SOUTH AFRICA AND WORLD POLITICS

Realities in a Changing Situation

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The Changing World Scene

Although there have been profound changes taking place in recent years in the pattern of international relations, both political and economic, the view of world politics from South Africa seems still to be a rather simplistic one. There is a tendency to see the world in the static mould of the cold war, i.e. a bipolar world in which middle and small powers are either openly aligned with one of the two super-powers, or non-aligned in theory but pro-Communist in practice. We perhaps fail to appreciate that the world is in the process of dynamic and rapid change which is affecting fundamentally the relationships between states. South Africa is not isolated from this process of change, and some of our external problems are related directly to the changing situation which at the same time also provides new opportunities.

The first half of the Seventies has seen the end of the dominance of world politics by the two super-powers, for a variety of reasons, and at the same time new initiatives to negotiate issues dividing the Soviet Union and the United States. Although only limited success has so far been achieved in these negotiations, there are no serious indications that the era of détente between the two, which replaced the confrontation of the cold war, is ending. Parallel with the détente between the two super-powers, has been the détente in relations between the United States and Communist China. Although here again the results of the increased communication between the two powers, highlighted by President Nixon's visit to Peking in 1972, have not yet fulfilled the expectations aroused, there is no indication of any American desire to return to the policy towards China of the Fifties and Sixties, and the latter is now playing a growing role in the international community. On the other hand, there are no
signs of a détente in the relations between China and the Soviet Union, and a major factor in world politics continues to be the competition between these two Communist powers for influence in the world.

Europe and Japan, as major economic powers in the world, have been playing an increasingly independent role in international politics. Although political unity in the European Community has obviously not been achieved as quickly as many hoped, Western Europe, in the process of grappling with its own particular problems, has come to rely less on the United States which has been pre-occupied with internal and external problems of its own. European sensitivities, and even suspicions, about the United States' bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union, and the tendency of European governments to dissociate themselves from American foreign policy - especially as regards Vietnam and, since October 1973, also the Middle East - have accentuated the divisions in what used to be known as the Western Alliance, even if this has not resulted yet in a unified European foreign policy.

Japan, too, has found the need to develop its own role in world politics, to match its economic role, in place of a simple reliance on American protection and on a special relationship with the United States - a relationship which was discovered by the Japanese not to have much substance when the Sino-American rapprochement took place in 1971-72. Japan then had to move quickly to develop its own relations with Mainland China and to improve its relations with the Soviet Union.

While the two super-powers remain completely unchallenged in their overwhelming military strength (and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future), their ability to use this power to exert their political will has become much more limited, and their authority over their respective client states or satellites has diminished. (This is, of course, more evident in respect of the United States than of the Soviet Union.)

Under these circumstances the concept of the Third World, which emerged during the bipolar period, has largely lost its political meaning. Regional arrangements and regional powers are now emerging, concerned more with their own problems and less with ideological commitments or world-wide
alliances. As Alistair Buchan has pointed out, a "diffusion of power" is occurring within the international system. While the threat of confrontation between the super-powers is thus reduced by this diffusion of power, the possibility of local conflicts has increased, and generally the world has "entered a period of such complexity that it makes the clear distinctions of the previous quarter century - distortions and myths though they may often have been - seem like the boyhood world of Rousseau's noble savage".

To illustrate the complexity further, we must add to this brief picture of the changing power pattern in the world, various other factors now drastically affecting world politics.

The energy crisis, which is linked to the wider question of the supply of raw materials, could be considered to fall more appropriately under an economic or financial heading, rather than politics. But obviously this matter cannot be divorced from international politics in respect of either the causes or the effects of the crisis. The dependence of the industrial countries of the West and also Japan on imported oil has affected their relations with countries in the developing world, especially those which are suppliers of oil, but also those which are suppliers of other strategic raw materials. As all industrial nations, except possibly the Soviet Union, are net importers of most of the raw materials they require, the suppliers of these materials are given a new political power in the world, which is illustrated, in particular, by the current strong position of the OPEC countries, especially the Arab states. This in turn has had a negative effect on Israel's relations with the Western countries. Arab influence over other developing countries, including those in Africa, has also increased.

