South Africa was becoming an “ordinary”⁵ country once again. Faced with this new reality, South Africa's foreign policy under Mbeki found its anchor in developing a “South” identity. In pursuit of this emergent ideal, Africa and especially the SADC region became the root of foreign policy as well as “active diplomacy on behalf of developing countries in multilateral institutions” worldwide (Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk, 2002:255).

While Mandela made it his mission to achieve reconciliation in South Africa and crusaded for freedom and equal rights throughout the world, Mbeki espoused his African ideal, which culminated in his vision of an African Renaissance⁶ (Stols, 2002:35). Mbeki was quoted as saying:

And I have heard the stories of how those who had access to power, or access to those who had access to power, of how they have robbed and pillaged and broken all laws and all ethical norms to acquire wealth...It is out of this pungent mixture of greed, dehumanising poverty, obscene wealth and endemic public and private corrupt practice, that many of Africa's *coups d'état*, civil wars and situations of instability are born and entrenched (Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk, 2002:254).

He went on to urge that Africa must “rebel against the tyrants and the dictators, those who seek to corrupt our societies and steal the wealth that belongs to the people” (Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk, 2002:254).

5. In the absence of Mandela's personality, South Africa's “global standing reverts increasingly to that merely of another emerging market from a continent plagued by uncertainty and instability” (Mills, 2000b:299).

6. South Africa seeks five broad foreign policy objectives under the umbrella term “African Renaissance”: Africa's economic recovery; the establishment of political democracy throughout the continent; the end of neo-colonial relations between Africa and the economic global powers; the marshalling of the African people to take their destiny into their own hands, and the speedy development of people-driven and people-centred economic growth to meet basic human needs (Stremlau, 1999:663). For a discussion on Renaissance diplomacy, see Evans, G., 1999b. “South Africa's foreign policy after Mandela: Mbeki and his concept of an African Renaissance”. The Round Table, No. 352 and Evans, G., 1999c. “Foreign policy and the African Renaissance”, in Spence, J.E., (ed.), After Mandela: The 1999 South African Elections.

Whereas Mandela's government made South Africa's reintegration into the global community and conflict solving from Kinshasa to Port-au-Prince priorities in its foreign policy, Mbeki "sought to sharpen and focus the country's foreign policy identity priorities and geographic focus". This refinement included Mbeki's ambition for South-South cooperation (Barber and Vickers, 2001:361).

Mbeki envisioned greater unity among all African states, but especially those of southern Africa. He realised that closer cooperation and economic integration would benefit all the countries in the region (Van Niekerk *et al.*, 2002:236). Therefore Mbeki's foreign policy goals included regional integration in southern Africa; promotion of the African Renaissance; greater South-South cooperation; supporting the cause of the Global South through South Africa's leadership role in multilateral forums, and preventing conflicts as well as promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes (Barber and Vickers, 2001:362).

In its 1999 mission statement, the DFA declared that domestic security and economic concerns would come first. Foreign Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma argued, "for a developing country like ours, faced with daunting challenges of economic upliftment and inequalities, our foreign policy priorities should, above all else, be determined by our domestic needs" (quoted by Barber and Vickers, 2001:362). This reviewing of policy did not mean that the government discarded its declared commitment to democracy and human rights, but rather that these principles would be shifted from South Africa's bilateral diplomacy to multilateral agendas in SADC, the OAU and so forth (Van Nieuwkerk, as quoted by Barber and Vickers, 2001:362). Consequently, Mbeki's era in foreign policy initiated a "more independent and pragmatic foreign policy", where national interest became as much of a driving force as humanitarian principles (Barber and Vickers, 2001:362).

Once again the promotion of human rights would remain high on South Africa's list of priorities in the region as would monitoring elections⁷ and providing assistance in this regard if requested (DFA, 2001: Internet source; GOVZA, 2001: Internet source).

Many scholars contend that during the colonial era, the African peoples' greatest loss was not their

7. Mbeki was also quoted on numerous occasions as saying that South Africa's paramount ambition in its foreign policy was to help establish "genuine and stable democracies in Africa, from which systems of governance will flourish" (Mills, 2000b:310).

land or power but rather self-respect as the colonialists taught them that “their ways, cultures and gods were inferior and should be abandoned” (Mills, 2000b:322). This loss requires that the concept of an African Renaissance must include psychological, cultural and political elements that are necessary for continental re-identification. This cultural aspect is as important as developmental and economic elements in African renewal (Mills, 2000b:322).

In the African Renaissance rhetoric, what also needs to be considered is the African diplomatic tradition of “respect for its colonially crafted boundaries and the juridical rights associated with territoriality and state sovereignty” (Evans, 1999b:627). The importance of the sovereignty principle was highlighted in the Nigerian crisis, where South Africa was regarded by the rest of Africa as committing a fundamental sin in trying to intervene in that country.

As South Africa’s second democratic elections dawned in 1999, southern Africa was continuing to experience so much conflict that it was increasingly being viewed as an “arc of crisis”. For South Africa the most disturbing situation was the brewing social unrest in Zimbabwe (Mills, 2000a:7). In order for South Africa to achieve its regional foreign policy goals, stability throughout the region would be of utmost importance (Le Pere and Van Nieuwkerk, 2002:259). But just how far was South Africa prepared to go in its efforts to ensure democratic government and to protect human rights across southern Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe?

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As recorded previously, historical events and relationships have a bearing on the future. Therefore the next section will investigate the causes of Zimbabwe’s current difficulties.

5.3. The Zimbabwean context

There are three prominent areas of concern in Zimbabwe, as identified by Taylor and Williams (2002:548-551): the land issue, the economic crisis and the lack of democracy.⁸

5.3.1. The land issue

The crux of the Zimbabwean land question is the structural inequality in ownership and in access to

8. For greater detail on the origins of the crises in Zimbabwe, see Meredith, M., 2002. Robert Mugabe: Power, Plunder and Tyranny in Zimbabwe.

land. This inequality has manifested itself in a conflict that has spanned over a century and has its roots in colonial times (Moyo and Matondi, 2003:77). Zimbabwe's colonial history began in 1889 when Cecil John Rhodes and the British South Africa Company (BSAC) were given a Royal Charter of Incorporation from Great Britain and established Northern and Southern Rhodesia, which are current-day Zambia and Zimbabwe⁹ respectively. The Charter not only gave the BSAC power to conclude agreements with African leaders but, most importantly, the Charter afforded the BSAC the power to expropriate and distribute land. British nationals were encouraged to settle on these lands, which the BSAC would be responsible for developing economically (Peters and Malan, 2000:151-152).

Agricultural development in Zimbabwe was dependent on land expropriation so African people were moved off their land and into Native Reserves. Although the BSAC and the settlers were less than 5% of the population, by 1902 they had expropriated 75% of land in Zimbabwe. Problems quickly arose in these Native Reserves in which Africans were "assigned" land to use (Peters and Malan, 2000:153). The land allocated was generally poor in quality and scarce and as a result did not allow for food self-sufficiency among blacks or for agricultural development. In addition, because it was so crowded and overused, the land became increasingly unproductive and this in turn led to environmental problems (Peters and Malan, 2000:152). Moreover, the government's extension of special credit and pricing policies to settlers was not extended to Africans.

Several acts were passed over the years to legalise race-based land holdings in Rhodesia¹⁰ that favoured the settlers. The Land Apportionment Act, for example, formally divided the land between white and black. White portions of Rhodesian land were extended to 48 million hectares (from 31 million). A primary stipulation of this Act was that no African was entitled to hold or occupy land in white areas. The black majority, which numbered one million in 1931, was allocated only 29 million acres (Meredith, 2002:115). This Act remained in force for the next forty years.

The unequal land settlement promoted increasing opposition to the settler government and demands

9. Although Rhodes and the BSAC encountered considerable indigenous opposition, they created the colonies of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Northern Rhodesia was rich in minerals, which the BSAC instantly began mining. Southern Rhodesia's land was much more fertile and was consequently used for agricultural purposes (Peters and Malan, 2000:152).

10. The Land Apportionment Act (1930), the Native Land Husbandry Act (1951), the Tribal Trust Land Act (1967) and the Land Tenure Act (1969). The 1930 Act outlined holdings, which included the European areas (50,8% of the colony), the Native Purchase Areas (7,7%), Native Reserves (22,4%) and unassigned areas (18,4%) (Peter and Malan, 2000:153).

for greater access to land, among other factors, led to the war of liberation. Mugabe's ZANU mobilised people to participate in the struggle by promising them that it would "institute land reform to give back land that had been taken during colonialism" (quoted by Peters and Malan, 2000:153). Thousands of people took part in the liberation struggle, which eventually led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. One female ex-combatant, Pamela Tungamirai, explained "this is the time we (ex-combatants) had been waiting for, to be rewarded for our contribution during the war. Land is the reason why we all left our homes to join the liberation struggle..." (quoted by Peters and Malan, 2000:153).

The Lancaster House Constitution (LHC), which resulted from negotiations between, among others, ZANU-PF and the UK, stipulated the pace of land reform in Zimbabwe and placed constraints on the scale of reform until 1990. Firstly, the Zimbabwean government had to acquire land only on a "willing seller/willing buyer" basis, which meant that as a result the government did not obtain enough land and that which was acquired was not always of the best quality. Secondly, the government agreed that it would pay the fair market price for land. The LHC did not specifically state that the UK would pay for land reform in Zimbabwe, but Mugabe's government understood that to be the case (Peters and Malan, 2000:153; Taylor and Williams, 2002:549-550).

Independence did not resolve the structural problems over land (Moyo and Matondi, 2003:74). The Zimbabwean government faced the massive problem of an unequal and racially distorted agricultural system. An estimated 6 000 white commercial farmers owned 15,5 million hectares or close to 47% of the agricultural land in the country and 8 000 black small-scale commercial farmers owned or leased 1,4 million hectares. In addition, 700 000 peasant families occupied around 16,4 million hectares "under communal tenure" (Shaw, 2003:75).

Between 1980 and 1985 conflict revolved around the shift from the long liberation struggle to the actual implementation of the goals fought for during the struggle. This period was characterised by vast numbers of spontaneous land occupations that occurred all over Zimbabwe (Moyo and Matondi, 2003:74).

By 1985, a new Land Acquisition Act¹¹ was passed by Parliament, allowing the government the

11. The Land Acquisition Act listed the conditions under which the government could acquire land. Under this Act, the land that was allocated for resettlement had to be "derelict, under-utilised, owned by absentee landlords, adjacent to communal areas or belong to a farmer who owned more than one farm" (Peters and Malan, 2000:154).

right of first refusal on all large-scale commercial farms up for sale. In practice the government continued to defend the property rights of large-scale commercial farms after Zimbabwe gained its independence and squatters were forcibly evicted. Although it has been suggested that certain politicians actually encouraged people to “squat” officially, the government’s position was to evict squatters (Moyo, 1995:113). By 1986-87 the government appeared to have put a stop to the illegal occupations of commercial farms, national parks, urban areas, communal lands and state land, violently at times. After 1986 the whole pace of land reform slowed down (Moyo and Matondi, 2003:74).

In 1992 the House of Assembly passed a new Land Acquisition Act, which permitted the Zimbabwean government taking compulsory action to acquire land. This law also declared that if sellers did not feel they were justly compensated for the land, they were obliged to take the issue to court (Peters and Malan, 2000:154). In May of the following year the government published a list of properties that would be transferred to the state under this new Act. The action incited angry protests from the white-dominated Commercial Farmers’ Union (CFU) (Europa World Year Book, 2002a:4486).

Between 1980 and 1990 a relatively modest 71 000 households were resettled in Zimbabwe on 3,6 million hectares of land lawfully acquired by the government. A further 500 000 households continued to wait for land that the government had promised them. The pace of change slowed considerably during the 1990s as land reform became increasingly expensive to administer.¹²

Furthermore, the land redistribution that did take place was plagued by allegations of cronyism, corruption and incompetence (Shaw, 2003:76). In 1997 allegations arose that official contracts were being unfairly tendered and that homes for civil servants were being financed by ministerial funds. Government ministers and Mugabe’s wife were also having homes built with government money. It was reported that several government members and their families had been misusing funds that were initially intended to aid war veterans. Mugabe himself later publicly admitted that there was corruption in his administration (Brown, 2003:1226).

12. The process of land reform itself is so expensive because it includes the cost of land acquisition and building schools, roads and clinics in the resettlement areas. The Zimbabwean government estimated that the whole programme would soar above \$1 billion since it also needed to incorporate the cost of services such as credit and building infrastructure to assist farming (Peters and Malan, 2000:156).

When it emerged that government ministers had received vast tracts of land, international donors, particularly the UK (which had spent 44 million pounds on the land reform process by this time and still had three million pounds left) suspended their funding and demanded a more transparent programme which would redistribute land to the poor while also preserving commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe (Peters and Malan, 2000:156; Taylor and Williams, 2002:550).

Mugabe responded by warning that he would expropriate white-owned farms anyway, without any compensation. He announced a new policy of outright land seizure, which was approved by Parliament. In 1997 when the government demanded that the UK pay, donor funding was only threatened further. To aggravate matters, the IMF and World Bank suspended their funding to Zimbabwe when Mugabe sent troops into the DRC in 1998 (Peters and Malan, 2000:156).

Increasing government corruption worsened the already volatile atmosphere and civil society¹³ began protesting for change (Peters and Malan, 2000:156). With his popularity waning, Mugabe attempted to win back popular support by announcing that the national land resettlement programme would be accelerated. He also proposed amending the country's constitution, which ZANU-PF rewrote in February 2000. Among the changes were clauses that reinforced the right to compulsory acquisition and a statement that white commercial farmers' constitutional rights to full and fair compensation would not be honoured. In addition it was declared that the UK (as the former colonial power) would be responsible for assisting the white farmers in this regard (Moyo and Matondi, 2003:88; Peters and Malan, 2000:156; Zunga, 2003:42).

