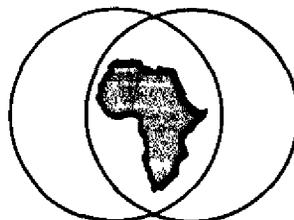


**SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN TODAY'S WORLD**

by

**J.E. Spence**

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**



**DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE INSTITUUT VAN INTERNASIONALE AANGELEENTHEDE /**

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## SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN TODAY'S WORLD

J.E. Spence

I propose to concentrate on the major thrust of South African policies in the Southern African region, and, although my work in recent years has concentrated on the military implications of Indian Ocean strategy and South Africa's nuclear potential, I shall focus on the outward movement and some of the implications on this movement of recent changes in Angola and Mocambique, as well as potential changes in Rhodesia and South West Africa.

The major thrust of South African foreign policy throughout the post-war period has been directed at the consolidation and extension of economic, technological and military ties with Western powers; and the Western powers which have mattered in this context are primarily Britain, the United States and France. Simultaneously, throughout this period there has been the attempt, on the part of South Africa's policy-makers, to project an international image of political stability and economic prosperity for both Black and White. At the same time, stress has been laid on the fierce commitment to the cause of anti-communism and the value of South Africa as a military bastion of Western security in the Indian Ocean and South Atlantic region. This thrust to establish, consolidate and enhance relationships with key Western powers has operated throughout the post-war period despite, of course, the alleged isolation - sometimes more apparent than real - that has characterised South Africa's position in international society since 1946.

Plausibly, in retrospect, one can take the view that at the time of maximum isolation, when the degree of hostility was at its highest, South African decision-makers recognised that what they had to do was to sit tight, prepare for the long haul, cultivate and enhance critically important relationships with Western powers, in the hope that ultimately the world would change in a direction to allow a truer perspective of South Africa's position, rather than a biased one. The assumption behind this major thrust of South African policy, is that Western élites in both political and economic spheres have been, and still are, essentially supporters of *status quo* in Southern Africa. They, therefore, have little inducement to alter their perception of South Africa's domestic situation unless, and until, they are compelled to do so, because of some fundamental change in the Southern African sub-system. For that to happen, the change in the sub-system would have to be profound enough significantly to threaten Western political and economic interests in the region. It would also have to threaten the greater Western aspirations to avoid having to make hard choices about commitments to the Republic in advance of any major social upheaval. This is simply another way of saying that South Africa has been able to take advantage of a situation where decision-making in Western capitals tends inevitably to be concerned with short-term considerations, rather than long-term planning to meet future contingencies.

Of course, for the Republic, the business of relying on an image of stability and prosperity has been very important. There has been a recognition that if this image is to be projected abroad, then it is important that the internal situation be as firm and stable as possible. Some commentators have argued that the price of maintaining that image abroad, in terms of maximising internal security, has been a very high price. Some would argue that the price has been too high. But the fact is that South Africa, over the last 20 years, has taken the view that no price is too high to maintain that image of security for both internal and external reasons.

There is, furthermore, an implicit assumption in policy-making, that if that stability were to crack in some significant way, then clearly other Western powers would begin to look at South Africa in a rather different way from that characteristic of their policies over the last 20 years. It is fair to say that the Western powers are impressed with South Africa's stability and with the fact that any attempt to intervene against South Africa, whether economically or militarily would run into the most profound difficulties. South Africa has thus succeeded in impressing upon the West the power and the capability that she has to resist either internal subversion, or infiltration, or indeed external intervention and interference of one kind or another. Policy-makers abroad, as I read them in the British and American context, have come to the conclusion that there is really little point in trying to engineer change at long distance in South Africa, because of the profound obstacles and difficulties involved in attempting this process.

Ironically, however, one might argue that the greater the internal repression (in a very technical sense) required to impress investors and governments abroad with the folly of disturbing the *status quo*, the more difficult it has become to counter the moral and ideological arguments of the African States and those elsewhere in the West, who in general oppose the Apartheid policy. Perhaps in the past it did not matter that the African States and certain élites in Western States opposed Apartheid, but it may become a matter of some significance in a period of so called *détente* with Africa in the next 6-12 months, even years. Thus *détente* may of course, require some significant internal change.