Although South Africa is not a supplier of oil, it is a source of other important raw materials, and this cannot but have a bearing on South Africa's international political relationships.

The question of international trade, which has risen dramatically in the scale of priorities for all governments in recent decades, cannot in the modern world, be divorced from international politics. This applies also to monetary relations which have become so critical in recent
years. The connection between economic, political and security relationships is of necessity a close one, and the changes in the pattern of economic relationships thus intimately affect world politics. South Africa, as a growing economic and trading power, is involved in these changes.

The predominance of economic factors in international relations has brought with it more interdependence between states then in the past. Other matters which now also receive priority attention, such as the protection of the environment and the control and use of the sea, add to this growing sense of interdependence, as they are issues which are not limited by international boundaries.

The above matters are ones which are dealt with between governments and therefore remain truly international. However, the interdependence of countries and peoples is also being strengthened by other factors which can more properly be defined as "transnational". These factors include the growing role of the multinational company or transnational corporation, which Mr. George Ball has argued "is a modern concept evolved to meet the requirements of the modern age" at a time when the nation state "is still rooted in archaic concepts unsympathetic to the needs of our complex world". The role of the MNC is a controversial one, especially where nationalism remains strong, but nevertheless the power of certain big corporations gives them the opportunity for great influence in today's world - influence which cuts across national boundaries and which is not everywhere under the full control of governments.

The spread of information and ideas, whether they be scientific, social, political, ideological, etc., through the mass media and through faster and more advanced forms of communication, is another important underlying factor strengthening transnationalism and interdependence. The spread of ideas, especially those which can influence internal social change, is something which governments may try to control. But experience shows that, even when a government has strong control over the media, the flow of ideas cannot be stopped entirely.

This brief survey of some of the current developments in the changing world picture, affecting international relations (including those of South Africa), is perhaps an over-simplified one, but it serves to
indicate at least the complexities and some of the realities of the world in which South Africa must move. Some of the factors mentioned affect South Africa directly; others less so. But, in any case, it seems necessary to try to avoid simplistic assessments of South Africa's position in this complex world; and, faced with the realities, even to revise some too easily held assumptions.

The Question of South African Isolation

Against this framework of a rapidly changing international system, can it be said that the oft-stated proposition, namely that isolation is the basis of South Africa's position in the world, is true? There is certainly much apparent evidence to support this proposition, when one looks at the almost complete absence of diplomatic links with other African states; the acute problems in the United Nations and other international organisations; the universal and frequent criticism by other governments, not only in Africa; the arms embargo and lack of any defence alliances; the international sports boycotts; the pressures from private groups in Western countries on companies investing in South Africa; the unsympathetic press coverage; and so on.

All these pressures and threats, which have been steadily increasing over the past two decades or more, are consciously directed at increasing South Africa's isolation. But what real effect have they had in areas of vital concern? James Barber, in the introduction to his survey of South Africa's foreign policy from 1945 to 1970, states that, while South Africa has faced considerable diplomatic isolation, at the same time "she enjoyed one of the fastest economic growth rates in the world. This simply could not have been achieved without extensive international contacts and co-operation." He goes on to say:

"The contrast between diplomatic and economic contacts calls into question the basis on which South Africa's international relations should be examined. Should we, for example, concentrate on activity at the United Nations, or should we rather examine the flow of trade and investment? Obviously it would be a mistake to concentrate exclusively on one form of contact to the exclusion of all others, and in South Africa's case particular caution must be exercised in accepting too easily that the widely reported, public, diplomatic reactions represent the whole picture."  