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which was launched in September 1999, and the NCA both campaigned against the draft and helped to sway the referendum vote (Moyo and Matondi, 2003:88). ZANU-PF failed dismally by 120 000 more No votes than Yes votes¹⁴ (Peron, 2000:46).

Mugabe's government subsequently faced two problems. Firstly, the majority of the population voted against accepting the new constitution proposed by his government. Secondly, the MDC was

13. Churches, associations, academics, students, labour and other groups formed the non-political civic organisation known as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which demanded constitutional reforms as the first step to improving conditions in the country. The NCA drew up a constitution to replace the LHC, which had already been pulled to pieces with amendments made by government. The government accused the NCA of being part of an imperialist plot and completely ignored the NCA's proposed constitution (Zunga, 2003:42).

14. Of the 26% who participated, 54,6% voted to reject the constitution (Brown, 2003:1227).

becoming an increasingly confident and popular opposition, which would be dangerous in the forthcoming legislative elections. Therefore the government initiated a campaign to try to restore some of its former popularity so that a victory over the opposition would be ensured. In late February 2000 the state began its campaign of illegally occupying white-owned farms, which was made worse by so-called war veterans, many of whom were too young to have participated in the war of independence a full two decades earlier. Security forces refused to take action against the occupiers because they argued that the occupations were a political issue and therefore did not fall within their jurisdiction and claimed that to try to enforce order would be dangerous and counterproductive (Brown, 2003:1227).

The CFU acquired a High Court Order, which declared the land invasions illegal acts and ordered the police to evict the invaders within 24 hours. However, the Order was not implemented. War veterans' leader, Dr Chenjerai "Hitler" Hunzvi (self-named because of his admiration for the Nazi leader), retorted: "we cannot accept the humiliation of being told by a white man to pack our bags and leave our land". Mugabe himself claimed that the fight for land was more important than "the little law of trespass" and declared that the government would not intervene unless violence broke out (Meredith, 2002:170; Sparks, 2003:320).

Mugabe's initial response to the farm invasions was to pretend that they were a "spontaneous uprising by land-hungry peasants denied access to land by rich white farmers" (Meredith, 2002:169). However, it soon became apparent that leading ZANU-PF officials, army officers and even police officers were actively directing events. Hunzvi, who Mugabe had appointed as head of the campaign, disclosed to ZANU-PF supporters that he had been given Z\$20 million by ZANU-PF to organise farm invasions and to campaign for ZANU-PF in the upcoming elections (Meredith, 2002:169; Shaw, 2003:76).

Hunzvi led the farm invasions that began on 28 February 2000. At this stage there was no official legislation allowing for such occupation of farmland. The invasions were horrifically violent with international television covering the events and broadcasting images of groups of people carrying weapons ranging from axes and stones, to sticks and guns. The invaders were shown "descending on farms, arriving at the farm owner's house demanding that the farmer leave the place, or demanding that he share the place, or holding the farmer and workers hostage" (Zunga, 2003:66). Houses were destroyed and compounds burnt. Zunga (2003:66) describes the actions as an "*impi* style attack".

Government and army trucks were used to transport these gangs to farms and to make sure that they were routinely supplied with rations once there. Although they were known to the world as “war veterans”, a large majority were actually unemployed youths who were recruited from the streets and poor communities of Zimbabwe to stay on the farms. Their task was to peg out plots of land and squash support for the opposition in the run-up to the election by harassing farm workers to stop them voting for the MDC (Meredith, 2002:167; Zunga, 2003:87).

The biggest argument that Mugabe uses to justify the land occupations has been referred to as the “entitlement argument” (Shaw, 2003:81). Mugabe’s regime argues that the whites who settled in Zimbabwe at the end of the 1800s and who appropriated most of the land for themselves, did so unjustly and that “subsequent, legally impeccable transfers do not wash away the stain of this unjust acquisition” (quoted by Shaw, 2003:81). In accordance with this argument, those who have since inherited or bought the originally “stolen” land have no moral entitlement to it. Justice will only prevail once this land is taken from its present occupiers and given back to the rightful owners (Shaw, 2003:81).

Following the deaths of the first two white farmers, David Stevens and Martin Olds, Mugabe addressed the nation. He referred to the white commercial farmers as having “entrenched colonial attitudes” and later accused them of being “enemies of Zimbabwe” in what he now referred to as the third *Chimurenga*¹⁵ (freedom struggle) (Brown, 2003:1227; Meredith, 2002:175).

It is estimated that in the timeframe since mid-February 2000, between 800 and 1 500 commercial farms owned predominantly by white farmers (but also including farms with black owners and those owned by MNCs and the state) have been occupied by war veterans. These occupations have reportedly been marked by violence and gross human rights abuses including torture and rape (Moyo and Matondi, 2003:88). Now less than 400 white farmers stay on farms in Zimbabwe¹⁶ and possess only 3% of the land (4 500 white farmers used to own one third of the land, 70% of which was prime farmland, prior to the government’s launch of the land reform programme in February 2000) (Mail and Guardian online, 2004: Internet source).

15. Mugabe and his followers termed the farm invasions and expropriations as the third *Chimurenga* to provide some nationalist legitimacy to these actions and to justify the illegal role of war veterans in carrying them out. The struggle against the Smith regime was dubbed the second *Chimurenga*, while the first *Chimurenga* referred to the nationalist uprising against colonial occupation in 1896 (Shaw, 2003:79).

16. Many white farmers have resettled in Zambia, Mozambique, Uganda and even Nigeria (The Citizen, 10/01/04).

5.3.2. The economic crisis

In Zimbabwe's first decade of independence, its GDP grew by an annual average rate of 3,8%. However, the economic promise displayed in 1991 did not last because of macro-economic policies and increasing government intervention (SAIIA, 2002:2). Between 1990 and 1996, that rate slowed to 0,5% annually (Taylor and Williams, 2002:549).

During the late 1990s, while the land issue was slowly reaching boiling point, Mugabe was causing the deterioration of the Zimbabwean economy. He imposed a 100% luxury goods import tax; confiscated hard-currency accounts kept by wealthy Zimbabweans who had done well during the structural adjustment era of the 1990s; defaulted on debt to the IMF and African Development Bank; following inflation, lowered the real interest rate from its initially high positive levels in the 1990s to -85% in 2001, and "kept a currency peg in place at artificially high levels" (Bond, 2002:16).

In August 1997 Mugabe announced that the war veterans would receive many substantial benefits that had not been incorporated in the budget (Brown, 2003:1226). The war veterans were becoming an increasingly powerful pressure group so it is little wonder that Mugabe would do what he could to ensure their support. He agreed to make a one-off bonus payment of Z\$50 000 to each of the 70 000 war veterans as well as a monthly pension of Z\$2 000 (Sparks, 2003:320). This came at a time when the country could little afford it and the announcement accelerated Zimbabwe's economic free fall. Moreover, the IMF and World Bank as well as other international donors had suspended their funding programmes to protest allegations of corruption (see above).

At this time Zimbabwe's economy was worsening as food prices soared, unemployment grew excessively and the Zimbabwean dollar weakened even further. These extensive economic problems contributed to the nation's already growing dissatisfaction with government. Riots erupted when in January of 1998 the price of maize meal was raised again.¹⁷ Despite Mugabe's willingness to withdraw this price increase he did deploy the army to suppress the rioters. Moreover, even though the economy was in crisis, Mugabe put forward legislation to Parliament that made provision for a number of luxury retirement benefits for himself, his family, the two Vice-Presidents and their families. Rioting broke out again and in August 1998 the Zimbabwean government issued a decree

17. In October 1997 the price of maize meal rose by 36% and then 24% in December (Meredith, 2002:141).

that banned strikes and restricted public and political gatherings, though this was quickly repealed (Brown, 2003:1226).

Zimbabwe's economic crisis was aggravated by Mugabe's decision to deploy troops to the DRC in August 1998 to assist President Laurent Kabila. Initially, Mugabe dispatched 6 000 troops but that number soon grew to over 13 000, more than one third of Zimbabwe's army. By mid-2000, an estimated 600 Zimbabweans had been killed and the financial costs came to well over US\$500 million. Although several cabinet ministers and army generals managed to benefit from deals¹⁸ associated with the intervention, the overall result of the intervention was negative (Taylor and Williams, 2002:551). By the end of 2002 Zimbabwe had completely withdrawn its troops (Brown, 2003:1230).

By July 2000 Zimbabwe had become the world's fastest shrinking economy (Taylor and Williams, 2002:549). Today, half of the population is confronted with starvation, fuel shortages abound and unemployment is estimated at 70%. In 2002 Zimbabwe's external debt stood at US\$5 billion and the GDP dropped by 12,1%. Inflation rose to almost 600% by the end of 2003 and was projected to reach 800% by the end of 2004 (Landsberg, 2004:174). More than 80% of the population live below the poverty line (Johnson, 2001:59; Rupiya, 2003:165; Tsvangirai, 2003:135).

5.3.3. A lack of democracy

In the early 1980s, Mugabe unleashed a campaign to kill dissidents in Matebeleland (southwest Zimbabwe) in the hope of wiping out the ZAPU opposition. Eight thousand people, many of them innocent bystanders, were killed in the attacks. These incidents illustrated Mugabe's readiness to use force as a strategy to achieve his objectives. Mugabe admitted this himself when he stated that he had a "degree in violence" (Meredith, 2002:69-76).

Following the voters' rejection of his proposed constitutional amendment in 2000, Mugabe became increasingly worried about mounting support for the opposition. According to County Reports on Human Rights Practices (2001, Internet source), the Zimbabwean government sanctioned a "systematic campaign of violence" that targeted supporters of the opposition in the months preceding

18. In return for military support, Kabila was willing to hand out mining and timber concessions and other trade opportunities in diamonds and cobalt, among other minerals (Meredith, 2002:148).

the parliamentary elections in June 2000. Ruling party supporters and war veterans, backed by the government, killed, abducted, tortured, beat, abused, raped and threatened farm owners and workers who backed the MDC¹⁹ (Meredith, 2002:178; Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2001: Internet source).

In the run-up to the parliamentary elections, Mugabe attempted to stop foreign election observers from doing their jobs, stating that he did not need or want “these foreigners” observing the election. Nonetheless, observers from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), Amnesty International, the Southern African Legal Assistance Network and the Zimbabwean Human Rights NGO Forum did the best they could. The NDI, IRI, Amnesty International and others argued that the election could not be regarded as free and fair on the basis of what had happened in the months prior to polling day: intimidation of the opposition and violence used, the refusal of free media access, and “the multiple administrative irregularities in the organisation of the election itself” (quoted by Johnson, 2001:65). As for the latter, it appeared that the electoral register had included the names of dead or fake voters, which created numerous opportunities for electoral fraud (Johnson, 2001:65).

Mugabe was given more to worry about following the results of the elections. Although ZANU-PF won, the sudden emergence on the scene of a unified opposition party, the MDC under Morgan Tsvangirai's²⁰ leadership, almost overshadowed his victory. The MDC obtained 57 of the 120 directly elected seats in parliament. Mugabe's ZANU-PF just managed to squeeze by with 62 seats (Lloyd, 2002:221).

19. In the Buhera district ZANU-PF supporters forced a vehicle driven by Morgan Tsvangirai's campaign manager, Tichaona Chiminya, and eight other passengers off the road. The men beat the passengers before setting the car on fire. Chiminya and colleague Talent Mabika died from burns. Although their assailants were known, no action was taken against them (Meredith, 2002:178; Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2001: Internet source). Three MDC activists were killed in three other incidents. An MDC supporter was hacked to death at a rally in Shamva where David Nhaurwa, an MDC organiser, was also wounded. In the second incident ZANU-PF activists beat a man wearing an MDC shirt to death with iron bars. Fellow MDC organiser Robert Mbuzi died from a gunshot wound received in Mhangura, north of Harare, three days earlier (Keesings, 2000:43500).

20. Tsvangirai became leader of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in the late 1980s and used this position to gain a number of small victories over Mugabe, including forcing him to back down on plans to increase taxes. Tsvangirai soon headed the MDC whose supporters include “anyone who can beat Mugabe”. Mugabe showed his displeasure with the MDC by allegedly having party leaders arrested, beaten and killed (Lloyd, 2002:221).

Prior to the presidential election, the Zimbabwe government passed emergency legislation²¹ that stifled media coverage,²² imposed strict regulations on local and international election monitors, routinely used violence against the opposition supporters and activists and even placed the Zimbabwean armed forces formally in charge of the election. The military made it clear immediately that they would not accept any result that went “against the revolution” and insisted that they would only support a presidential candidate who, in their view, upheld “Zimbabwean values” (quoted by De Beer, 2002: Internet source; Hamill, 2002:34).

Mugabe forced Tsvangirai to cancel over 100 rallies during the first two months of the year and intimidated hundreds of thousands of voters with his so-called Green Bombers. Established in 2001, the Green Bombers are officially part of the National Youth Service Training Programme. This group has been blamed for some of the worst human rights abuses in the country, particularly its intimidation of supporters of the opposition²³ (The Citizen, 10/08/04; Time, 22 March 2004: Internet source). More than 100 were killed and thousands of others were tortured, raped and beaten. Other suspicious activities included the late registration of hundreds of thousands of voters and a refusal to give the MDC access to the voter’s roll until the actual day of polling (Bond, 2002:22).

The judiciary was also targeted. Mugabe continually addressed the nation and blamed the judiciary, media and “British agents” as well as white Zimbabweans for “fomenting unrest” in the country (quoted by Brown, 2003:1226). In June 2001 Mugabe hinted that he could not ensure the safety of Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay of the Supreme Court – the only state institution that could still oppose him. His meaning was plain and the Chief Justice as well as numerous other senior judges resigned. Mugabe then placed allies of his in their positions, a move which Amnesty International referred to as creating a “culture of impunity”. Soon the government obtained a positive ruling on land seizure, which overturned an earlier judgement of the court that the land seizures were unconstitutional. The independence of the judiciary had clearly been compromised (Lloyd, 2002:220; Taylor and Williams, 2002:551).