Now let us look at the "outward movement". It will be recalled that earlier it was argued that South Africa's major thrust was to establish, maintain, cultivate and enhance a variety of links with the Western powers. Certainly, the Republic's leaders made no secret of the connection, as they saw it, between the outward movement and the traditional aspiration to improve the country's standing and importance in the eyes of the Western decision-makers. In other words, there is a clear and direct connection between the policy of the outward movement, and the policy of maintaining the best possible relations with the key and critically important Western powers. This is a matter of public record, stated by Foreign Minister Muller, who in 1968 made the obvious, though valid, point that, as the West became aware of South Africa's fruitful co-operation with other African States, so the attitude of the West would improve. He claimed: "I believe that it will happen to an increasing degree, because we must simply accept that our relations with the rest of the world are largely dependent on our relations with the African States." To this extent South African policy-makers make a connection between the outward movement and the rest of South African foreign policy.

What are the imperatives behind the outward movement as an outsider would read them? There are those (of a Marxist persuasion) in Britain, and elsewhere, who argue that the outward movement has been forced upon the South African Government in the last 10 years because of domestic economic difficulties, that the movement is primarily a desperate search for new markets, a desperate search for outlets for investment. This seems an over-simplification of a very complex process in which a variety of motives are clearly at work as such, and these are very difficult to disentangle into the neat components required by the dialectic. My own view is that South Africa during the last 10 years, for a combination of reasons, which have to do with the emergence of a favourable domestic and international climate, has been primarily concerned to translate a traditional position of economic dominance in the region into political and diplomatic advantage. Hence, the emphasis is on the contribution its government can make to the maintenance of security in physical and strategic terms in South and Central

Africa by military and economic means.

One of my colleagues and collaborators, James Barber, has put this point very well in a recent book.<sup>+</sup> He argues that it is a misperception to see the South African government being driven by economic forces it cannot control; rather, it is attempting to use its economic and military resources to gain political objectives. In this sense it is the Republic's economic strength, not its economic problems, which provide the foundation for the outward movement. This is not, however, to deny the possibility that over the long-term significant economic advantages might well accrue to the Republic, measured in terms of access to hitherto untapped sources of water, power and outlets for capital and manufactured goods.

One could, of course, argue, in a sense, that the repeated emphasis on the idea of a Southern African economic community conforms to the Marxist hypothesis. On the contrary, however, this stress on the virtues of economic co-operation between South Africa and its weaker neighbours, is essentially a projection of a very short- to medium-term interest in the promotion and maintenance of security in political and strategic terms. Thus, for good reasons, relatively little is said publicly, of what South Africa's military options are apart from the occasional and studiously vague outbursts about "putting out one's neighbour's fires". My thesis is that the maintenance of regional order has a higher value in the governments' political lexicon than the blind promotion of economic development, either for its own sake or because of alleged contradictions in a capitalist society.

It is also worth reflecting on the extent to which the outward movement has squared with the announcement in 1968 and subsequent development of the Nixon Doctrine. You will recall that the assumption of this Doctrine was that the United States could no longer be expected to play the role of a global policeman, that in future years significant and particular states in specific regions would have to bear more and more responsibility for maintaining collective security and for promoting economic development in their particular regions. The candidates for the Nixon Doctrine were states like India, Australia and Japan, and quite conceivably South Africa as well. There was, and probably still is, therefore, a coincidence of interest between the mood of the United States, when it surveyed its world wide responsibilities in a post-Vietnam era, and South Africa's aspirations in Africa.

It seems appropriate for the remainder of this argument to take the Portuguese coup of April, 1974, and the emergence of a new regime in Lisbon, as a convenient bench mark. Throughout I want to emphasise that South Africa's perception of its role in Africa is related to its dominant concern to maintain and enhance traditional ties with the West. Thus, broadly speaking, between 1967 and 1974 one might define the outward movement, as Larry Bowman has, namely, as "an attempt to establish an economically and militarily strong South Africa, surrounded by client states, befriended by the major powers and geographically isolated from any significant enemy."