Given the importance of international trade in today's world and the
industrial countries' need to secure the supply of scarce resources, together with South Africa's economic strength and its wealth of natural resources, it is not surprising that all the efforts in the U.N. and elsewhere to isolate South Africa in the economic sphere have largely failed. In fact, South Africa's external economic relations have prospered rather than declined, and there is no indication of any change in this trend. Even in Africa, where trade boycotts have been officially maintained by many countries, the amount of trade has been increasing, not only within Southern Africa, but with countries further north (although specific figures in this regard are not available). The ability of South Africa to furnish economic and technical assistance and the desire of some African states to be able to trade openly with the Republic, are at least among the factors in the current efforts to settle political differences through communication and negotiation.

Arms embargoes by some countries, especially the U.K. and the U.S., have created problems, but they have not prevented South Africa from building up a considerable defence capability. While there are no defence alliances and a minimum of open co-operation with other defence forces, this degree of isolation does not appear to have noticeably weakened South Africa in the defence field.

The expansion of formal diplomatic relations with other states has been to some extent limited by U.N. General Assembly recommendations aimed at isolating South Africa. But in this regard it is noteworthy that, in spite of numerous U.N. resolutions, the number of diplomatic and consular missions abroad has steadily grown over the years, and it is only in Africa that there has been some reduction. In fact, in no region where South Africa has vital economic links, have diplomatic relations been broken, and in regions where South Africa has been expanding trade relations and forging new links, such as in Asia and Latin America, a number of new missions have been opened in recent years. It would perhaps be true to say that the shortage of qualified personnel has been a greater limiting factor on the growth of South Africa's Foreign Service and its representation abroad, than the efforts of other governments and international organisations to isolate the Republic internationally.

The political problems encountered in international organisations are
real ones in the contexts of those organisations, and they have become more acute during the past year. South Africa has not been able to participate effectively in United Nations activities for many years, but membership still remains important because of the opportunity it offers for contact and communication, and thus for the resolving of political differences with other states. Furthermore, the ending of U.N. membership would make membership of other international organisations more vulnerable, in particular the Specialised Agencies related to the U.N., which deal with technical matters of more direct concern to South Africa. But even the ending of membership in these organisations would not necessarily mean the isolation of South Africa in the technical fields concerned. For example, South Africa has for many years not been able to participate in the activities of the World Health Organisation and was forced in the early Sixties to withdraw from the Food and Agriculture Organisation. But this has not meant by any means that South Africa has been isolated in the field of medical science, or been detrimentally affected in the development of agriculture. What it has meant, of course, is that South Africa has not been able to contribute from its know-how and experience in these fields to the multilateral efforts in the developing countries.

The focus of this paper concerns politics, and in this regard isolation is a factor for South Africa in its international relations, a factor which distinguishes it from almost all other states in the world. But it is necessary to appreciate, when considering the realities of the world today, that politics is only one dimension of international relations, and that other related dimensions have increasingly high priority.

Under the circumstances, therefore, there is some justification for the conclusion of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Parliament in September, 1974, that isolation is a threat and in some respects South Africa has been isolated, but that "in most spheres, in the important spheres, their attempts (at isolation) have failed". In this regard Dr. Muller referred to the expansion of international trade and of diplomatic relations, especially in Latin America. He also mentioned, as being positive factors in international relations, South Africa's economy and its advanced technology - with reference inter alia to the
nuclear energy field.\textsuperscript{7}

Dr. Muller may have had domestic political reasons, on this occasion and others, to look on the bright side of South Africa's international position, in order to counteract Opposition accounts of growing political isolation. But the facts he mentioned are real ones of growing significance in a world where trade, monetary questions, technological advances, energy problems, scarce natural resources, etc., are matters of increasingly high priority. The rhetoric of critical public statements, official and unofficial, in other countries and in international organisations can be misleading and give an impression of isolation which is in fact "sometimes more apparent than real" - as suggested by Professor Jack Spence.\textsuperscript{8}

Western Attitudes and the African Context

In none of the Western states - which are our important trading partners - is South Africa high on the list of political priorities. In no case has South Africa become anything more than a peripheral issue in election campaigns, for instance - with the possible exception of New Zealand this year, where it has been suggested that the issue of rugby contacts may be one which counts against those on the Government side who favour isolation of South Africa.