21. Mugabe forced the Public Order and Security Act through Parliament. He branded his opponents as terrorists in order to get the bill passed. This new law allows for the use of the death penalty for acts of “insurgency, banditry, sabotage and terrorism” and carries prison terms for anyone who is seen to “undermine the authority of the President” or “engender hostility” to him. The Act also bans demonstrations and provides police with greater powers to manage “riots, disorder or intolerance” (Time, 21 January 2002:8).

22. Media laws have been passed to prevent journalists from writing anything that “criminally defames the office and person of the president.” The independent daily, The Daily News, had its printing press blown up and both domestic and foreign journalists have been attacked and even deported (Louw, 2001:88).

23. Despite international condemnation over this group’s actions, Mugabe has recently announced a plan to expand the youth militia (The Citizen, 10/08/04).

Another incident that provoked criticism of Mugabe's undemocratic actions took place when a COSATU fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe was deported by order of the Zimbabwean government in late October 2004. The COSATU delegation had intended to meet with, among others, the ZCTU, the Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the National Constitutional Assembly, all civic organisations that the Zimbabwean government had labelled as "anti-government" and "quasi-oppositional political organisations" (Cape Times, 26/10/04). The deportation prompted COSATU's alliance partner, the SACP, to angrily declare, "this act is ultimate proof that the Mugabe regime is essentially a dictatorial and undemocratic regime which is not willing to engage honestly with opposition forces" (news24.com, 2004a: Internet source).

5.4. South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe

In Mbeki's view all of the above-mentioned crises were rooted in the Zimbabwean political economy and therefore South Africa would "support, we will assist, but it (reconciliation) has to be done by the people of Zimbabwe" (quoted by Schoeman and Alden, 2003:5). Mbeki is very aware of the importance of stability in Zimbabwe. He wrote in ANC Today:

Zimbabwe and South Africa are immediate neighbours being inextricably linked to each other, we share a common destiny. To be productive, our interventions can only be as friends who act to support democracy, peace, stability and prosperity... It is however also true, as we have indicated, that the future of Zimbabwe is of direct relevance to the future of our own country and our region. We are therefore materially and directly interested in a Zimbabwe that is democratic, peaceful, stable and prosperous (quoted by Nyaira, 2002: Internet source; The Daily News, 27/03/02).

It is understandable that South Africa regards the southern African region as being of the utmost importance in its foreign relations. Yet, if security and prosperity amongst its neighbours is so vital to South Africa, then why has South Africa dealt with Zimbabwe in such a gingerly fashion?

To begin answering this question, the following indicators of quiet diplomacy will be applied:

- Personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state or government or senior officials.
- Avoidance of media exposure.
- The appearance of limited action or even inaction.
- Calm and tactful but persistent negotiation or dialogue in a non-threatening atmosphere.
- Constructive engagement with the target country in an effort to help solve the problem as quietly as possible.
- Diplomacy often carried out in the context of bilateral or multilateral efforts.

As in the previous chapter, certain indicators of quiet diplomacy have been combined to avoid repetition.

5.4.1. Personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state or senior officials

In an obvious contrast to Mandela's largely moralistic "pulpit" diplomacy, Mbeki sought to follow a softer approach. He was reported as saying, "our government will work persistently and without making the noise of empty drums, to help the sister people of Zimbabwe to find a just and lasting solution to the real and pressing land question in their country" (quoted by Barber and Vickers, 2001:363).

In its foreign policy towards Nigeria, discussed in the previous chapter, the South African government identified a number of objectives. Similarly, with regard to Zimbabwe, Mbeki initially listed four aims:

- To find a common commitment to resolving the land question and restore the rule of law.
- To halt the violence that has occurred.
- To create conditions necessary for the withdrawal of veterans from farms.
- To pursue all of these objectives "in a manner that would be beneficial for all the people of Zimbabwe and the rest of southern Africa" (The Citizen, 05/05/00).

Mbeki has met personally with Mugabe on many occasions and has always emerged from the meetings with a positive view about the situation and stating that there continued to be goodwill, progress and agreement between himself and Mugabe on several issues. For example, following the parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe Mbeki flew to Bulawayo where he thanked Mugabe for his support in the past and emphasised the importance of African solidarity (Barber and Vickers, 2001:363). Mbeki has always been careful to agree with Mugabe that the underlying issue in Zimbabwe is the "colonial legacy of skewed land distribution" (quoted by Schoeman and Alden, 2003:6). Mbeki even insisted that Mugabe could assist South Africa to confront its own problems since South Africa also suffered from land dispossession. He added that both South Africa and its neighbour needed to work against "this colonial legacy" together (Johnson, 2001:64; The Citizen, 19/12/03).

Mbeki asserts that the issues in Zimbabwe are based on racism. He is adamant that attacks on his quiet diplomacy are “racist attempts to create an atmosphere of fear in South Africa” (Johnson, 2001:64). Whereas Mandela was a crusader for human rights, who also preached racial reconciliation in “a rainbow nation”, Mbeki has constantly advocated the doctrine of “two nations, one rich and white and the other black and poor” (quoted by Johnson, 2001:76). It seems apparent then why Mbeki cannot criticise Mugabe. He cannot, in line with his own policies, ally himself with white farmers against a black liberation leader. Moreover, if he changed his policy he would have to admit that he, “the ANC’s foreign policy and diplomatic expert”, had misjudged, and quite catastrophically so, his first real foreign policy difficulty (Johnson, 2001:76).

The problem with Mbeki’s insistence that the Zimbabwean crisis is rooted in the land issue caused mainly by whites, is that many Zimbabweans do not regard it as that at all. Harare mayor Elias Mudzun insisted that “the world must know this is not a black and white issue. It is an issue of the blacks in Zimbabwe suffering” (Dempster, 2003: Internet source). In a survey conducted by the Helen Suzman Foundation in 2000, only 2% of Zimbabweans thought whites were at fault, while 28% blamed Mugabe and 41% blamed his government. Moreover, 66% of the electorate said that they had no confidence in Mugabe and were frustrated by his handling of the land issue (Johnson, 2001:63).

On more than one occasion Mugabe has promised Mbeki good behaviour. Following one meeting, Mugabe appeared on camera to declare that he would uphold the rule of law, that veterans who harassed farmers would be arrested and that all war veterans would soon be forced to leave the farms they had invaded. In return Mbeki promised once again to provide aid and mediate with the IMF for funds. When Mbeki left, however, Mugabe publicly asserted that he had never said any of the things that he had in fact said the day before (Johnson, 2001:66).

Even after Mugabe’s blatant defaulting on his promises, Mbeki continued to back him in the international community. At the UN Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000, Mbeki tried to broker deals between the UN, UK and Zimbabwe only to have them ripped apart when Mugabe once again refused to concede transparency and uphold the rule of law (Johnson, 2001:67).

Privately, the South African government seemed to be pursuing a vastly more interventionist approach by setting up a ministerial task team. Cabinet ministers met with Zimbabwean ministers of minerals and energy, finance, land and industry and international trade in March 2001. Following

this meeting, a series of workshops was lined up during which Zimbabwe's domestic problems were discussed. According to the Weekly Mail and Guardian (6-12/04/01;1-6/06/01), the South Africans taking part emphasised how these problems were impacting negatively on the southern African region.

The ANC MP Tony Yengeni and party Secretary General Kgalema Motlanthe established a regional network of southern African liberation movements in an effort to "broaden its front on constructive engagement" with Zimbabwe (Bond, 2002:18). However, Schoeman and Alden (2003:6) contend that instead of acting as a way to put pressure on Mugabe's regime to reform, this network resulted in distancing the South African government, the ANC and COSATU even more from the opposition in Zimbabwe, the MDC. This movement away from Tsvangirai and his MDC was also due to the MDC's increasingly closer ties with white interests both inside Zimbabwe and out.

Joel Netshitenzhe (CEO of Government Communications and head of the Policy Unit in the Presidency) insists the South African government does become frustrated when attempts at dialogue fall apart. He asserts that the government does condemn laws limiting political activity and freedom of expression in Zimbabwe and South Africa has raised these concerns bilaterally or through SADC. He does, however, add that Zimbabweans' fate "is in their own hands. Outsiders can only lend a hand" (Cape Times, 26/02/04).



It had been mentioned before in this chapter that Mbeki regards the cultural dimension of the African Renaissance to be as important as socio-economic development. Therefore it is not surprising that the traditional African custom of revering elderly people is still important for Mbeki and his officials. It is unpragmatic to expect that either Mbeki or the other SADC leaders will humiliate Mugabe, an elderly statesman, through a public rebuke (Sowetan, 19/06/01).

That being said, Mbeki has been forced by sheer public pressure at home and by the international community to criticise some things that Mugabe has done. Mbeki first spoke out about human rights violations when he expressed concern over the Zimbabwean government's "actions, which deny the right of people to protest peacefully" (Cape Times, 27/03/03). Mbeki even "extended the hand of friendship" to Tsvangirai and emphasised the importance of dialogue between ZANU-PF and the "broad democratic forces" (Cape Times, 27/03/03). However, Dlamini-Zuma later insisted that the South African government had always advised the Zimbabwean government to stop torturing

opposition members. Mugabe's curt response was that he will "not seek the approval of outsiders to enforce law and order in our country" (Sunday Times, 30/03/03).

In an interview with the BBC in 2001, Mbeki conceded that Mugabe had ignored his quiet diplomatic advice and that he (Mbeki) had tried persuading Mugabe to reform, but that he "didn't listen to me" (quoted by Bond, 2002:17, South Africa Survey, 2002:89). South African Minister of Defence Mosiua Lekota later also acknowledged that in spite of efforts made during numerous talks between South Africa and Zimbabwe, "chaos was allowed to reign and the crisis to spiral out of control" (Saturday Star, 11/05/02). He admitted: "the government of Zimbabwe would not listen to us. We asked them to do something to stop the looting of farms and not to follow the route of lawlessness, but we failed". Later he explained these were his personal views and not government policy.

With reference to COSATU's recent deportation from Zimbabwe (mentioned earlier), Foreign Minister Dlamini-Zuma defended Zimbabwe's right to expel foreigners and told the press that South Africa's relations with Zimbabwe had not been affected by the incident (news24.com, 2004b: Internet source). The day after the deportation Mugabe reinforced Dlamini-Zuma's announcement by publicly commenting: "we have excellent relations with the ANC. We discuss our problems on a basis of mutual understanding" (quoted by news24.com, 2004c: Internet source).

In addition, at the ANC caucus meeting held soon after the deportation took place, Lekota expressed his irritation with COSATU's actions, insisting that its lack of conferring with its alliance partners prior to the trip was "an embarrassment to the ANC". Mbeki loyalists in the ANC also referred to COSATU's actions as "irresponsible games, which do not contribute anything towards solving the crisis in Zimbabwe" (news24.com, 2004d: Internet source). While Mbeki's spokesperson, Bheki Khumalo, said that Mbeki had no comment on the matter, informed sources in the caucus argued that Mbeki had shown his displeasure with COSATU and had issued a warning to the organisation (news24.com, 2004d: Internet source). Moreover, head of the ANC Presidency Smuts Ngonyama, accused COSATU of setting Zimbabweans against each other and added: "there is no way you can find solutions to a sensitive situation like this if you try to play to the gallery" (Sunday Times, 07/11/04). It is instructive that the government chose to take issue with its own alliance partner, but did not utter a word of public criticism over Zimbabwe's expulsion of the COSATU delegation, a decision that has significant implications in terms of how far Mbeki is willing to go to defend Mugabe's actions.

5.4.2. The appearance of limited action or even inaction and media involvement

Mbeki's policy towards Zimbabwe has been severely criticised and even referred to as "no policy". Some suggest that South Africa's diplomacy has amounted to "a complete and public excusing of Mugabe's human rights atrocities" and has given the domestic public and the international community the general impression of acquiescence (Johnson, 2001:61; Rupiya, 2003:168). Domestically, the independent media has consistently and strongly criticised the Mbeki government for its apparent inability to solve the Zimbabwean crisis (Cape Argus, 20/02/01;01/02/02; The Citizen, 29/05/01; Business Day, 19/11/01; Weekly Mail and Guardian, 14/02/02).

Foreigners looked to South Africa to use its considerable power in the region to "subdue, control, influence and punish" Mugabe's government (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:15). Initially it did appear that the South African government had a method in mind to deal with the situation. It did not criticise Mugabe on the grounds that it was attempting "to make President Mugabe more amenable to negotiate behind the scenes" (quoted by Taylor and Williams, 2002:559). This step is a legitimate method of quiet diplomacy as defined by the theory. As the months passed, however, the lack of an effective engagement strategy only weakened South Africa further and emphasised its apparent inability to promote adherence to the rule of law in the region (Taylor and Williams, 2002:559).

Hughes and Mills (2003:8) refer to South Africa's quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe as a non-policy since it is "non-verifiable, non-specific, has no clear or given objectives or deliverables and does not permit either the local or international community to understand the substance of the positions adopted". In their view, quiet diplomacy is a flawed approach since it assumes that Mugabe, who has ignored basic principles of democracy and rule of law, will be influenced by a soft diplomatic approach to change. Even the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank, Tito Mboweni, acknowledged that Zimbabwe would "never be moved by diplomacy" (The Financial Gazette, 2002: Internet source).

It is difficult to interpret what South Africa's position on Zimbabwe has really been over the period 1999-2004. Its foreign policy appears to have vacillated between two contradictory positions. On the one hand South Africa has preferred largely to stay out of Zimbabwean affairs. Mbeki's government argued initially that the rule of sovereignty prohibited South Africa's involvement. South Africa would only intervene if it were in an assisting capacity, either bilaterally or multilaterally, to help Zimbabwe find solutions to its domestic problems and to try to prevent further

economic degeneration (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:6). On the other hand the South African government has also been publicly critical, although guardedly so, of Zimbabwe's government resulting from frustration at the worsening crisis as well as its inevitable impact on South Africa and the rest of the region (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:6).