By June, 1970, this aspiration appeared very close to realisation. A new Conservative government in Britain seemed willing to countenance a renewal of arms sales to South Africa and perhaps offer South Africa a degree of formal incorporation into Western defence structures. In addition, gains of significance appeared eminent in the context of the Repub-

<sup>+</sup>BARBER, James, *South Africa's Foreign Policy, 1945-1970*.  
London : Oxford University Press, 1973.

lic's relationship with the independent states on its periphery. In other words, by the 1970's it was clear that, after some years of intensive diplomatic and economic activity, South Africa had broken free of the isolation which had characterised its relations with the rest of the continent for much of the post-war period.

What follows is simply a number of general observations on the period up to 1974, in the hope that this will, by implication, help towards an understanding of the current drive for *détente*. Throughout this period, up to 1974, it was clear that the failure to achieve a Rhodesian settlement and the long drawn out counter-insurgency in Angola and Mocambique were forcing choices on Pretoria, which in a sense had the effect of undermining the objectives of South Africa in the region as a whole. To begin with, the Rhodesian deadlock had the twin consequences of focusing world attention on South Africa, as repeated calls were made to extend sanctions to the Republic; and secondly, and more important in the local context, Pretoria felt obliged to give economic support to the new regime and, from August 1967, military aid, by sending police units to help the fight against guerrillas operating from the Zambian side of the Zambesi.

One might, therefore, argue that the political and economic objectives behind the outward movement, have until very recently been in some degree of conflict with strategic imperatives. The military and economic support for Rhodesia has, until very recently, seemed to suggest that there has been little hope that Zambia might in time come to be included in South Africa's "co-prosperity sphere". The single failure of the outward movement was that Zambia "escaped" incorporation within the South African area of economic influence, although it is true that Zambia's economic dependence upon South Africa increased in the period after U.D.I. Nonetheless, the Zambian Government, until very recently, has concentrated on trying to redirect its foreign policy towards the East African states; hence the building of the Tanzam railway, the oil pipeline and so forth.

Relations between Zambia and the Republic deteriorated rather seriously in the 1970-1974 period as Mr. Vorster became increasingly impatient with the Zambian willingness to help sustain the freedom fighters. Thus, there was a sense in which the U.D.I. complicated the outward movement. It prevented at the time any *détente*, any accommodation occurring between Zambia and South Africa, and throughout this period up to 1974 we shall see the importance of this factor. The long-term danger confronting the Republic was the prospect of having to commit more and more of its military capability in support of a deteriorating security situation in Rhodesia and possibly the Portuguese territories. After all, it was one thing to send several battalions of police to fight in the Zambesi valley from 1967 onwards - in the outside world nobody knew where the Zambesi valley was and nobody appeared to care particularly either! But it is quite another (and this constraint must have been operating on South Africa's policy-makers from a very early stage and is clearly operating now) to be compelled into an ever-widening confrontation in the buffer zones of Rhodesia and the Portuguese territories. Indeed, one could argue that perhaps implicit in the strategy of the liberation movements, has been the assumption that the more the Republic could be compelled to substitute military force for economic and diplomatic linkages, the more difficult would become its external posture vis-a-vis the great powers, and here one must include the Soviet Union and China.

It is true that the Republic could yet survive domestically by ultimately retreating behind the Limpopo River, and that option must have been brought to the attention of South African policy-makers in the 1970-1974 period. But the spectre of a race war, or what is sometimes apocalyptically called the "Vietnamisation of Southern Africa", would dent the confidence of foreign investors in South Africa, if not governments in the outside world. Thus the problem facing South African foreign policy-makers has been the weakness of Rhodesia and the difficulty of having to decide just how much commitment to make to Rhodesia. Of course, had South Africa been forced to intervene significantly on the Portuguese and/or the White Rhodesian fronts beyond the level of present commitment, then there would have been little prospect of building a stable prosperous Southern African economic community. Indeed, the legitimacy of the Republic's claim to be the guarantor of what one might call a "pax Afrikaner" in the southern third of the continent, would have been very much at risk.