All Western industrial states are to a greater or lesser degree desperately engaged in trying to cope with internal and external problems - economic, monetary, social and political - in a highly unsettled world, as indicated above. They have no apparent inclination also to get involved directly in Southern Africa. In fact, their concern, in their own interests, is that there should be stability in this region. This does not mean that there is, or has been, any specific commitment to South African racial policies as a means of maintaining stability, but there is good reason for Professor Spence's view that South African policy-makers have been able to act on the assumption that "Western elites in both political and economic spheres have been, and still are, essentially supporters of status quo in Southern Africa".\textsuperscript{9} South African policy has, therefore, been directed at maintaining and strengthening an image of stability and prosperity, because of the importance of the
links with these Western industrial states. In today's uncertain world there is less reason than ever for these states to alter their attitudes, unless they are compelled to do so as the result of a fundamental change in the Southern African sub-system. Such a change, as Professor Spence again points out, "would have to be profound enough significantly to threaten Western political and economic interests in the region".

Lest it should be thought that this conclusion gives grounds for complacency about South Africa's international position, one should hasten to add that efforts are being redoubled in various quarters to find effective ways of disrupting South Africa's external economic relations, and of reducing links in other areas, such as sport. However, the most important factor now is that the Black African states are clearly preparing to press for stronger measures, inter alia in the economic field, if the current efforts to settle differences in Southern Africa through negotiations fail.

The relevant question for us at the present time, therefore, is whether the dramatic ending of Portuguese control in Mozambique and Angola is bringing about the fundamental change in the Southern African sub-system which might compel Western powers to alter their perception of the South African situation - in spite of their reluctance to do so in view of other vital preoccupations. In this regard, South Africa is at present more vulnerable on the issues of Rhodesia and South West Africa than on its own internal policies, because the major countries of the West are already becoming increasingly committed to a solution of these issues in terms of African demands, and are less likely to resist pressures for effective action in the U.N. and elsewhere to hasten a settlement of both these issues, than they would be on the issue of the South African domestic situation - at least for the time being.

This important question brings us directly to the basic issue of South Africa's relations with the rest of Africa. This forms the subject of another paper, but it cannot, of course, be entirely avoided here, because of its bearing on South Africa's relations with the rest of the world, and in particular with the industrialised countries, which are our main trading partners. Africa may not have a high priority in these
overseas countries, but the African states collectively do have an influence through their numerical strength as a group at the United Nations and in other international organisations related to the U.N., as well as in bodies such as the Commonwealth.

Pragmatically, most Western states and Japan would like to maintain relations with both South Africa and the Black African states, and they do not wish to have to make a choice in this regard. These governments have for years tried to avoid giving the impression that they are lending support to the South African Government. Hence their increasingly critical public statements. When they have to take a stand, for instance in refusing to break trading links or in preventing other extreme action by the United Nations, they obviously find it highly embarrassing. If the Black states increase their pressure and demands, as they appear likely to do now, if no settlements are reached in Southern Africa, South Africa may well find that its difficulties in the United Nations and with important countries overseas will increase. Already Japan has placed limits on its economic relations with South Africa, against what would seem to be its own economic interests, largely because of the importance it attaches to its position in the United Nations and its reluctance to antagonize the African group there.

Our relationships within Africa are therefore the key to better relations with the rest of the world, and it is only through normalising relations in Africa that a deterioration of South Africa's position in the world as a whole will be prevented. South Africa does not have any real dispute with other states outside Africa, and, as already indicated, our links in many fields, other than the strictly political, are growing. Even in the U.N., the disputes over "apartheid" and South West Africa are basically with the other African states; if these disputes can be settled in Africa, they will automatically disappear from the U.N. agenda. But nevertheless it is important to appreciate that these disputes, while they last, do affect our relations with other countries, and in the future they could affect them seriously.

Domestic or International Issue?