A similarity between South Africa's handling of the Nigerian situation and Zimbabwe's ongoing crisis is evident in that once again input by respected public figures and foreign service professionals was apparently ignored in developing South Africa's response. South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe has been a presidential monopoly, where the foreign minister and ministry have been largely absent. Moreover, businesses and labour unions' views have not been taken into account (SAIIA, 2002:1). Archbishop Desmond Tutu's criticisms have been ignored as they had been during the Nigerian crisis. Up until this stage Tutu was the only leading black figure to overtly criticise Mugabe, who he referred to as "almost a caricature of all the things the people think black African leaders do" (Johnson, 2001:64).

Two members of the tripartite alliance, COSATU and the SACP, were also ignored. Whereas the ANC showed full support for ZANU-PF, COSATU asserted that the increasingly violent situation in Zimbabwe was the direct result of a "careless" government and an "arbitrary" land reform programme. The SACP stated that it was "extremely concerned about the unacceptable levels of intimidation, violence, abuse of state resources and the enactment of repressive laws since the Zimbabwean parliamentary elections in 2000" (quoted by Taylor and Williams, 2002:560). Even though these expressions of concern from the SACP and COSATU were understandably embedded within a wider call for international support for the "decisive implementation of a far-reaching land reform programme", they were nevertheless not taken into consideration by Mbeki (quoted by Taylor and Williams, 2002:560).

Mandela himself initially backed a quiet diplomatic approach to Zimbabwe. In an interview with BBC Radio, he said: "it is no use standing on hilltops and shouting about such a highly sensitive matter. An approach through diplomatic channels without much publicity is more likely to bring about a positive result". He added: "it is true that 50% of the land in Zimbabwe is owned by whites – who are in the minority – and the rest is owned by the majority. There must be some equitable adjustment of this question" (The Namibian, 2000: Internet source). However, the day after Mbeki publicly embraced Mugabe, Mandela burst out denouncing liberation leaders who "despise the people who put them in power and want to stay in power forever. They want to die in power

because they have committed crimes²⁴ (quoted by Johnson, 2001:64). Although Mandela did admit to disagreeing with Mbeki on the Zimbabwe issue, he loyally continued to back Mbeki's policy of quiet diplomacy (Johnson, 2001:64).

Interestingly, just as in the Nigerian case, the South African government's choice of policymakers could once again easily have contributed to its failing quiet diplomacy. After all many actors involved appear to have misread the situation in Zimbabwe or at least perceived it differently to the international community. For example, Dlamini-Zuma responded to Zimbabwe's very harsh media laws, which required all journalists to register, by stating that they posed no threat to media freedom. In similar vein South African Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana went to Zimbabwe and then came back giving Mugabe's government "a clean bill of health" on its human rights conduct. The Director-General in the Presidency, the Reverend Frank Chikane, accused those religious leaders who had demanded that the South African government take a tougher stance on Zimbabwe of "resorting to fabrications and clubbing together with political self-seekers in order to achieve their goals" (Sunday Times, 15/02/04).

In the Nigerian crisis South African emissaries did not meet with the opposition. Similarly Dlamini-Zuma's visits to Harare did not include meetings with the opposition. MDC leader Tsvangirai (2003:132) noted in frustration that, "the last time Dlamini-Zuma was in Harare she refused to accept that the murder, torture, political violence, rape and all the other brutalities associated with the Mugabe regime constituted a crisis that needed international attention".

Despite this initial choice by the South African government, Mbeki has since held discussions with the MDC on several occasions. In October 2004, he engaged in talks with the MDC leadership four times to discuss ways to stop the growing rift between the opposition and ZANU-PF in light of Zimbabwe's parliamentary elections due in March 2005. On 25 October 2004, Tsvangirai met with Mbeki²⁵ in the latter's capacity as chairperson of the SADC Organ for Defence, Politics and Security. The time and venue for the talks were kept secret because, as presidential spokesperson Bheki Khumalo asserted, "they must be allowed to have their meeting in quiet" in order to increase

24. When asked if he was referring to Mugabe, Mandela retorted, "Everyone knows very well whom I am talking about. If you don't know whom I'm talking about there is no point in telling you" (Johnson, 2001:64).

25. This was Tsvangirai's first visit abroad in almost two and a half years. He had been unable to leave the country since March 2002 when he was accused of plotting to assassinate Mugabe. His passport was confiscated during his trial proceedings. Tsvangirai's acquittal on 15 October 2004 meant that he was finally able to travel abroad (IOL, 2004a: Internet source).

the likelihood of success (Cape Times, 26/10/04).

Although the talks were private, sources later revealed that Mbeki had been interested in the MDC's position on the promised electoral changes that Mugabe had previously agreed to institute (Business Day, 2004: Internet source). Tsvangirai reportedly indicated to Mbeki that any proposed changes by Mugabe were "cosmetic" and that the Zimbabwean President needed to be prevailed upon to adopt genuine reforms by the other SADC members. The meeting did appear to be successful in that although Mbeki was not critical of Mugabe, Tsvangirai did emerge from the encounter hopeful. He revealed that he "found the engagement with President Mbeki very productive and his attitude to be open, concerned, and committed to finding a solution" (quoted by IOL, 2004b: Internet source).

When the heads of state and government met at the AU summit in Durban in July 2002, they accepted the Durban Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. Once again African leaders declared their "commitment to the promotion of democracy and its values" in their countries through ensuring that the rule of law is upheld; good governance prevails; all citizens are regarded as equal; individuals have an inalienable right to participate freely in elections, and that individual liberties and collective freedoms are safeguarded (Venter, 2003: Internet source). The following year Mbeki addressed the heads of state and government of the AU and remarked that African leaders including himself were taking "our destiny into our hands, creating for ourselves a continent of peace, democracy, prosperity and African and human solidarity" (DFA, 2003: Internet source).

These moral principles are commendable on paper and yet there has been little evidence of their application in practice. Not only has South Africa's vague policy on Zimbabwe resulted in extensive international criticism but South Africa is also in danger of losing its moral authority on the continent. Mbeki's silence on the issues of law and good governance in Zimbabwe undermines the credibility of his loudly proclaimed vision of a new Africa and an African Renaissance (Business Day, 29/03/01).

To be fair, when the crisis in Zimbabwe was beginning to spiral out of control in 2000, Mbeki was also attempting to translate his vision of an African Renaissance into what would eventually become the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by the end of 2001. As a result, he was extremely sensitive to how South Africa was perceived by the rest of Africa. He needed the continent's support for this new economic programme. Moreover, South Africa was also lobbying

its SADC neighbours to support the restructuring of the stagnating SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. South Africa also needed support for its peace initiative in the DRC (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:5).

Essentially, NEPAD is a “contract between the world’s richest and poorest nations in which greater aid, debt relief and trade access will be offered in exchange for democratic progress, good governance, and progress in tackling corruption” (Hamill, 2002:37). South Africa has led the rest of the continent in this regard and has actually been the key African go-between with the richer states. However, the situation in Zimbabwe and South Africa’s response to it challenges the basis on which NEPAD has been constructed. After all, it is implied in the NEPAD document that Africa will make democratic progress and that those states that are already democratic, particularly regional leaders such as South Africa, should be assertive in helping to move the continent in that direction (Hamill, 2002:37).

Part of the NEPAD deal is that African countries pledge themselves to applying self-regulatory measures, which include isolating members who flagrantly disregard good governance and democracy (Sowetan, 14/03/02). Hundreds of newspaper articles emphasised South Africa’s lack of credibility as a result of its quiet approach to Zimbabwe (Saturday Star, 09/03/02).

As the champion of good African governance, the world waited for Mbeki’s response to Mugabe’s re-election (Saturday Star, 09/03/02). When it became clear that Mbeki accepted the results of the presidential election in 2002, as did other neighbouring African countries, it indicated to the world that African states do not intend to take NEPAD seriously as a guide to political and democratic conduct. Furthermore, South Africa’s apparent acquiescence in the questionable election results has jeopardised its reputation as “the African state with the keenest appreciation of global economic and political dynamics” (Hamill, 2002:37).

Apart from its dented credibility as the leader of the African Renaissance, South Africa is also increasingly in danger of losing its credibility as a powerful peacemaker in southern Africa. The so-called “Mbeki doctrine” refers to his belief that while South Africa cannot force its own views on others, it can assist in dealing with regional instabilities by offering its leadership to bring opposing groups to the negotiating table. In Mbeki’s view, the model of “peace, power sharing and reconciliation” that worked in South Africa could be applied elsewhere with effective results. This is the policy he continues to pursue with Zimbabwe by attempting to get ZANU-PF and the MDC

into formal talks (Economist, 05/10/03). However, Mbeki's continued claims that his quiet diplomacy tactics were making progress and that the Zimbabwean government and opposition were in serious talks were denounced by the MDC who repeatedly argued that no such talks were underway (Business Day, 28/11/03; Carroll, 2003: Internet source). As it was, no formal contact had occurred between Mugabe and the opposition MDC since May 2002, just after Mugabe won re-election (This Day, 25/02/04).

Mugabe accused Britain of bankrolling the MDC and insisted that as long as they were being dictated to by Britain, he would not negotiate with them. "We can't discuss with allies of the Western countries that would want to destroy our economy. The devil is the devil...we have no idea (sic) of supping with the devil". He also stated, "if there is no business, I don't see why we should talk about negotiations" (IOL, 2004c: Internet source). In the opposition camp, MDC Secretary-General Welshman Ncube angrily noted: "we have said over and over again that Mugabe is not interested in serious dialogue...why the South Africans keep on telling the world that there is some kind of dialogue boggles the imagination" (The Star, 25/05/04). Mugabe's continued dismissal of the possibility of talks with the MDC prompted the MDC to declare that they hoped South Africa would now "stop shielding Mugabe from international pressure on the pretext of non-existent dialogue" (The Star, 25/05/04).

By late 2001 even Mbeki himself publicly acknowledged that his quiet diplomatic stance had not been effective in bringing about change in Zimbabwe. At a public meeting in May 2002, Lekota also admitted that constructive engagement and quiet diplomacy had failed. However, he added that South Africa could not publicly condemn Zimbabwe during its presidential elections because that would be counter-productive. In September 2002 Tito Mboweni acknowledged that South Africa's economy was being hit hard by Zimbabwe's spiralling crisis (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:7).

Another very important reason for South Africa's lack of effective action against its neighbour is rooted in historical ties (that also influenced South Africa's response to the Nigerian crisis). Since the ANC was a former liberation movement supported by the frontline states throughout their struggle, it stands to reason that the ANC has a large debt to repay (Mills and Clapham, 1991:9). South Africa feels indebted to Zimbabwe for its outspokenness against apartheid and its help during those years. The ANC feels it cannot turn its back on Mugabe and ZANU-PF, which it refers to as its "sister party" (Business Day, 25/03/03; Dlamini-Zuma, 2002: Internet source). This is ironic since, historically, ZANU had a closer relationship with the PAC (because of their mutual alignment

to Chinese support) than the ANC (backed by Soviet assistance). As mentioned in Chapter 3, Mugabe allowed the establishment of an ANC office in Harare, but the ANC was not permitted to use Zimbabwe as a staging area for infiltration into South Africa (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:18-19).

Nevertheless, Dlamini-Zuma insists that both the ANC and ZANU-PF fought colonialism and oppression in their respective countries (Cape Times, 20/12/02). In addition, the ANC's Head of International Affairs and Policy, Mavivi Myokayaka-Manzini, criticised the media and South African opposition for attempting to dictate to the ANC that they should "take a position that will outrightly just condemn. We can't do that at the ANC. These are our comrades we fought with in the struggle...our relations have been sealed in blood" (Weekly Mail and Guardian, 08/03/01).

South Africa's choice of foreign policy towards Zimbabwe has been influenced by many factors including: the "blood ties" with ZANU-PF (discussed above); South Africa's far-reaching aspirations in Africa, including support for NEPAD and the fear that South Africa might be misconstrued as siding with the West on an African matter (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:7).

5.4.3. Constructive engagement through persistent negotiations

According to the theory the principal idea behind constructive engagement is that it is possible to pressure a country to institute constructive change in its policies through mediation and critical dialogue rather than military force (Vodanovich, 2003: Internet source).

When Mbeki became president in 1999 the South African government began to employ a strategy of "constructive engagement" with Zimbabwe while publicly keeping quiet on many disturbing issues developing there. For example, when Pahad was probed on Mbeki's policy towards Zimbabwe especially in light of its human rights abuses, he sidestepped the question saying only that matters were being taken up "in diplomatic channels" (Pretoria News, 26/02/99).

This policy continued over the next year and was designed "to encourage Mugabe to change course from lawlessness, violent coercion and racial scapegoating" which he had been supporting since his defeat in the constitutional referendum. Even after the war veterans invaded farms and farmers were killed, South Africa continued to insist on a policy of "good neighbourliness" and "non-interference" with Mugabe (Time Atlantic, 23/04/01). By the end of 2001 it was obvious there were few

substantial results from this constructive approach. However, the most important test of South Africa's policy would be how it ensured that the 2002 presidential elections would be free and fair (Hamill, 2002:35).

According to Mbeki, the principal objective of his soft approach was to try to avoid a complete collapse of authority in Zimbabwe. Similarly, in her budget vote speech in May 2001, Dlamini-Zuma insisted: "we have to continue to engage the Zimbabwean government whilst pointing out firmly and frankly where we disagree with them. We have a responsibility to avoid complete collapse and not to make things worse for ordinary Zimbabweans" (quoted by Schoeman and Alden, 2003:4). Mbeki was quoted as saying that such a collapse would not only be disastrous for Zimbabwe but also for South Africa. "We cannot afford a complete breakdown. I don't know how we would cope with it", he declared (quoted in South Africa Survey, 2002:89). Foreign Affairs Portfolio Committee Chairman Pallo Jordan has also argued on numerous occasions that the government's approach is "informed by a desire to avoid further collapse in Zimbabwe and bring about durable peace and stability" (Dlamini, 2003:172).