Thus military involvement on a substantial scale in either Rhodesia or the Portuguese colonies has always been seen as the worst alternative, and subject to a number of very important constraints. First of all, such action would immeasurably strengthen the O.A.U.'s case that apartheid constitutes a clear and present threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. This is an accusation that, up to now, South Africa has always been very careful to avoid; it's government has protested strongly that apartheid is a domestic matter and does not in fact threaten the peace of the world in any significant way. Thus one constraint on intervention is perhaps the knowledge that South Africa would give legal and political hostages to the fortunes of the O.A.U. We should also bear in mind that in these circumstances O.A.U. demands for great power intervention would increase. Such demands could not be quite as easily dismissed as they have been up to now, because the traditional Western view that the stability of the area rendered intervention on their part unnecessary and undesirable, would perhaps no longer be as tenable, and this would be reinforced by fears that Western economic interests would be at risk, if a major conflict were allowed to continue unchecked in the so-called buffer region.

The April, 1974, coup in Portugal and events in Angola and Mocambique in the year that has followed, have obviously complicated the Republic's position and are forcing some very hard, awkward choices upon Mr. Vorster's government. What is indeed interesting and fascinating to the outside observer, is Mr. Vorster's capacity for making a virtue out of necessity. I was present at a meeting in London shortly before I came to the Republic, attended by journalists, academics and Civil Servants, discussing the current moves towards *détente*. I recall a participant arguing that "whatever one may say about South Africa on the policy of apartheid, the fact is that South African foreign policy is brutally rational in appreciation of its interests and in making decisions about how those interest can best be protected".

It is clear that, ever since the Portuguese decision to abdicate colonial responsibility, both Mr. Vorster and the Frelimo Leaders have stressed that they wish to avoid getting involved in each other's internal affairs. Indeed, Mr. Vorster in September, 1974, expressed the view that he hoped a stable government would emerge, for Mocambique's sake and that of South Africa. He also stressed that a Black government in Mocambique held no fear for South Africa whatsoever. Thus, Pretoria has taken very great care to avoid over-reaction to events in the neighbouring territories. The official South African line appears to be business as usual with whatever

regimes finally come to power in Angola and Mocambique. The assumption behind this view (certainly in the case of Mocambique) is that the traditional dependence of the territory on the Republic will continue as an African nationalist government realises that ideological considerations must give way to economic realities.

It could be argued that the collapse of Portuguese resistance in Angola and Mocambique has knocked away a key prop of the outward-looking movement, namely that the Republic, by supplying the economic components of a counter-insurgency campaign, could and would ensure a victory in the struggle for the "hearts and minds" of the indigenous African population. I think that assumption was present in South African policy-making towards Mocambique when insurgency was at its height. Certainly, South Africa, rightly in retrospect, resisted the temptation to intervene militarily in either Angola or Mocambique.

On the other hand, the fact that South Africa did resist the temptation to intervene in military terms, has enabled Mr. Vorster to enter this new phase of relations with Mocambique, however ambiguous they are, unencumbered by the burden of past military commitments. He has some prospect, in other words, of using Mocambique's economic ties with South Africa as a bargaining counter to give shape and substance to a new pattern of relationships. But, consider what might have happened had South Africa been involved militarily; had South Africa been enforced to withdraw ignominiously from such involvement, then Mr. Vorster's policy might have been very seriously hampered. At least the decision not to get involved significantly has paid off to the extent that at present Mr. Vorster starts with "a clean slate".

Nevertheless, the impact of Portuguese withdrawal on South Africa is likely to have important consequences for South Africa's military planning in particular. It cannot be argued that the Portuguese army was betrayed by weak and vacillatory politicians, as has been claimed for the French experience in Algeria in the late 1950's. Frelimo appeared to be gaining the upper hand well before the coup in Lisbon, and the fact that a *military* coup took place in Lisbon, suggests how dissatisfied the army had become, not simply with the conduct of the war, but with the *raison d'etre* behind its prosecution. It's an old story which must be familiar to you that guerrillas in the modern world do not have to win; all they have to do is enforce a prolonged stalemate on the enemy, so that the will to go on fighting ultimately collapses at home in the metropole. This is the lesson of much of the insurgency directed at Britain in the Fifties and Sixties. It has also been the lesson of the Vietnam experience for the United States.