The nature of these disputes will be dealt with in Mr. Chambati's paper,
but it is relevant, when considering the wider picture of South Africa's political position in the world, to stress that our disputes with the rest of Africa are a reality with which we have to come to grips. Even though the basic issue in dispute concerns Black/White relations within the Republic, we cannot escape the reality of this dispute simply by claiming that the situation, being domestic, is not the concern of any other state. The fact is that the issue of relations between Black and White in South Africa has become internationalised, whether or not this fact can be justified in terms of traditional international law or of the United Nations Charter, strictly interpreted. Professor Gerrit Olivier has stated that the entrenchment in international law of a state's jurisdiction over its internal affairs "has proved to be of little or no avail to South Africa ever since the founding of the U.N.", and he quoted Professor Joseph Frankel as pointing out (in 1963) that "reaction to Nazi atrocities which Hitler was left free to commit within the sanctuary of his domestic jurisdiction, has led to widespread concern with human rights everywhere". Professor Olivier has concluded:

"To abrogate this principle of non-interference altogether would obviously be bad policy. But to stand or fall by it as the keystone of our foreign policy ................. is totally unrealistic."

There is a further point in this regard, which is now becoming more relevant, namely that the Government's policy of separate development itself, which involves the creation of new independent states, in effect makes the issue an international one. There is even a growing tendency now for this policy to be presented as one of "decolonisation", and there is no doubt that the question of decolonisation became accepted long ago as an international issue, in spite of attempts by the colonial powers in the early years after World War II to protect themselves behind the domestic jurisdiction clause of the U.N. Charter. In any case, whether separate development is a process of decolonisation or not, the ultimate success of this policy will depend on international recognition of independent Homelands.

From Defensive to Positive Policies

What are the consequences of accepting the reality of the internationalisation of the question of Black/White relations in South Africa? It would seem that the first consequence should be a move away from the defensive posture which South Africa has adopted for so long. Attempts to
defend the South African position from behind a legalistic shield of domestic jurisdiction have obviously failed, and similarly attempts to justify and explain internal policies, on the basis that other governments and peoples are misinformed or have a distorted view, have not made much headway and are not likely to. The fact is that, even if all the lack of information and distortions that do exist, could be corrected, there would still remain basic differences of principle about the policy itself. The governments of neighbouring African states, for instance, are not misinformed about the situation in South Africa; the fact is that they disagree in principle with the South African Government. This dispute over principles cannot be wished away simply by endless explanations; it can only be ended by radical changes in the facts of the South African situation, thus removing the grounds for the disagreement (which, to be realistic, is not a likely course of events), or through negotiations in which accommodations can be made on both sides, in order to reduce the area of disagreement and provide for a gradual normalisation of relationships.

In 1969 the Prime Minister emphasised the importance of our relations with Africa (as he has done many times since) and stated: "To the extent that we establish the right relations with Africa, to that extent will our problems diminish in other parts of the world." In this regard he said further that it was essential that the African states, and others, "must understand the essential nature of separate development". However, it seems clear that there is no way of simply convincing our fellow African states, especially our neighbours, to accept this policy in theory, and to co-exist with a South African system in which the Government continues to apply the policy - in the hope that some day in the future it will prove acceptable. There is wide acceptance in Africa of the position that it is for the peoples of South Africa themselves to reach a settlement, without direct interference from outside, but that in the meantime there will be no co-existence, which implies acceptance of the "apartheid" system. Instead, efforts will be continued to ostracize or isolate South Africa, as a pressure for change.

We will, in the final analysis, not get over this problem of normalising relations with the rest of Africa until the internal situation has changed or developed in such a way that there is clear evidence of internal
acceptance by our own Black people, followed then by acceptance in Africa. This obviously cannot, and will not, happen at the stroke of a pen internally, or through any sudden change of attitude externally. It will have to be a developing process of change, with communication and negotiation internally and externally, so that relations can gradually improve. But the differences will certainly not be overcome, if we insist that the issue which divides us from Africa, and which thus affects our relations with other states outside Africa, is a purely domestic one in which other governments have no right to be concerned, because to insist defensively on that position is to fly in the face of the realities.