The South African government has a distinct view on its constructive approach to Zimbabwe. Dlamini-Zuma has insisted that quiet diplomacy is an inherently African form of foreign relations and that, "if your neighbour's house is on fire, you don't slap the child who started it. You help them put out the fire. This is the African way" (quoted by Khan, 2001: Internet source). Dlamini-Zuma has also asserted on many occasions that South Africa will "never" condemn Mugabe's regime, emphasising instead that the government's objective is to create peace and build bridges. She added, "we should work toward bringing the Zimbabweans back from the brink not to throw people over the precipice" (quoted by Dempster, 2003: Internet source).

The new South Africa is still attempting to gain acceptance as a genuine African country. This attitude was perpetuated by South Africa's handling of the Nigerian crisis when it was accused of not being "African enough" (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:18-19). Mbeki and other South African policymakers are very mindful of the Nigerian lesson. As Bond (2002:18) notes, they are not eager to "get (their) fingers burned" again. Myokayaka-Manzini referred to Mandela's actions in the Nigeria crisis - where he condemned Saro-Wiwa's execution and did not consult SADC, the Commonwealth or the OAU - as a "terrible mistake". She spoke of South Africa's actions as being those of a bully; "people resent being bullied" (Weekly Mail and Guardian, 08/03/01). Similarly, Lekota contended: "we suddenly found that we were the only ones who condemned the planned [sic]

hanging. As a result, we learnt a valuable lesson that, especially in Africa, you cannot act alone because you will find yourself isolated and in a position similar to that of the apartheid government” (quoted by Black, 2003:35).

Mbeki is still trying to erase the suspicions that South Africa’s agenda in the region is less than well intended. If the ANC government had threatened Mugabe’s government with punitive measures, other regional states would have been furious (Landsberg, 2004:173). As Landsberg (2004:173) notes, the “politics of solidarity in southern Africa and elsewhere in Africa makes for a dominant political culture”. Mbeki is determined that South Africa cannot afford to lose face with its African “brothers” again.

Nigerian President Abacha accused South Africa of siding with the West (see Chapter 4). In Zimbabwe the ideology of a “North-South” struggle and the African belief that “hegemonic powers continue their dominance and exploitation of the poor” are very apparent, with Blair and international financial institutions being the so-called Western forces. Because of the Africanist diplomacy of solidarity that exists throughout the continent, South Africa suddenly becomes a “puppet of the West” and traitor to the “struggle” (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:12). Black solidarity, brotherhood and support for former comrades in arms take precedence over the need to ensure freedom, rule of law and respect for human rights – which are ironically the very values that were fought for in South Africa’s (and Zimbabwe’s) liberation struggles (Mhanda, 2003:158).

Mbeki had reason to worry about accusations of being un-African or of siding with the West. For example, when he spoke out finally against the unfolding crisis in Zimbabwe towards the end of 2001, the state-owned Herald newspaper in Zimbabwe lashed out at him: “President Mbeki’s alleged utterances neatly dovetail into Britain’s grand plan for a global coalition against Zimbabwe”. It went on to accuse Mbeki of becoming part of a “plot to overthrow the ruling ZANU-PF government from power...such betrayal is difficult to stomach” (quoted by Khan, 2001: Internet source; Schoeman and Alden, 2003:18-19). When Mbeki later sent a confidential letter to Mugabe in which he urged him to return to reconciliation talks with the MDC, the letter was leaked to Zimbabwe’s state-owned media. Mbeki was once again accused by the Zimbabwean state-owned press of being “manipulative” and of “furthering the agenda of a domestic and imperialist lobby” (Sunday Times, 20/10/02).

In 2003 Mbeki justified his constructive engagement policy by asserting that it had produced results. He cited three examples of things he had persuaded Mugabe to do: to give back one farm to each white farmer thrown off the land; to soften the “draconian” media legislation; and to grant citizenship to descendents of foreign-born black farm workers who have lived in Zimbabwe for generations. The MDC, however, stated that none of these reforms had taken place, or were likely to (The Star, 07/03/03).

5.4.4. Bilateral and multilateral efforts to resolve the Zimbabwean situation

The South African government’s handling of the Nigerian issue generated the perception of an inconsistent and ineffective strategy in promoting human rights. It also pointed to the limits now apparent in South Africa’s capacity to influence foreign situations, even with the considerable moral authority following the 1994 “electoral miracle” and Mandela’s celebrity status. Additionally, the Nigerian crisis emphasised the risks of acting unilaterally and without thorough and informed preparation. It can be said then that the Nigerian issue was the key factor encouraging South Africa to increase its African multilateral connections (Black, 2001:78).

The rest of the world remains flabbergasted over South Africa’s response to the Zimbabwean crisis. South Africa’s apparent disregard for violence by militia members and war veterans prompted Amnesty International to voice deep concern over South Africa’s position. Given the ANC’s experience during apartheid, Mbeki’s government was expected to take a stand against human rights violations. Yet Mbeki wants the international community to leave it to the AU and SADC to resolve the Zimbabwe crisis in “the African way” (Cape Times, 27/03/03; The Citizen, 10/03/03; Weekly Mail and Guardian, 25/04/03).

Johnson (2001:61) suggests that behind the scenes Mbeki was “only too conscious of how disastrous a leader Mugabe was, but he could have more impact on the situation if he could use an attitude of sympathy and friendship to nudge Mugabe in the right direction”. Such was the atmosphere when Mbeki, Mugabe, Sam Nujoma (of Namibia) and Joaquim Chissano (of Mozambique) attended the Victoria Falls Summit in April 2000 to try to persuade Mugabe to stop the illegal occupation of white-owned farmlands. The international community, particularly the UK, viewed this summit as a good opportunity for South Africa to take a stronger stand against Zimbabwe, but Mbeki continued his constructive engagement policy (Europa World Year Book, 2001:3578).

Mbeki's spokesman declared that Mbeki and his three counterparts had managed to get Mugabe to agree to stop the violence and withdraw the war veterans from white farms, while Mbeki had also asked Mugabe to stop his public attacks on Blair and Britain.²⁶ In return, Mbeki and the other presidents would give Mugabe their full and public support and Mbeki would press Britain to provide funding for land reform in Zimbabwe. Mbeki was apparently so confident that he phoned Blair and told him that "a new chapter had been opened on the land reform question" and that there would be swift progress in settling all of the other remaining issues (Johnson, 2001:62).

However, Mugabe refused to stop the violence and continued to show disrespect for the rule of law. Mbeki's hopes that Mugabe would fulfil his promises were dashed. Despite this, Mbeki was still unwilling to be critical of Mugabe's human rights abuses and even attempted to blame Britain for all the problems in Zimbabwe. He insisted that the root cause was colonialism and racism, which resulted in the current condition of the poor, landless blacks and asserted that Britain's failure to fund land reform led to the current crisis and even the mass violence that accompanied it. In addition Mbeki argued that Britain's demand for adherence to the rule of law and transparent transferral of land to the poor as a condition for providing funding was inexcusable. "I don't think it is correct for anybody to walk away from this," he added (quoted by Johnson, 2001:63).

In essence, Mbeki's attitude amounted to a "complete and public excusing of Mugabe's human rights atrocities" and a declaration that Mugabe could engage in any kind of "land reform" he wanted since the original sin of white colonialism was far greater than any other wrongdoing (Johnson, 2001:63). Mbeki referred to Mugabe's seizure of land in 2000 as being "perhaps inevitable" because Britain and other Western countries had broken promises to fund peaceful land redistribution since 1979. Britain denied this charge, insisting that it had donated money for land redistribution until it became clear that the land was being given to Mugabe's cronies and not to the peasants who really needed it (Sunday Independent, 14/12/03).

When the local white media particularly pressed Mbeki's government to take a strong stand on Zimbabwe, Mbeki hit out not only at white South Africans but also at "white supremacists" who criticised the Commonwealth and Africa's response to the Zimbabwean crisis (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:5).

26. Mugabe had previously referred to Blair's government as "gay gangsters" and attacked Blair's "gay philosophy and gay way of life" (Johnson, 2001:62).

In the run-up to the presidential election in 2002, the international community looked once again to South Africa as the regional leader to begin applying some real pressure on Mugabe. However, this was not forthcoming. The South African observer mission described the elections as “legitimate” but not necessarily “free and fair”- a statement which resulted in its immediate ridicule. The ANC supported the mission’s findings instantly (quoted by Hamill, 2002:35). South Africa was not alone in showing support for Mugabe. An observer team from the then OAU (now AU) described the elections as “transparent, credible, free and fair”. The SADC President at the time, Bakili Muluzi from Malawi, also declared the elections “substantially free and fair”. Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi even congratulated his “dear brother” Mugabe on winning the election and Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa lauded Mugabe as a “champion of democracy” (quoted by Taylor and Williams, 2002:561).

After the presidential election, the ANC continued to claim, “the will of the people of Zimbabwe has prevailed” (quoted by Taylor and Williams, 2002:560). They added their congratulations to those who participated in the elections and, ignoring the overwhelming evidence of systematic intimidation against the opposition, proposed that “isolated violence in Zimbabwe could not and should not be used as a stumbling block in the elections process in the country” (Taylor and Williams, 2002:560).

In March 2002, at the CHOGM in Coolumberr, Australia, Mbeki argued that any talk of ostracising Mugabe over the presidential elections was “inspired by notions of white supremacy” and that such actions were pursued only because white Commonwealth leaders apparently felt uneasy at their “repugnant position imposed by inferior blacks” (Mbeki, as quoted by Taylor and Williams, 2002:558). Ironically it was also Mbeki who, at an African Renaissance Conference in September 1998, asserted:

We want to see an African Continent in which the people participate in systems of governance in which they are truly able to determine their destiny. Thus... we say that we must ensure that when elections are held, these must be truly democratic, resulting in governments which the people would accept as being genuinely representative of the will of the people (Mbeki, as quoted by Taylor and Williams, 2002:558).

Mbeki, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Australian Prime Minister John Howard formed the *Troika* created by the CHOGM. Its purpose was to take action against Zimbabwe if the Commonwealth Elections Observer Team “made a negative finding” about the 2002 presidential elections. Despite South African election observers regarding the poll as legitimate, the opposition

in Zimbabwe said that Mugabe had “rigged the ballot and stolen the election”. The Observer Team²⁷ returned from the elections and concluded, “the conditions in Zimbabwe did not adequately allow for a free expression of will by the electors.” Based on this finding, the *Troika* decided to suspend Zimbabwe from the decisionmaking councils of the Commonwealth for one year (Mbeki, 2003: Internet source; Quist-Arcton, 2003: Internet source).

In September 2002 the *Troika* met again in Abuja to discuss whether or not there had been significant change in Zimbabwe (Mugabe reportedly ignored an invitation to attend). Their findings were that not enough progress had been made and several countries chose to institute smart sanctions. These measures did not entirely ban Mugabe from travelling overseas; he still addressed the UN’s Food Summit in Italy in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in the same year, and the UN General Assembly in May 2002 (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:9).

Mbeki’s discomfort with his position in the *Troika* was perhaps most obvious when he came out so strongly against the decision of the 2003 CHOGM to continue Zimbabwe’s suspension. South Africa expressed its strong disagreement with this decision, stating that there had been no mandate laid down for Zimbabwe’s continued suspension and referring to it as “undemocratic and unhelpful” (Mbeki, 2003: Internet source; The Zimbabwe Independent, 2004: Internet source).

In accordance with the policy of “good neighbourliness” South Africa and its fellow SADC neighbours have generally refused to criticise Mugabe openly, insisting instead that Zimbabwe’s problems were internal and therefore the business of the Zimbabwean people. When news came that South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique had been working closely with the US State Department on strategies meant to isolate Mugabe in the sense that he had to realise that the political status quo was not acceptable, South Africa and Botswana denied this complicity, arguing instead that their policy “was rather to influence Harare through dialogue” (quoted by Schoeman and Alden, 2003:13).

Despite this display of solidarity, which is so traditional of African countries, several of them have taken Zimbabwe to task. In September 2001 a special Commonwealth delegation met in Abuja to discuss Zimbabwe. Three African states attending the meeting, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria,

27. Mugabe would not initially allow foreign observers into Zimbabwe. When he eventually conceded, several foreign delegations described the campaign in the run-up to the elections as “a massive and sustained programme of brutalities and persecutions, of beatings and murders, of coercions and threats” (Beinart, 2003:6). The head of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (an organisation of local civil groups) argued that “there was no way these elections could be described as substantially free and fair” (quoted by Beinart, 2003:6).

informed Zimbabwe's foreign minister that Zimbabwe's problems were basically Mugabe's fault (Lloyd, 2002:221). In September 2001 African leaders of SADC attended a special meeting in Harare, where they accused Mugabe of being responsible for many of Zimbabwe's problems. Despite this reprimand, Mugabe continued the land seizures and intimidation of opposition leaders and supporters of the MDC. In January 2002, SADC leaders met in Malawi and called for free and fair elections. Following the elections, Mbeki and Obasanjo met Tsvangirai and Mugabe to propose a reconciliation and power-sharing agreement (Lloyd, 2002:221).