Of course, for the Republic the military lessons are extremely interesting; in military terms an African guerrilla army has demonstrated a capacity to tie down a counter-insurgency force of some sixty thousand strong. It has also demonstrated a capacity to operate - certainly towards the end of the conflict - well beyond the initial stage of hit and run tactics which usually begin these conflicts. Indeed, Frelimo were obviously moving toward the third phase (in Maoist terms) of guerrilla warfare, employing sophisticated weapons such as missiles in the months before April, 1974. Bear in mind that in those parts of Mocambique that Frelimo controlled, the classical Chinese pattern was followed. They established parallel structures of authority in the captured areas, and created local networks of support, together with embryonic administrative and welfare systems. Presumably these achievements have not been lost on South Africa's military élite, especially the fact that the Government has now to deal with

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Thus military involvement on a substantial scale in either Rhodesia or the Portuguese colonies has always been seen as the worst alternative, and subject to a number of very important constraints. First of all, such action would immeasurably strengthen the O.A.U.'s case that apartheid constitutes a clear and present threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. This is an accusation that, up to now, South Africa has always been very careful to avoid; it's government has protested strongly that apartheid is a domestic matter and does not in fact threaten the peace of the world in any significant way. Thus one constraint on intervention is perhaps the knowledge that South Africa would give legal and political hostages to the fortunes of the O.A.U. We should also bear in mind that in these circumstances O.A.U. demands for great power intervention would increase. Such demands could not be quite as easily dismissed as they have been up to now, because the traditional Western view that the stability of the area rendered intervention on their part unnecessary and undesirable, would perhaps no longer be as tenable, and this would be reinforced by fears that Western economic interests would be at risk, if a major conflict were allowed to continue unchecked in the so-called buffer region.

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a regime which came to power by the experience of revolutionary war. In strictly military terms, of course, the implications are obvious; for the first time, South Africa will have on its borders, both East and West, two new States for which independence has been gained by means qualitatively different from those employed by the nationalist movement of African territories elsewhere in the region.

One can argue that South Africa's success in coming to terms with Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Malawi owed something to the relatively peaceful constitutional mode of decolonisation that characterised their emergence as independent states. Obviously this was not the only factor which explains this dependence and willingness to coexist with South Africa, and economic factors were important in this context. However, the fact that the nationalist leaders in these states never had to mobilise support in a revolutionary war in part explains their willingness to come to terms with South Africa. True, Frelimo has problems of its own, in the sense that it cannot claim to have mobilised every peasant in Mocambique, and has a very strong tribal base.

Nonetheless, it seems to me that Frelimo's relationships with South Africa in the post-independence period, will be subtly different from those of Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland with South Africa. The tone and the style of their diplomacy will be different, perhaps lacking the orthodox convention which characterises the diplomacy of these other states.

Thus, my thesis is that the way a government comes into being and the experience that it endures in the passion of armed struggle does affect the way that government subsequently behaves in international politics. I am quite sure that South African foreign policy-makers are not blithely assuming that the pattern of relationships with Mocambique will be precisely the same as those with other states, despite the fact that all have a common factor of economic independence under-pinning them. It is true that in the statement which Samora Machel issued on the investiture of the Transitional Government in Mocambique two months ago,<sup>+</sup> there was a warning against the dangers of left-wing ultra-revolutionary elements trying to use the South African connection as a factor in domestic Mocambique politics.

He made it clear that such people must be watched and dealt with; concluded on a Leninist note that "ultra leftism is a weapon of reaction". Thus Machel recognises the danger of the South African connection becoming a factor in Mocambique politics. Some, for their own good reasons, might want to belabour the government if it follows too obvious and too easy a policy of coexistence with the Republic.

I am not saying that a policy of accommodation is impossible in the circumstances, as economic factors will probably in the long run determine a *modus vivendi* between Mocambique and South Africa. It *will*, however, require resources and measures of diplomatic flexibility on the part of South Africa to come to terms with a Marxist orientated state that has come to power by means of violent revolution - the first of its kind that South Africa has had to cope with in the diplomatic spectrum.

Implicit in policy formulation is the fear of a second "Congo" in Mocambique. Indeed, this has been voiced in the Nationalist press, notably

+ Reproduced in: Frelimo and the Transitional Government of Mocambique: the Lusaka Agreement; Policy Statement of Samora Machel, President of Frelimo. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, September 1974.