If then we are willing to discuss and even negotiate with other governments over this basic dividing issue - and it seems we may have reached that point - we have to accept that accommodation and even concessions may well be necessary. It can never be expected in negotiations that all the 'give' will be on one side. However, such a willingness to negotiate realistically should not be confused with appeasement. Negotiations do, it is true, imply the need for compromise, but at the same time both sides in negotiations can expect to gain from them, and in South Africa's case we have a great deal to gain from successful negotiations with our fellow African states, even if this means agreeing to changes which they require in return.

A positive policy of this nature would no doubt have an immediate healthy effect on South Africa's relations with countries elsewhere in the world, as has already happened as a result of South African initiatives to seek negotiated settlements of the Rhodesian and South West African questions. Such a positive policy would make it unnecessary to engage in extensive propaganda campaigns in Western countries, which, however they are dressed up, are simply evidence of a defensive posture. In this regard, it does not help at all to point fingers at other countries where conditions of life may be worse than in South Africa, because this is simply another form of the defensive policy, and once again it avoids the real issue which is the dispute within Africa over the principles involved, as well as the hard facts of the situation. Any gimmickry in our foreign policy, including the use of clever advertisements overseas, and concentration on questions of South Africa's "image" abroad, do not go anywhere near the root of the problem. At best they can merely serve as palliatives, while there
is always the danger they will be seen as "cover up" attempts.

There is a further problem with a defensive campaign in Western countries. As already argued above, South Africa's isolation in the world generally is more apparent than real, and in a world where trade, monetary problems, resources, technology, etc., are of vital concern, South Africa's external links have been growing in several directions. The apparent isolation of South Africa is due to the prominence given to political issues in the media and in official statements of other governments, but this situation is considerably aggravated by any high-lighting of the divisive political issue in South African external propaganda, official and non-official. The fact is that governments will not be influenced in this way, and it is they which decide on policy towards South Africa, because the public, generally speaking, in these countries is indifferent. An illustration of this appeared in a recent report of an attempt by a conservative American Senator to defend South Africa in the Senate Chamber. The report stated that, when he started speaking, "about half the Senate members stirred restlessly in their seats before heading for the lounges".14

Confidence and Independence: A Regional Role

A further point about a defensive type of external policy is that it appears to demonstrate a lack of confidence, whereas in fact South Africa today has reason for considerable confidence in its external relations generally, on the basis of its strong economic position, its rich store-house of natural resources, its growing self-sufficiency in its energy requirements, and so on.

There are reasons for confidence, too, in South Africa's military and strategic position in the world. Although this area is the subject of a separate paper, it is relevant to mention it here, because the attempts to convince the West of South Africa's strategic importance for them have generally been based on a rather negative and unsubtle approach. The stress, for instance, has often been on anti-communism, which frankly has no wide appeal in today's post-bipolar world. There has also been a tendency to concentrate on and exaggerate potential threats. Instead of this negative approach, which tends to draw attention to political weaknesses, a more positive and realistic approach is needed, which takes
into account the realities of a changing world situation and which, for instance, sees South Africa more in a regional role, as a stabilising factor in the region, rather than as a link in a world-wide Western defence network. We have, in other words, to get away from the thinking of the cold war, with the defence of the status quo, and rather accept that the world is changing and that South Africa's role in it is changing accordingly.

This desire to be linked to the Western defence system and the countless statements over the years, almost pleading for recognition as a valuable anti-communist ally, illustrate what has been the main thrust of South African foreign policy since World War II, namely to maintain strong links with the West, particularly the United States, Britain and France. There have been good reasons for this policy, such as trade, but it has in the past been linked to a wider philosophy which has perceived of South Africa as part of the so-called Western world - or the "free world", as it is still sometimes described in cold war terminology. (There was in the past also an inclination to describe ourselves as part of the "civilised world", although this term, with its implications, wisely seems to have been dropped in South Africa, but not yet in Rhodesia.)