Another example of this type of disapproval occurred in October 2002 at the SADC summit in Luanda. It was decided that Zimbabwe would no longer remain as deputy chair, a position that would now go to Tanzania. The pro-government media in Zimbabwe quickly explained the decision as being made by Zimbabwe itself since Mugabe felt the need to concentrate all of his efforts on the land reform programme. However, diplomats at the summit acknowledged that the decision was taken to show displeasure with Mugabe as well as to "send a message to Zimbabwe that the region values peace, security, stability and respect for greater democratisation" (quoted by Schoeman and Alden, 2003:13). Simultaneously President Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, who chaired the meeting, reaffirmed opposition to sanctions and suggested dialogue take place between Zimbabwe and its critics in the West. This approach may be an indication that although African leaders remain insistent on demonstrating pan-Africanist solidarity, they are beginning to realise that good governance is vital if they want to attract foreign investment (Schoeman and Alden, 2003:13).

It has to be said that despite criticism of his policy, Mbeki has received support from African countries and even from US President George Bush, who unexpectedly backed Mbeki's soft approach to Zimbabwe on a visit to South Africa in July 2003. Bush referred to Mbeki as the "point man" on the subject of Zimbabwe and added, "he is working very hard. He believes he's making good progress. I think Mr. Mbeki can be an honest broker" (Carroll, 2003: Internet source). Following private talks, Mbeki indicated to the press that he and Bush were in complete agreement on the need to resolve economic and political problems in Zimbabwe. He reported that they had both urged the Mugabe government and the opposition to "get together" (Carroll, 2003: Internet source). Mbeki even assured Bush that Zimbabwe's political crisis would be over by mid-2004 (Africa Confidential, 2004:1). In May 2004, the South African government had to concede that this was not to be. Pahad acknowledged that, "it is clear we will not make the deadline", but insisted that the government would continue its policy of quiet diplomacy (Pretoria News, 25/05/04).

5.5. Mbeki steers clear of sanctions

Zimbabwe is dependent on South Africa “for the transiting of a high percentage of its US\$40 million (which translates to about R3,4 billion) monthly fuel supplies” (Hughes and Mills, 2003:11). South Africa also provides 20% of Zimbabwe’s electricity. Moreover, Zimbabwe is highly indebted to South Africa for a R60 million Telkom credit line to its Posts and Telecommunications Department, an overdraft extended by the South African Reserve Bank to Zimbabwe’s Reserve Bank, export credit reinsurance covered by the South African government of Zimbabwe’s iron and steel parastatal Zisco, and a further R80 million in Eskom electricity payments (Hughes and Mills, 2003:11). Despite this vast economic leverage and the ability to use it coercively against Zimbabwe by way of economic “sticks”, Mbeki remains adamant that South Africa will not alter its policy of quiet diplomacy.

This has not, however, prevented Mbeki from using economic “carrots”. In early 2000, when Mugabe was steadily losing popularity, he instinctively gave the fellow liberation leader full support. He even rushed to Harare just before the constitutional referendum, along with his ministers of finance, energy and minerals, and reportedly offered Mugabe an R800 million loan to buy fuel and electricity. Zimbabwe already owed Eskom R120 million. As it was, South Africa supplied 40% of Zimbabwe’s total imports. Mbeki also promised Mugabe that he would try to persuade the IMF to release funds to Zimbabwe (Johnson, 2001:60).

Interestingly, when the constitutional referendum failed, Mbeki immediately began to back-pedal. He announced that there had been no specific agreement and no loan at all from South Africa, only that South Africa would guarantee a rand-denominated Zimbabwean bond and that Mbeki would attempt to mediate between Mugabe and the World Bank. These objectives failed anyway because the IMF and World Bank had attached conditions to lending to Zimbabwe, including its withdrawal from the DRC, and Mbeki could hardly ensure these institutions that Mugabe would abide by the conditions (Johnson, 2001:60). Although this arrangement was eventually denied ever having been made, Sasol’s announcement that it had just signed a deal to supply Zimbabwe with fuel merely revealed that South Africa had indeed promised to provide Mugabe with enough oil and electricity to stave off complete economic collapse (Johnson, 2001:60).

When Mugabe began his programme of forced land redistribution through farm invasions, the world looked to Mbeki to take some kind of effective action, which Mbeki did not. This inaction gave the

impression that if the ANC faced a major electoral challenge it might behave in exactly the same way and seize property without compensation in South Africa as well. This concern was not without foundation, especially when the Mbeki government repeatedly claimed that although similar land seizures to those conducted by Mugabe would never be allowed in South Africa, this country could actually learn from Zimbabwe's "land reform" programme (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2003:480). As a result foreign investors dumped South African equities and bonds, causing the rand to drop to such an alarming degree that by the end of 2000 South Africa's currency was almost 25% down on the previous year. There was no doubt that South Africa was hard hit by Mugabe's actions. The CEO of the South African Chamber of Business, Kevin Wakeford, related the rand's fall and the massive capital outflows directly to the government's silence on Zimbabwe. He urged that "South Africa has no option but to take a position" (quoted by Johnson, 2001:61).

Irrespective of the economic power it wields, the South African government's choice of actions are limited by the fact that it believes there are no alternatives to quiet diplomacy other than "loud diplomacy" or "throwing stones", which it will not resort to anyway (SAIIA, 2002:1). Trevor Manuel was quoted as asking, "what should we do on Zimbabwe? Act like Ariel Sharon? Kick butt, blow them up, drive over their car, should we send in tanks?" (The Star, 16/05/02). Manuel's statement is clearly in line with the theory of quiet diplomacy, which insists that there be no military involvement.

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Pahad suggested that what foreign governments really wanted when they pressed South Africa to take action, was regime change in Zimbabwe. He affirmed, "There is no way that South Africa will get involved in a regime change" (Pretoria News, 25/05/04). Moreover, Mbeki apparently believes that South Africa does not have the power or ability to sway Mugabe. "The notion that South Africa can walk across the Limpopo and remove that government is not going to happen", Mbeki declared. "The notion that South Africa can dictate policy to Zimbabwe, I think people must abandon that" (Sunday Times, 13/10/02). Mbeki insisted that Zimbabwe was not a province of South Africa and that "Mugabe does not take instructions from me. I discuss (matters) with them as a neighbour" (Mail and Guardian, 18/03/04). Consequently Mbeki continues to advocate his policy of constructive engagement.

Critics argue that other alternatives do exist in the form of economic sanctions and leading ZANU political figures' personal financial interests in South Africa (SAIIA, 2002:1). After the questionable presidential election results, the EU and US imposed personal or "smart sanctions", including

travelling bans on Mugabe, his wife Grace, and other prominent officials of the ZANU-PF government. Their assets were also frozen (Quist-Arcton, 2003: Internet source). The leader of the Opposition Democratic Alliance (formerly DP) in South Africa, Tony Leon, insisted that South Africa apply smart sanctions as well. In addition he urged South African parastatals to “review their soft loans and easy credit terms with Zimbabwe” (quoted by SAPA, 2002: Internet source).

As the quiet diplomacy approach has so far failed to produce meaningful results, many critics have begun to argue that, “South Africa needs to show more stick and less carrot in its negotiations with the Mugabes of the world” (Solomon, 2002:153). Hughes and Mills (2003:11) warn, however, that sanctions are a powerful tool in implementing foreign policy and therefore the impact of sanctions on the Zimbabwe regime would need to be set apart from the population with only specific individuals and organisations targeted. These “smart” sanctions could be aimed at individuals associated with Mugabe’s government and could include the freezing of bank accounts, restrictions on travel and seizure of property. South Africa’s parastatals Sasol, Eskom, Telkom and Transnet, could also curtail credit on oil, electricity, and transport and telecommunication services.

Should further measures need to be imposed, these could be in the form of multilaterally–mandated sanctions in agreement with the UN, SADC, EU, AU and the Commonwealth, and could include border blockades on imports and exports and either suspending or removing Zimbabwe from leadership positions in international organisations. Mugabe would perhaps need to exit his position as president, possibly through obtaining a leadership amnesty (Hughes and Mills, 2003:11). Moreover, key states would need to be involved in applying sanctions, such as Mozambique which is a large fuel supplier to Zimbabwe, and states would have to be united in the measures undertaken so that uneven application of sanctions could be avoided (Hughes and Mills, 2003:11).

In late 2001, Mbeki’s spokesperson Bheki Khumalo informed the press that, “we as a government are opposed to any form of sanctions against Zimbabwe. What we can only do and will do is engage with Zimbabwe in the context of the Southern African Development Community Task Force, of the Commonwealth initiative, as well as government-to-government as well as party contacts” (Bond, 2002:19). Foreign Affairs spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa has also asserted that the South African government “(has) never subscribed to the notion of sanctions against Zimbabwe” (The Citizen, 10/03/03).

At the heads of state summit of SADC countries in August 2004, sanctions were opposed once again on the basis that they “impact negatively on the poor” (quoted by Sunday Times, 05/08/04). The member states reaffirmed their commitment to working within the parameters of SADC organs to assist the Zimbabweans in helping themselves. The members also proposed that the region be more active in ensuring that Zimbabwe’s parliamentary elections in March 2005 are free and fair (Sunday Times, 05/08/04). Given the full backing of African states for Mugabe’s dubious election wins in the past, it is questionable whether they are truly committed to this action.

Among the reasons for South Africa’s “softly-softly” approach to Mugabe was that punitive economic measures would have potentially destabilising consequences, only hastening the political and economic destruction of Zimbabwe. The consequences for South Africa included the possibility of a massive influx of refugees, disrupted trade links and an atmosphere of “generalised chaos” on its borders (Hamill, 2002:36). Ironically, critics point out, it is South Africa’s soft approach to Zimbabwe that has resulted in precisely that, with thousands of Zimbabweans pouring over the border to escape famine and high inflation and to seek employment (Itano, 2001:6).

Conclusion

Once again it is necessary to recap the main findings in Table 2 below:

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 2. South Africa’s use of quiet diplomacy during the Zimbabwean crisis</p>	
Key factors to consider	Explanation of factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towering South African leader at time of crisis (2000-2004) • South Africa’s southern African policy at time of crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Thabo Mbeki – pragmatic, with strong economics background. • South-South cooperation; strong emphasis on the African Renaissance and unity among African states. Regional integration and peaceful resolution of disputes are important.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learnt by South African government 	<p>successful. Mugabe remains in power; the Zimbabwean economy is at its worst since the start of the farm invasions in 2000; and democracy remains an elusive concept, dimming prospects for Zimbabwean parliamentary elections in March 2005.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African solidarity comes at a price – loss of credibility for NEPAD and Mbeki
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Whereas Mandela was a highly moralistic President, it is evident that Mbeki is far more pragmatic in his interactions with other states. This pragmatism was clear in the examination of South Africa's foreign policy objectives in southern Africa, which highlighted South Africa's commitment to regional cooperation, regional socio-economic development and the African Renaissance – all of which translate into a renewal of the continent.

In an analysis of Zimbabwe's background, it was discovered that there are predominantly three origins or causes of the country's current critical situation. These are the land issue, economic deterioration and the lack of democratic governance in Zimbabwe. While it is true that colonialism resulted in a vastly unfair and unequal distribution of land, it is also evident that Mugabe used excessive violence in his land reform programme, which has been marred by corruption and cronyism. Moreover, Zimbabwe's economy under Mugabe's control has deteriorated to its worst level in history. Furthermore, Mugabe displays a complete lack of respect for the rule of law and human rights and has ordered the intimidation and deaths of scores of opposition supporters.

The international community has expected South Africa to assume the lead role in dealing decisively with Mugabe, given its vast moral authority and its considerable economic power in the region. This expectation is not unwarranted, given that Mbeki has espoused good governance, democracy and respect for human rights as imperatives in the African Renaissance. However, this expectation is perhaps overly optimistic since Mbeki has followed a policy of quiet diplomacy with Zimbabwe, one that has so far proved ineffective.

In an application of the quiet diplomacy indicators, the following became evident:

Mbeki has met personally with Mugabe several times. However, most of these meetings have proved fruitless, with Mugabe either renegeing on his promises or denying that he ever made them in the first place.

Mbeki's choice of actors has also been questionable. He seems to have surrounded himself with policymakers who appear unable to overcome Mugabe's assistance to the liberation struggle during apartheid and who choose not to see what is really taking place in Zimbabwe. He has ignored views from respected public figures such as Desmond Tutu and former President Mandela.

The South African government has followed a policy of constructive engagement, which Mbeki insists is working, although there are no results to back up this claim. Mbeki also continues to assert that Africa has to solve its own problems and must be left to do so by the rest of the international community. However, it is evident that even in African multilateral forums, the Zimbabwe crisis remains unresolved since South Africa is unwilling to step on any toes.

Evidently, South Africa's humiliation in its unilateral dealings with Nigeria in 1995 has influenced its subsequent foreign policy choices. South Africa cannot afford to be shunned by the rest of Africa. Consequently, African solidarity has once again been given more weight than respect for good governance principles.

Moreover, South Africa does not view any other alternative to quiet diplomacy as being viable. Mbeki has warned against using any sanctions, which he insists will be detrimental to the ordinary people of Zimbabwe. In addition he believes that such harsh action will exacerbate the situation in Zimbabwe even further.

Mbeki's quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe has not effected purposeful change in that country. The result has simply been that South Africa appears to have, once again, chosen pragmatism over principle, sacrificing its high ideals of African renewal to appease its fellow Africans.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: summary of principal findings, comparative results and further research

Summary of main findings

The primary purpose of this study was to critically analyse and explain the new South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy in two cases, firstly with Nigeria in 1995-1996 and secondly with Zimbabwe in 2000-2004.

As a background to the rest of the study, the first chapter noted that the end of the Cold War in 1989 as well as external and internal pressures facilitated the demise of apartheid, making way for a new and democratic South Africa. The international atmosphere was such that South Africa's transition from autocratic white rule to democratic majority rule was hailed as a miracle. It was viewed as a symbol of good governance and a leader in Africa. It must be noted that this responsibility was essentially foisted upon South Africa by the rest of the international community, particularly the Western powers, who hoped that South Africa would act as a model for peacemaking, peacebuilding and development on the continent.