*Die Transvaler*, and this suggests how important it is for Pretoria that the new governments in Angola and, more especially, Mocambique, establish themselves in power and demonstrate a capacity to enforce their will throughout the length and breadth of their jurisdiction. A failure to do so would mean an uncertain and potentially very dangerous situation for South Africa, particularly on the Republic's long borders with Mocambique: the prospect of South Africa's security forces having to cope with sporadic guerilla raids, encouraged by an atmosphere of instability and lack of government control in Mocambique. In these circumstances South African security forces would face the temptation to retaliate against the host state's territory.

It is true that South Africa found it relatively easy to resist retaliation against Zambia, but Zambia is a long way away, and the guerrillas operating from Zambia were really directed at Rhodesia and not at South Africa - despite the A.N.C.'s claim to the contrary. But Mocambique presents a more urgent issue, and if you think that I am being apocalyptic, forgive me, but I think I ought to consider the worst case as well as the best. Thus, if there is a period of instability and violence, in which Frelimo is unable to control its own domestic situation, and guerrilla movements aimed at damaging South Africa establish themselves in Mocambique, then there are grave problems facing South Africa. South Africa could probably contain guerrilla incursions from that quarter; the counter-insurgency preparations of the South African Government are extremely sophisticated and are likely to be successful.

South Africa is a special case, *sui generis* in the context of theories of revolutionary war, as these have operated elsewhere. South Africa does not fit the model that Mao, Giap and Guevara have advanced for revolution in the Third World. South Africa could probably contain border incursions whether they were coming through northern Natal or through the eastern Transvaal, but this is not the critical issue.

The real difficulty is the impact that this would have on Black opinion in South Africa, which is impossible to measure. More important is the impact this would have on external opinion abroad as the spectacle of White South African troops fighting Black guerrillas on Republican soil would transform the outside world's view of South Africa. Western statesmen might have to revise the relatively low priority that hitherto they have accorded to the Republic as a source of international tension. That is the danger in the long run, if instability does follow independence in Angola and Mocambique. The situation of Angola is especially complicated, because there one is dealing with a guerrilla movement already in being - Swapo - operating in the northern part of South West Africa, a territory in contention at the United Nations. Therefore, in both Angola and Mocambique, Mr. Vorster's government has a clear and obvious interest in their governments establishing themselves and not allowing their states to become sanctuaries or host territories for the operation of guerrilla activity. At the very least, therefore, I would expect a South African government to take very stringent military precautions on the Namibian and Mocambique borders. Mr. Vorster's hints in November, 1974, that he was reconsidering the position of South West Africa and the possibility of a new constitutional arrangement, suggested to commentators overseas the possibility that South Africa was considering a withdrawal of its presence from the territory. Thus, considerations of this kind do weigh heavily in calculations about the costs and benefits to be derived from maintaining the present strategic perimeter.

Rather different problems confront Mr. Vorster with respect to Rhodesia. It has been obvious for a long time, certainly since soon after U.D.I. that the Republic's long-term interest would be met by a settlement of the Rhodesian issue, even if this meant an African government coming to power in Salisbury. This, it has often been argued, would be regarded as a preferable alternative to an indefinite period of uncertainty and the likelihood of having to progressively shore-up a Rhodesian regime harassed and increasingly stretched to contain insurgent activity.

Rhodesia is, I believe, highly vulnerable to insurgency, especially since the significant changes in Mocambique. The critical difference between Rhodesia and South Africa has always been the fact that in its three vital areas of state power, Rhodesia is qualitatively weaker than South Africa: firstly, in terms of numbers; secondly, and this is a difficult point to argue as one cannot really measure or quantify it, there is a sense in which the ideological commitment of Rhodesians differs, at least quantitatively, if not qualitatively, from that of White South Africans in maintaining their own survival; thirdly, of course, Rhodesia is weak particularly with respect to those technological and bureaucratic means of social control which South Africa has devised and perfected over the last 20 years.