South Africa's links with the metropolitan powers in colonial times prevented our identification with Africa and gave strength to the idea of South Africa as an "outpost of Western civilisation". Then, as the colonial powers withdrew from Africa, South Africa was forced to begin to come to terms with its real position as part of this continent, and there was an attempt to define the country's role as a "bridge" between Africa and the West. This was spelt out particularly by Mr. Eric Louw as Foreign Minister in the late Fifties, but it was a concept which made no impression anywhere outside this country, and it was clearly motivated by the desire to have South Africa seen by the West as an outpost and as a bulwark against the potential spread of communism in Africa. It was also indicative of a strong reluctance to accept the changes taking place in Africa and of opposition to Black nationalism. This set the Whites of South Africa against both the metropolitan powers, whose policy it was to withdraw from their colonies, and also the African nationalists who were achieving independence. Under the circumstances, the claim of some Afrikaner nationalists to have been the first anti-imperialists of
Africa sounded rather hollow.

However, South African official attitudes have evolved during the Sixties and early Seventies, beginning under Dr. Verwoerd and then more clearly under Mr. Vorster, so that there is now a clear willingness on South Africa's part, officially at least, to see itself first of all as an African state with a role in Africa. This change of attitude has been met by an open recognition on the part of Black African states that South Africa is an independent African state and that the Whites are fully Africans. This was spelt out in the Lusaka Manifesto of 1969, and in many statements of African leaders since then. It is doubtful, however, whether this perception of South Africa as fully committed to Africa in the first place, has yet permeated very far in the thinking of Whites in general, who are perhaps still inclined to view themselves as an appendage of Europe.

It is also doubtful whether the consequences have been fully appreciated even in official thinking, in regard, for instance, to South Africa's political relations with countries outside Africa. The time has surely come for us to recognise realistically that South Africa is not part of any Western grouping of states - if such a single grouping even exists any longer in the fluid state of world politics - and that South Africa now has a character of its own which should be expressed in a fully independent foreign policy. In a world where the bipolar alignment of states has broken up, and where there is a stronger tendency for regional groupings to develop, South Africa has every reason to see itself as a regional power, with its primary role in Africa. In establishing its links with other regions and with major world powers, South Africa would then frame its policies on the basis of its own interests and those of its region, rather than attempting to keep itself aligned with a particular group elsewhere in the world, or a particular major power.

In the bipolar world, when the two super-powers dominated world politics, the policy of seeking shelter under the United States umbrella was perhaps unavoidable. But now, with other centres of power growing and world politics more flexible, this is no longer the case. In any event, there is no guarantee for South Africa of United States or West European protection against any threat to South African security. Such protection
would presumably only be given, if these powers felt that this region was vital for their own security, so that a commitment to its defence could be made in their own national interests. This is not the case at present, and South Africa has to face that fact realistically, and act accordingly.

This suggestion that South Africa should increasingly see itself as a regional power, unaligned with any major world power, is based on the facts of the situation and the indication that official attitudes have been tending in that direction for several years, as reflected in the efforts since the late Sixties to diversify economic and political links away from the concentration on Europe and North America, towards both Latin America and Asia, and more especially as reflected in the current policy of communication and negotiation in Africa. We have come a long way since Dr. Malan's election manifesto in 1948, when the assurance was given that, should Russian aggression lead to war in the world, "we will not remain neutral ... our sympathy will be on the side of the anti-communist countries, and if it is sought and practicable, our active support as well". Two decades later, in 1968, after the United Kingdom had imposed its arms embargo, Dr. Hilgard Muller commented in the House of Assembly: "It is no wonder that many South Africans are beginning to ask themselves whether it is in South Africa's interests to stand unconditionally by the West at all times." There have been other voices raised, too, suggesting that South Africa should declare itself to be neutral in the struggle between the West and Communism, but these have all generally been a reflection of resentment at the refusal of Western countries to recognise the Republic as a valuable ally, rather than a positive and realistic appreciation of the realities and of the Republic's opportunities as an unaligned, regional power, and the Government has continued to maintain its vehement public stand against the Communist powers. Whether or not there was any justification for the reluctance of Western countries in the past to associate themselves too closely, politically or militarily, with South Africa, there no longer seems to be any need for South Africa to commit itself in advance, as it were, to any particular powers or to align itself with any particular group, except when special circumstances and its own interests so dictate.
Conclusion