Chapter 2 referred to several instruments of foreign policy which a state can use as it projects its own interests outward in an effort to attain its objectives, namely propaganda, military intervention, clandestine action, political influence, weapons and war, economic rewards and coercion, and diplomacy. These instruments are not necessarily mutually exclusive and can be combined for maximum effect. While any and all of the above-mentioned instruments can be employed by a state in its foreign policy dealings, it is evident that if a government wishes to defend its interests or achieve its objectives then it needs to communicate with a variety of parties. This communication is traditionally referred to as diplomacy.

Numerous elucidations of diplomacy were provided. Among the definitions several primary characteristics were highlighted: 1) diplomacy describes the official channels of communication between states (although such traditional means are not the only ways in which diplomacy can be undertaken); 2) diplomacy involves attempts to discuss all conflicting positions to a problem so that an acceptable outcome can be reached, that is through a process of negotiation, and 3) diplomacy is entered into generally for the purpose of either avoiding conflict or terminating it.

The relationship between power and diplomacy was also highlighted and it was noted that while all states might be legally sovereign, they are not equal in terms of their ability to influence each other's actions or decisions. While power was traditionally defined by the possession of numerous resources including military forces, economic size and natural resources, power is currently also defined by more intangible sources, such as moral influence and leadership ability.

Four key categories of power were identified, namely "hard" and "soft" power, and structural and relational power. "Hard" power involves the ability of states to get other states to do their bidding and can either take the form of an inducement or "carrot", or a threat or "stick". Soft power is exercised indirectly and involves other states wishing to emulate a certain state. Structural power refers to the ability of a state to determine the rules of the international system, whereas relational power refers to the manipulation or alteration of conditions in other states to achieve own goals.

Three changes in international politics that contributed to the dynamic nature of diplomacy were discussed: 1) the end of the Cold War, which brought with it a change in the kind of issues appearing on the diplomatic agenda; 2) the process of globalisation, which has ushered a variety of new players into the diplomatic game, including the emergence of instant media, and 3) the increasingly popular doctrine of humanitarian intervention where human rights abuses have continuously tested the principle of sovereignty.



It was necessary to explore other types of "harder" diplomacy to be able to have some kind of measure for comparison. Coercive, gunboat and public diplomacy are harder forms of diplomacy as opposed to soft or quiet diplomacy.

There are few comprehensive definitions of quiet diplomacy. It is often referred to simply as a term of convenience when discussing many kinds of soft diplomatic approaches. Therefore, a list of characteristics of quiet diplomacy was drawn up:

- Personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state or government or senior officials

Diplomacy is most often conducted by heads of government who meet face-to-face to reason, discuss and negotiate. Personal diplomacy is particularly powerful since there is one-to-one communication and consequently less chance of message distortion.

- Avoidance of media exposure

The nature of the media in general is such that there can be misinformation or distortion of a message. Consequently many heads of government or foreign diplomats prefer to conduct their meetings away from the public eye.

- The appearance of limited action or even inaction

Often times soft diplomatic activity takes place behind the scenes in a preventive capacity, that is, to try to prevent conflict or to end a conflict. As such the public is often unaware of successful diplomatic endeavours.

- Calm and tactful but persistent negotiation or dialogue in a non-threatening atmosphere

Diplomacy is conducted by peaceful means and refers to efforts made by parties to relate to each other through negotiation for the purpose of reaching an agreement rather than resorting to the use of physical/military force or sanctions or the threat thereof. Fact-finding and the promotion of dialogue and cooperation between negotiating parties are fundamental tools of quiet diplomacy.

- Constructive engagement with the target country in an effort to help solve the problem as quietly as possible

This method of diplomacy implies more direct confrontation with the target. Nevertheless, it remains possible to apply pressure that will evoke constructive change through mediation and critical dialogue rather than military force.

- Diplomacy often carried out in the context of bilateral or multilateral efforts

States engage in bilateral efforts frequently in an effort to solve conflicts, but diplomacy can also be undertaken in a multilateral context so that there is a greater opportunity for discussion, examination and resolution.

It can therefore be said that quiet or soft diplomacy includes personal or direct contact, often in a context of bilateral or multilateral relations, between heads of state or government or officials of state, without much media involvement, and in a non-coercive and non-threatening atmosphere of calm and constructive dialogue.

The aim of Chapter 3 was to explore the historical connections between South Africa and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Nigeria during the apartheid years, more specifically 1960-1993, so as to gain an understanding of the pertinent historical roots that would then help illuminate South Africa's post-1994 interactions with these African states.

It became clear that apartheid South Africa was economically dominant in southern Africa and as such had considerable hard power. As the most developed state in the region, South Africa wanted to relate to its neighbours on its own terms, which were not favourable to other African states given its apartheid policies. South Africa made use of its structural and relational power in the region through railway diplomacy as a part of its "outward" policy in Africa. It envisaged a constellation of southern African states where South Africa would be at the core of regional technical and development plans and to ensure continued economic dependence on South Africa by its neighbours. The rest of southern Africa responded in kind with the SADCC hoping to reduce dependence on South Africa.

During apartheid, the South African government was determined to safeguard its domestic policy of racial discrimination and preserve white minority rule. This policy manifested in attempts at regional integration but these efforts bore no real fruit since the rest of Africa regarded South Africa as a racist state. Hostility from its neighbours as well as their support for African liberation movements prompted South Africa to engage in coercive diplomacy.

Mugabe became President of Zimbabwe in 1980 and immediately made his attitude towards white South Africa known in his public declaration of support for the PAC, ANC and SWAPO. Mugabe used his position in NAM and other regional bodies to challenge South Africa's apartheid policies throughout the next ten years. The South African government responded by pursuing a policy of destabilisation in the region, including acts of sabotage on railway routes, in an attempt to extinguish the black liberation movements as a threat.

Initially, following its independence, Nigeria tried moral suasion in its dealings with South Africa. Nigeria was also part of the group who forced South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961. Nigeria was very active in the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, with six Nigerians serving as chair over a 30-year period. The Committee was responsible for constantly pressing for sanctions against the South African government, including oil embargoes, and consumer, sports, and cultural boycotts. The Committee also assisted the ANC and PAC through channelling financial and military

aid to these liberation movements. In 1967, the Biafran Civil War broke out in Nigeria and South Africa assisted the Biafrans with the hope that sustaining an exhausting war in Nigeria would weaken that country and slow the efforts of the black liberation movements on the continent. Following the Biafran War, the Nigerian military launched an extensive anti-apartheid campaign, the most notable result of which was the Eminent Persons Group (established by the Commonwealth with Nigerian General Olusegun Obasanjo as co-chairman).

Unilaterally, Nigeria gave financial support to the ANC, PAC and SWAPO and encouraged the frontline states to keep pressure on South Africa. It was relentless in its insistence that South Africa abolish apartheid and consistently pressed for change until De Klerk released Mandela and initiated constitutional negotiations.

In the early 1990s, following Mandela's release and other changes, several high-level exchanges took place between South African and Zimbabwean diplomats and other officials. Nigerian President Babangida met with De Klerk twice and provided good offices for the South African government and liberation movements on several occasions. During its transitional phase, South Africa remained the economic hegemon in southern Africa. In addition, though, Mandela's release from prison meant that South Africa also had the most soft power in Africa.

Comparative analysis

The main findings of Chapters 4 and 5 will be summarised firstly in table format (overleaf) for easy comparison. This will be followed by a comparative explanation of the results of this study. Both chapters were divided into five main sections. Firstly, the individual level of analysis was discussed; secondly, South Africa's relevant continental and regional foreign policies, respectively, at the time of the crises were explored; thirdly, the context to the problem was sketched; fourthly, South Africa's objectives during each crisis were examined and finally, the study applied the matrix of quiet diplomacy indicators described in Chapter 2.

Table 3. South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy towards Nigeria (1995-1996) and Zimbabwe (2000-2004)	
NIGERIA	ZIMBABWE
Individual level of analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Nelson Mandela – world icon and symbol of reconciliation and peacekeeping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Thabo Mbeki – pragmatic, with strong economics background.
South Africa's foreign policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African policy • Value-driven, moralistic and principled. Human rights are flagged as the most important “light” to guide foreign affairs. The promotion of democratic governance is also given importance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern African policy • South-South cooperation; strong emphasis on the African Renaissance and unity among African states. Regional integration and peaceful resolution of disputes are important.
Context of the crises	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigeria: military dictatorships; violent suppression of ethnic minorities, especially the Ogoni; and violation of human rights contribute to an overall lack of democracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zimbabwe: Mugabe's illegal land occupation; deteriorating economy; corruption in government; intimidation of MDC and other election irregularities all contribute to a lack of democracy.
South Africa's objectives in attempting to resolve the crises	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent execution of Ogoni activists. 2. Encourage return to democratic rule. 3. Secure Abiola's release. <p>(South Africa failed to achieve objectives).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help resolve the land question and uphold the rule of law in Zimbabwe. 2. Halt violence. 3. Create conditions for the withdrawal of veterans from farms. 4. Pursue the above objectives in a manner that will ensure all Zimbabweans benefit. <p>(South African objectives still not wholly met).</p>
<p>Application of quiet diplomacy indicators: Personal or direct diplomacy</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandela meets Abacha personally; Emissaries are sent: Tutu, Mbeki, Nzo. Despite the persistent attempts at dialogue, the South African government has no success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mbeki meets Mugabe several times only to have progress erased by Mugabe's actions. Mbeki is reluctant to disrespect elderly statesman (cultural element of African Renaissance).
<p>Limited action/inaction and media involvement</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear/defined policy guidelines; advice of public figures ignored; questionable choice of actors involved; lack of adequate information; economic links and historical ties (Nigeria provided financial support to the ANC, PAC and SWAPO and constantly called for sanctions to be imposed on apartheid South Africa) make a hard line difficult to pursue; little or no contact with opposition in Nigeria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy designed to make "Mugabe amenable behind the scenes". Seen as a non-policy by many. Advice of public figures Tutu and Mandela ignored. Choice of actors involved is questionable, as they seem not to view the situation in Zimbabwe as "dire". Contact with opposition groups avoided initially, although the recent "secret" meeting between Mbeki and Tsvangirai in October 2004 was "productive". Historical ties (as Mugabe kept up

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite media attention and public outcry, the South African government defends quiet diplomacy. 	<p>pressure on the South African government and consistently called for sanctions) influence Mbeki's attitude towards Mugabe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mbeki and the South African government are widely criticised by the domestic and international media for their soft approach to Zimbabwe. However, Mbeki defends his policy and accuses press of racism.
Constructive engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: to engage with the Nigerian government. • The South African government is accused of practising the same policy that they criticised the international community of following with the apartheid government. However, the ANC contends that there is nothing wrong with the policy as long as it is not "weak". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: to engage actively with Mugabe without causing complete collapse in Zimbabwe. Black solidarity influences South Africa's actions.
Bilateral or multilateral efforts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigeria suspended from Commonwealth on Mandela's insistence; South Africa recalls high commissioner from Abuja; CMAG set up; SADC does not back Mandela; continued disapproval from Africa causes South Africa to back-pedal; South Africa withdraws from CMAG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mbeki meets with Presidents Nujoma, Chissano and Mugabe to try to reach an agreement. Mugabe refuses to stop violence. Mbeki blames Britain. South African observer mission declares election free and fair. At the CHOGM – Mbeki defends Mugabe. After 2002 presidential election, Mbeki, Obasanjo and Howard (<i>Troika</i>) suspend Zimbabwe

	from Commonwealth for a year. Smart sanctions imposed by international community. South Africa does not impose smart sanctions.
Commitment to quiet diplomacy?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following execution of Ogoni Nine, Mandela goes beyond quiet diplomacy to coercion and presses US and UK to impose oil sanctions - unsuccessful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Africa has vast economic leverage over Zimbabwe, but rejects sanctions (detrimental to Zimbabwean citizens).
Policy success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandela's quiet diplomacy fails and South Africa does not achieve its initial objectives. Moreover, Mandela's attempts at hard or coercive diplomacy merely result in increasing antagonism from African states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mbeki's quiet diplomacy has not been successful. Mugabe remains in power; the Zimbabwean economy is at its worst since the start of the farm invasions in 2000; and democracy remains an elusive concept, dimming prospects for Zimbabwean parliamentary elections in March 2005.
Lessons learnt	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African solidarity is given far more weight than human rights; African states place a high value on sovereignty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African solidarity comes at a price – loss of credibility for NEPAD, the good governance agenda and Mbeki.

Mandela was hailed as an instant hero on his release from prison. He became a symbol of democratisation and reconciliation. With this respect, however, came a heavy responsibility because the international community expected him to use his experience in peacekeeping and apply it throughout the world and especially in Africa. Mbeki, on the other hand, did not experience prison and was in exile travelling the world as a diplomat championing the ANC's cause. While Mbeki was subsequently not met with the same magnitude of awe as Mandela, he did however have more

diplomatic experience and had already assumed much of the responsibility of running the country as Deputy President. In a way, Mbeki has been under more pressure than Mandela simply because he has had to follow in the footsteps of a world icon and consequently has been the object of intense interest by the international community.

Following the executions of the Ogoni Nine, Mandela made his humiliation and anger at being ignored apparent and often made statements without consulting his Foreign Affairs department or his African counterparts. Such outspokenness did not have the desired response. This cannot be said of Mbeki who, as is evident from his handling of Zimbabwe, is not prone to making emotional statements. He has, however, been known to refer to racism as the cause for much of Zimbabwe's troubles.

It is evident that while Mandela continually espoused the promotion of human rights and democratisation, Mbeki was and is far more pragmatic in his foreign policy dealings. Moreover, his dedication to the African Renaissance is foremost on his agenda. South Africa's foreign policy during the first few years as a democratic country was value-driven and characterised by a commitment to the protection of human rights, the promotion of democracy and the socio-economic development of the African continent. The international community expected South Africa, as the regional leader, to propel the continent forward economically and politically. While this was a considerable responsibility for a country that had only recently become democratic and needed to pay attention to many domestic changes that were taking place, South Africa also appeared ready and willing to be Africa's "saviour". Mbeki's foreign policy in southern Africa specifically included the objectives previously established by Mandela but also emphasised the "African ideal". Mbeki was and is adamant that African problems should remain in African hands. In keeping with this thinking, his foreign policy has constantly been punctuated by rhetoric on South-South cooperation and African solidarity.