For all these reasons, Rhodesia is vulnerable to insurgency. The Rhodesian capacity to resist has dramatically weakened, as Frelimo forces demonstrated by their success in periodically cutting the Beira-Umtali line before April, 1974. Therefore, it is conceivable that if *détente* collapses the Black nationalists on the north eastern frontier could look forward to some support from a friendly Mocambique with less incentive to co-exist with Salisbury than with South Africa. Indeed, a Frelimo government in Mocambique might be able to satisfy its radical critics abroad (for not doing enough about South Africa) by demonstrating that it was doing something about Rhodesia. Thus, while the Republic has proven capabilities to withstand the more orthodox varieties of guerrilla warfare, its government cannot relish the prospect of having to extend that capability to cope with threats to significantly weaker regimes on its borders. Therefore, a progressive disengagement from both Namibia and Rhodesia is clearly not without attraction for Pretoria. The alternative is to acknowledge that military intervention in any one, or all three territories, may be required. In these circumstances, a retreat into "Fortress South Africa" might have its advantages: thus, the Republic could withdraw to the Limpopo strategic perimeter and isolate itself from disorder in the peripheral states. Paradoxically, retreat into a garrison state is becoming increasingly difficult to operate. One can retreat in a physical sense (and that may be the whole purpose of *détente*), but there are internal obstacles to the creation of a fully-fledged garrison state.

A simple example illustrates the potential change within South Africa implicit in the linkage between domestic and foreign policy included by events in Mocambique since last April, and here I allude to the banning of a pro-Frelimo rally in September, 1974. This rally was organised by the Black South African Student Organisation and the Black People's Convention. The notion of the garrison state and the idea of sitting tight seem irrelevant now, and Mr. Vorster, in the way he is currently handling domestic policies, is surely well aware of this.

What is interesting to a Political Scientist is the fact that South Africa appears to defy neat categorisation. Often when teaching African politics I ask my students to write an essay - "Is South Africa a totalitarian State?". They read Brzezinski, Huntington, etc., use the orthodox

models of totalitarianism and eventually admit: "We really cannot sort this one out; it doesn't fit somehow." Of course it does not fit because the one thing that South Africans have never been able to do (even assuming that they wish to do so) is to keep out the flow of ideas. The Russians can (with increasing difficulty), East Germans can, but South Africa has never been able to.

There is still a relatively free press in this country both Afrikaans and English, capable of interpreting events abroad according to a journalistic ethic derived from a Western liberal tradition. In addition, there is a university system, English and Afrikaans, committed to the spirit of free inquiry. Both these institutions - the press and the university system - remain important instruments for the transmission of ideas opposed to those enforcing official policy. Both will do much to interpret recent events in Angola and Mocambique to the Black population. What that impact will be cannot be measured in advance, and it would be foolish to predict it. But, that Africans do follow events elsewhere with great interest, is beyond question. Perhaps, too, Bantustan leaders will be pressed to be more radical than they have been, precisely because of radical changes taking place in adjacent territories. Thus we conclude that the change of the balance of power in Southern Africa represented by the imminent departure of the Portuguese, has confronted South Africa with a very new set of disturbing variables.

Containing the effects of these changes, within both South Africa and the wider regional system, is clearly going to require a combination of two things: political flexibility at home, and diplomatic skill abroad. On an obvious level of analysis there are more potential actors in the system to cope with by diplomatic means. Until last April there were Malawi and the three former high commission territories, the Portuguese and the Rhodesians. To these we must add Mocambique, Angola, conceivably a Black Rhodesia as well.

Flexibility in diplomacy implies a capacity to adapt internally to changing circumstances over the long run. But the difficulty here is that such aspirations may be nullified by pressures to intensify existing means of social control in the short run: an inability or an unwillingness to adapt in time could result in contradictions between foreign and domestic policy and these could unleash forces for internal and external change which at this stage are best left to prophecy rather than analysis.

When I wrote about this subject some years ago, I remember coining a catch phrase, namely "that the outward movement in South African foreign policy was based on the premise of liberalism abroad and repression at home". One could do things in the field of foreign policy which would have no significant spillover in the field of domestic policy. (Of course, the *verkrampes* always took the view that if you did have such a policy, it was bound to have significant spillover. Hence, the debate between *verligte* and *verkrampte* on this issue.) Looking at the situation now, could one say that the policy may have to be "liberal" at home as well as the price of *détente* abroad?

Let me just finish, if I may, by looking very briefly at the current situation. I obviously have no special sources of information on this; all I can offer you is an outsider's view based on very flimsy, impressionistic evidence. What strikes me is that there is clearly a coincidence of interest between Zambia and South Africa in getting a settlement. This coincidence of interest has been forced upon the two protagonists by the

the great change in Mocambique and Angola. Again, too, what is encouraging is that recent exchanges in Lusaka, in Gaborone and in Pretoria represent a reassertion of orthodox conventional diplomacy, and there has not been much of that during the last decade.