An attempt has been made above to deal with some of the factors in South Africa's external relations, in the light of the political realities of a changing world situation. Looking at the present position of South Africa in the world and the trends for the future, it seems necessary in particular to see our developing external relations as a whole, and to appreciate that the political constraints, which are the most obvious perhaps, do not by any means constitute the whole picture. Political isolation, which is a reality, does not mean that isolation is the most crucial factor in our international relations, when other vital areas, such as trade, are taken into account.

Nevertheless, the political factor is important, especially in Africa where it can be the determining factor, which in turn affects our wider relationships. It is, therefore, essential that we come to grips with the basic issue in the political dispute in Africa, an issue which has become in fact international, whatever may be thought about the legalities.

The recognition now of our potential role in Africa, and of the realities of our relationships with the so-called Western world, of which for so long we have assumed ourselves to be part, could be the beginning of a healthier, more realistic, view of South Africa's position in the world as a whole, namely as a regional power with a distinctive African character.

Needless to say, for this view to become a reality in the years ahead, our political differences in Africa must at least be drastically reduced. A great deal depends, therefore, on the current process of communication and negotiations with other African states.
REFERENCES AND NOTES


2. Ibid., p.82.

3. Quoted in Samuel P. Huntington, "Transnational Organisations in World Politics", World Politics, Vol.25 No.3, April 1973, pp.333-368, p.363. In this article Professor Huntington deals also with other "transnational organizations" which operate across international boundaries "in relative disregard of those boundaries". (Page 333). He concludes that "today the revolutionary organizations in world politics are not the national or international organizations which have been part of the nation-state system, but rather the transnational organizations which have developed alongside, but outside that system", and that in the immediate future "a central focus of world politics will be on the co-existence of and interaction between transnational organizations and the nation-state". (Page 368). He does also point out, however, that "predictions of the death of the nation-state are premature". (Page 363).


6. For details in this regard, see author's contribution on "The Department of Foreign Affairs" in Denis Worral (ed.) South Africa: Government and Politics. 2nd ed. Pretoria: van Schaiks, 1975, pp.332-347.


10. OLIVIER, Gerrit, "Foreign Policy: A change Needed", New Nation, Vol.5 No.9, April, pp.17-19, 29.


12. Ibid., p.103.

13. This position is reflected in the Lusaka Manifesto of 1969, the recent Dar es Salaam Declaration (April, 1975) and statements of African leaders. There are, of course, more extreme positions which envisage military action by African states. (The Zambian position on
this, reflecting a wide consensus, was stated by the Foreign Minister in Dar es Salaam in April, 1975, when he stated that Zambia would "not take up arms to fight South Africa". On the other hand, there are a few states which, while not approving of the South African system, are perhaps prepared in effect to co-exist with it and engage in "dialogue". Most African states, however, do not accept the words "dialogue" and "détente", because of the implications of co-existence in these concepts. The Zambian Foreign Minister, for instance, said in Dar es Salaam in April:

"I therefore state categorically, as I have said many times before, that Zambia and her friends have not been engaged in 'dialogue' with South Africa. After all, one can only dialogue with a friend. The term 'détente' is not in our vocabulary."

(The discussions with South Africa over the external questions of Rhodesia and South West Africa are seen in a different light and are acknowledged as necessary and productive by Zambia and similarly minded states.)

This position provides a serious problem for those who wish to see discussions and even serious negotiations take place with other African states over the basic issue dividing South Africa from Africa. It will thus be necessary for certain basic agreed principles to be found, to which there can first be a commitment on both sides. Principles included in the Lusaka Manifesto could perhaps be taken as a start in this regard.