In both the Nigerian and Zimbabwean crises, the principle of human rights emerged so strongly that the respective South African governments were compelled to become involved. In Nigeria, the continued presence of military dictatorships and a lack of freedoms and human rights, which culminated in the widely publicised executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists, made Nigeria an obvious target for South Africa's principled foreign policy. Zimbabwe was and is a clear target for Mbeki's foreign policy given its proximity to South Africa; its violation of human rights

and freedoms under Mugabe's 24-year rule; its economic deterioration, and the government's intimidation of opposition MDC supporters.

The difference between Mbeki's foreign policy and Mandela's is that Mbeki continually emphasises the importance of the African Renaissance and of consultation with African states on African problems. While it may not have facilitated the results desired by Western powers, this doctrine is nevertheless evident in Mbeki's handling of the Zimbabwean situation.

In response to the Nigerian crisis, the Mandela government stated three objectives: 1) to prevent the execution of the Ogoni activists; 2) to encourage a return to democratic rule, and 3) to secure the release of Chief Abiola. In response to the Zimbabwean crisis, Mbeki's government proposed four objectives: 1) to help resolve the land question and uphold the rule of law in Zimbabwe; 2) to halt violence; 3) to create conditions for the withdrawal of veterans from farms, and 4) to pursue these objectives in such a way that it would be beneficial to Zimbabwe and the rest of the region.

The Mandela government failed to achieve any of its initial objectives in its quiet-coercive-quiet diplomacy, and similarly the Mbeki government has failed in achieving at least its first three objectives. However, it has adhered to its final objective by consistently applying a policy of quiet diplomacy, which it believes is the best route to follow so that both Zimbabwean citizens and other southern African countries will benefit. While the policy itself has proved ineffective in practical terms, since Mugabe remains unshakeable in his course, it nevertheless indicates an unwavering path set out by the Mbeki government, which is an improvement on the government's rather uncertain foreign policy during the Mandela administration. In its early democratic years, South Africa was faced with the dilemma of having to carve a niche for itself in Africa in terms of the role it saw itself playing on the continent as well as how it was perceived by the region and the rest of Africa. After the Nigerian crisis in 1995, the South African government clearly made Africa a priority on its foreign policy agenda.

Both Mandela and Mbeki engaged in personal diplomacy with their respective counterparts. However, whereas Mandela visited Abacha once and thereafter sent emissaries in the form of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mbeki and Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, Mbeki visited Mugabe personally several times (as well as sending emissaries). In both cases, however, this personal diplomacy did not have favourable outcomes. In Nigeria's case, although South Africa did persevere in quietly and calmly negotiating with Abacha's regime, the Ogoni activists were hanged.

In Zimbabwe, Mbeki's habitual trips to Harare and subsequent upbeat statements on his return were shattered when Mugabe continually rescinded on his promises. It appears evident too that Mbeki is reluctant to personally force Mugabe to acquiesce given his respect for Mugabe as an elderly African statesman.

In its dealings with Nigeria, South Africa appeared not to have any clear policy guidelines. In addition, South Africa's High Commissioner to Nigeria, George Nene, was unable to provide enough vital information timeously. Mandela also did not initially take into consideration the advice of respected public figure, Tutu, who had habitually called for sanctions. With regard to Zimbabwe, Mbeki has also not considered input from public figures such as Tutu (once again) and members from the ANC's own tripartite alliance COSATU and the SACP. Moreover, those actors involved in policymaking over the Zimbabwean crisis appear to have constantly misread the situation and refer to Mugabe's critics as supporters of colonial ways and troublemakers.

Mbeki's government continues to be heavily criticised by the international and domestic media who accuse Mbeki of having no clear policy on Zimbabwe. However, this is debatable since the Mbeki government has always asserted that they are following a constructive engagement policy behind the scenes in the hope of making Mugabe "amenable" to suggested changes. Nevertheless, this policy has not had the desired outcome.



In future the South African government needs to ensure the accuracy of its information. In the Nigerian crisis the South African delegations and emissaries to Nigeria did not meet with the pro-democracy supporters and consequently did not receive all parties' views about the issues. In Zimbabwe's situation, Mbeki and Foreign Minister Dlamini-Zuma also did not initially meet with members of the MDC, adding to the impression that the post-1994 South African government was more inclined to engage in a one-sided debate and not to take the views of all of the parties into account. However, Mbeki has met with the MDC on several occasions over the last few months. While he has still not criticised Mugabe he has nevertheless provided Tsvangirai with reason to hope that he will use his position as chairperson of the SADC Organ for Defence, Politics and Security to ensure that Mugabe complies with SADC's list of requirements for the elections in March 2005.

During the Nigerian crisis, Mandela's policy was widely criticised by the South African and international media as being too soft. Mandela nevertheless defended his quiet diplomacy as being effective until the actual executions of the Ogoni Nine when it became clear that it was quite

ineffective. Similarly in Zimbabwe, Mbeki has continually defended himself against the independent media at home and internationally. Despite criticism, though, Mbeki has operated within the confines of quiet diplomacy since the theory states that for diplomacy to have a chance of success it must be conducted away from media and public scrutiny. Mbeki's latest meeting with Tsvangirai was kept secret for that reason.

South Africa's decision to pursue more of a constructive engagement policy than a coercive policy in Nigeria was largely based on Nigeria's support of the anti-apartheid movements as well as its financial support of the ANC in its election campaign in 1994. Similarly, Mugabe's support of the anti-apartheid movements and his denunciation of the apartheid government's policies has made it difficult for Mbeki and the South African government to publicly condemn him.

In both Nigeria and Zimbabwe's situations, South Africa employed bilateral and multilateral efforts to try to resolve the crises. In Nigeria, Mandela, outraged by Abacha's complete disregard for South Africa's quiet diplomatic attempts, used his considerable soft power to force Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth and pursued other multilateral efforts through CMAG and SADC. However, fellow SADC members did not back Mandela, eventually forcing South Africa to back-pedal on its more coercive policy and resume quiet diplomatic tactics. Mandela learnt a valuable personal lesson in that his good name alone could not provide him with the support that he needed from Africa. The South African government in turn learnt that its African neighbours would not let South Africa forget that it is a first among equals and that it needs SADC in its decision-making in the region.

Interestingly, it was the Nigerian crisis and South Africa's subsequent falling out with its African "brothers" that compelled the Mandela government to change its diplomatic strategy in favour of consultation and collective decision-making with the rest of Africa. After 1999, Mbeki's government continued this strategy. Therefore, throughout the Zimbabwean crisis, Mbeki has consulted with his fellow Africans. Although Mbeki was a member of the *Troika*, which suspended Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth for a year, Mbeki made it known a year later that he disapproved of the Commonwealth's decision to continue the suspension. Moreover, he has constantly used the platform provided by SADC and the AU to insist that Zimbabwe is an African problem and must therefore be solved the African way.

It is also evident that whereas the Mandela government experienced problems in balancing between acting as big brother on the continent and still consulting the rest of Africa, Mbeki has been more successful in that balancing act, as witnessed in his attempts to resolve the Zimbabwean situation. This is mostly attributable to Mbeki's sensitivity to the fact that he needs Africa's approval for his vision of an African Renaissance and for NEPAD to succeed.

Following the execution of the Ogoni Nine, Mandela resorted to the use of economic sticks when he tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade the US and UK to impose oil sanctions on Nigeria. In contrast, Mbeki's government has consistently condemned the use of sanctions as detrimental to Zimbabwean citizens. In addition, South African parastatals continue to provide assistance to Zimbabwe.

At the start of the study, a specific issue that needed to be addressed was highlighted. This issue questioned the extent to which South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy was successful or unsuccessful with regards to Nigeria and Zimbabwe and what the implications were for South Africa's power and status on the continent.

The following can be concluded of Mandela's and Mbeki's use of quiet diplomacy:

Mandela met with Abacha personally and thereafter sent emissaries; he persistently engaged with the Abacha government behind the scenes, away from media scrutiny; and he continuously used dialogue as an attempt to gain acquiescence from Abacha. However, Mandela did step outside of the confines of quiet diplomacy when he later pressed for economic sanctions against the Nigerian regime. While he did operate in a multilateral context, he also presumed that his personal soft power would force fellow SADC members to obey his directives. This presumption backfired and contributed to Mandela's failure in the crisis.

By contrast, Mbeki has consistently operated within the realms of quiet diplomacy in dealing with Zimbabwe. He has engaged in personal diplomacy; he has operated behind the scenes (so that it has appeared as though little or no action has been taken); he has met with the Zimbabwean opposition away from the media and thus the public eye; he has operated within a multilateral context; and he has constructively engaged with Mugabe's government. In addition, Mbeki has not resorted to coercive methods by refusing to institute sanctions against Mugabe's regime. Despite these efforts, this policy has yet to yield significant results.

In 1995, the ANC government was relatively new and fresh from its success in the democratic transition. Consequently, both Mandela and his government felt compelled to make their presence known as protectors of human rights and promoters of good governance in Africa and throughout the world. Following the disastrous results of its quiet diplomacy in Nigeria, it became evident that this foreign policy was highly moralistic and idealistic. With Mbeki's government, South Africa has backed down from this initial moral high ground to focus on more pragmatic policy. The result has been the increasing perception that the South African government is selective in its choice of where and when human rights protection deserves prioritisation.

This study's findings therefore suggest that realism is insufficient in explaining how a state's social systems shape its foreign interests and goals. It is evident for example how South Africa's ties to the past continue to impact on its choices in foreign affairs. It is also clear that the country's foreign policy goals have clashed, particularly over human rights norms and respect for state sovereignty. This has significant implications for South Africa's role as a political power in NEPAD and on the continent. How can South Africa have any significant influence particularly in Africa if its own policy guidelines and practices are a contradiction in terms?

In Nigeria Mandela's use of quiet diplomacy clearly failed - a fact that was revealed by Mandela's own actions when he chose to bypass soft diplomacy and use coercive tactics. However, it appeared that these actions were too little too late and merely resulted in increasing antagonism from African states. Mandela learnt that South Africa could not afford to break with its fellow Africans as African solidarity was prioritised on their agendas above human rights and good governance. On the other hand, while Mbeki's continued use of quiet diplomacy with Mugabe may have endeared South Africa to its African counterparts, it has also resulted in a considerable loss of credibility for Mbeki's commitment to an African Renaissance, NEPAD and the principle of good governance. Just as in the case with Nigeria, the South African government appears unable to translate its principles effectively into practice.

Quiet diplomacy is therefore a useful foreign policy tool if the goal is to engage with a target state in a non-threatening and non-coercive way. How successful this policy is in facilitating change in an African state's actions or behaviour is less convincing. This study found that South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy did not bring, in the case of Nigeria, and has not brought about, in the case of Zimbabwe, the desired changes in these two countries.

An agenda for further research

This inquiry into South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy has raised matters that require further study.

Very few comprehensive definitions of quiet diplomacy exist, a fact that complicated the identification of indicators of quiet diplomacy. Therefore, greater attention should be paid to classifying characteristics of quiet diplomacy so as to make a substantive definition possible.

To what extent has the media become involved in foreign policymaking and diplomatic strategy? The development of instantaneous media coverage and news conveyance and its effects on public opinion and government policy should be explored further.

Greater attention needs to be paid to African concepts of diplomacy as opposed to the traditional Western conceptualisation of the term. Whereas traditionally, diplomacy is undertaken for the purpose of achieving a state's goals or as a projection of a state's power, many Africans view diplomacy as a strategy undertaken with the purpose of offering assistance in the spirit of *Ubuntu* and not as a way to impose a state's objectives on another.

What would it take for South Africa to use coercive diplomacy or gunboat diplomacy in Africa? What would have to happen to precipitate South African military involvement in a crisis? In addition, it is worth exploring South Africa's abilities in this regard. How well-trained and equipped is South Africa's National Defence Force?

Since 1994 the South African government has constantly been at pains to assure its African counterparts that it will not act as a big brother on the continent. However, it is evident too that with its vast economic and military superiority, it cannot help but dominate. Therefore, it would be interesting to address the question: how can South Africa ever lead without domination?

How is Mbeki going to reconcile his hopes for NEPAD's success with the evident disregard that African countries have for the good governance agenda in NEPAD?

Mandela was a principled leader and used his vast moral authority to largely good effect during his presidency, with the notable exception of the Nigerian issue. Mbeki is more pragmatic, although he too has high ideals when it comes to the implementation of his African Renaissance. It would be

interesting to note how Mbeki has attempted and managed in some cases to sell his African ideal to the international community and what he needs to do to gain greater trust on the African continent in this matter.

It is apparent that historical ties play a major role in South African foreign policy formulation. Naturally, Mbeki and the South African government need to maintain good ties with Africa, but using historical relations as a basis for refusing to deal with a worsening situation, especially in Zimbabwe's case, has so far proved to be unhelpful. What then, is the likelihood of Mbeki and future ANC governments fulfilling any ambitious foreign policy objectives, particularly on the continent, if other African leaders remain overly confident that they can invoke the "anti-apartheid supporter" sentiment?

African states place a high value on sovereignty, fanned by their struggles against colonialism and Western domination. Their shared history in this regard gives them a sense of brotherhood or solidarity, a sentiment that has strongly influenced South Africa's foreign policy - including its relationships with Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Given its evident power in shaping government decisions, the principle of African solidarity should be addressed further.

Finally, African states have demonstrated the prioritisation of sovereignty and solidarity on their foreign policy agendas. What are the consequences of this attitude for human rights protection on the African continent?

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