This reassertion of diplomacy is one of the most hopeful things about the move towards *détente*. For the first time the local protagonists, Zambia and South Africa, have influence on Rhodesia, they have cards to play, in a way which was never true of Mr. Wilson, sitting on a succession of battle cruisers in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Ocean. All he had was the threat of long-term sanctions against Rhodesia, and Mr. Smith knew very well that he could survive sanctions, as he clearly has done, with South Africa's assistance. Of course, Mr. Callaghan's position is interesting. He, despite local criticism, has nonetheless taken the view that this is an African problem and that it has got to be settled by Africans - both Black and White. He sees Britain's role as informal at this stage, although ultimately the British Government has the legal and constitutional responsibility.

Of course, in a sense Mr. Smith is being asked to dismantle White minority rule. The time span for this is flexible, no doubt, but that is what I think he has been asked to do. He has been asked to come to terms with the fact of emergent Black power in Rhodesia. It is a big request, and it is not surprising that Mr. Smith is dragging his heels.

We all blithely assume that if a settlement is reached, that will be that, but here we must be cautious. After all, if a constitutional package is drawn up between the African Nationalists and the Smith government (with the British as it were, holding the ring) who will be responsible for monitoring the carrying out of a constitutional settlement over say a time span of five or ten years? Is it going to be South Africa, Zambia, or Britain? Bear in mind too that it is not just a question of agreeing on a new constitution with a complicated franchise; what has to be done in this context is to set in motion changes to alter the entire structure of Rhodesian society as presently constituted. This will have to be done if only to satisfy Black expectations in Rhodesia, and these are rising in the current situation. What we have to bear in mind, is that it is not just a question of drawing up a constitution on paper, it is a question of monitoring the thing once we have got it, seeing that it is observed by the parties concerned and, secondly, setting in motion very quickly thereafter fundamental changes in Rhodesian society to satisfy the rising of Black expectations. In other words, there are all sorts of things that can go wrong between a settlement in constitutional terms and transferring power in real terms.

In conclusion some very speculative points may be mentioned. (I would not want too much importance attached to them, but I think one is entitled to speculate on these occasions). What are the implications of a settlement to South Africa, assuming that it does come and meets all the conditions stressed? There is a sense in which, if Mr. Vorster and President Kaunda achieve a settlement and get Mr. Smith to come to terms with a Black majority, then their achievement will be regarded privately, if not publicly, by many statesmen and by many significant élites abroad, as something of a diplomatic triumph.

From Mr. Vorster's view, what would matter would be that the momentum for *détente* be maintained, in the hope that the very process of getting a settlement (in association with states like Botswana and Zambia and possibly

Tanzania) would effect a subtle transformation of the political climate of Southern Africa in general, giving South Africa breathing space and the time required to make changes. But, and this is the crucial question, what changes and how many must be made to satisfy South Africa's critics?

There are some critics who will never be satisfied, but perhaps they are not important. On the other hand one has to recognise that the very achievement of Black majority rule in Rhodesia, together with the changes that have and will have taken place by then in Angola and Mocambique, may very clearly encourage the African militant states of the O.A.U. in their campaign against the Republic. Thus *détente* is a double-edged weapon, in the sense that it can work for or against South Africa's advantage, following a settlement.

In these circumstances, South Africa would, no doubt, count on its economic dominance in the region to deter any groups or states which might want to play a hostile role against South Africa. If we take the worst possibility - the collapse of *détente* and a failure to get a settlement - then South Africa is still faced with the awful choice of whether or not to intervene to prop up Mr. Smith against increasing guerrilla war.

Earlier, I alluded to the difficulties and constraints that have existed in the past on this course of action; they would be even stronger following a failure of *détente*. Military intervention would mean, I think, the "Vietnamisation of Southern Africa" and all that implies internally and externally. The alternative is simply to retreat, let Mr. Smith go to the wall, and accept the fact of White disintegration by violence. It is propositions of this kind that no doubt Mr. Vorster had in mind when he said that a failure on the Rhodesian issue might result in "consequences too ghastly to contemplate".