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Robin Knight

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**A Constellation of States: Regional Co-operation in
Southern Africa**
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Book Review
**Namibia Old and New: Traditional and Modern Leaders
in Ovamboland**
by Gerhard Töttemeyer



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THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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NOTES ON AUTHORS AND ARTICLES

Mr Peter Vale is a Lecturer in the Department of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand. *Africa 1979: Myths, Miracles and Mirrors*, is an edited version of a talk he gave in November last year to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

After Brezhnev: Who and What? 1980 could well usher in a new successor to the Soviet leader, Mr Leonid Brezhnev. *Mr Robin Knight*, U.S. News and World Report correspondent, based in Johannesburg, has recently arrived in South Africa after a three-year stint as correspondent for his magazine in Moscow, and is thus able to analyse the power struggle in the USSR from a position of first-hand experience.

The Arabs in Africa: Islamic Philanthropy or Petro-Colonialism? focuses on the relationship between Africa and the Arab world. The author, *Mr Philip Frankel*, is a lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The South African Prime Minister, Mr P.W. Botha, vigorously pursued his concept of a constellation of Southern African states in 1979. *Mr Denis Venter*, a senior researcher at the Africa Institute of South Africa, and *Dr Deon Geldenhuys*, Assistant Director (Research) of the S.A. Institute of International Affairs, have long felt that the notion of a constellation deserved wider and deeper study. Their joint article, *A Constellation of States*, is therefore a timely and welcome piece which will hopefully enrich the debate surrounding the constellation concept.

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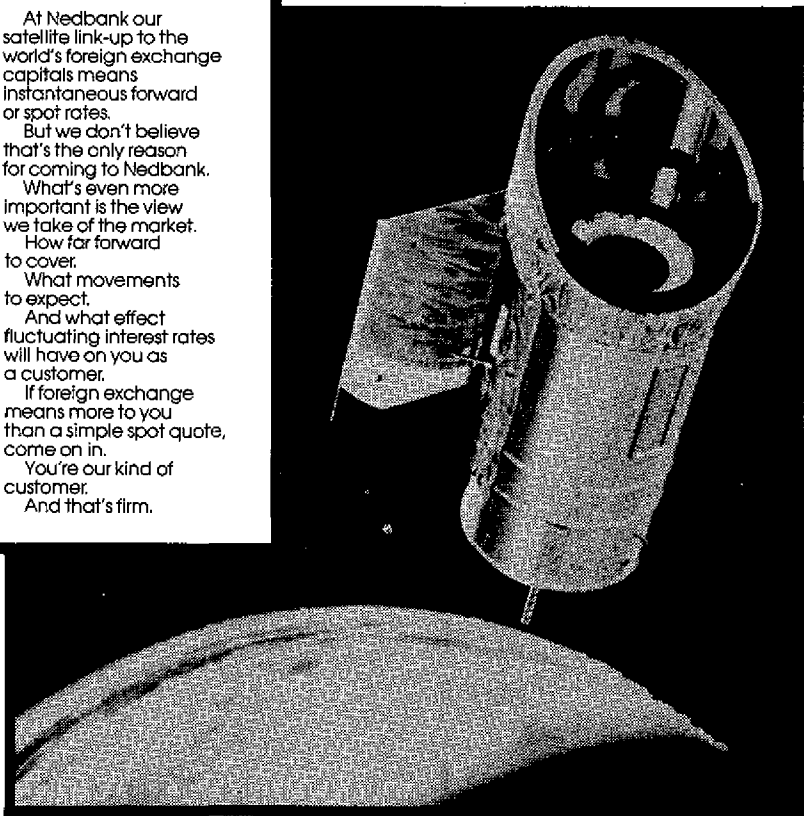
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AFRICA 1979: MYTHS, MIRACLES AND MIRRORS

Peter C.J. Vale

"I speak of Africa and golden joys"

Shakespeare; Henry IV

Most people tend to look upon political scholars, particularly those with a specialisation in international affairs, as sages, soothsayers or sangomas. This puts scholars always at a disadvantage, since very often they have no more information than the man in the street about what is happening in the political world; often they have less. As a result one should bear in mind that all scholars can do is give form and order to the political world in a highly subjective fashion and then ask that the readers make up their own minds. Moreover, the training and the tools of the scholar are limited and they can only knead the subject matter in accordance with these limitations.

A Year Of Fluidity: Some Miracles

To claim that 1979 has been a momentous year in the history of post-colonial Africa is probably premature; though the signs are encouraging. To claim, on the other hand, that the year has witnessed some fluidity in the political structures of Africa is probably closer to the truth: though, caution should be the watchword, however cumbersome the baggage of caution may be. To judge whether 1979, has been a watershed year — through this new fluidity — is a difficult poser, but it is the kind of question which needs to be responded to and this will be attempted in this brief paper.

It can be argued that domestic political developments in five separate African countries — Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Ghana and Nigeria — have moved the political soul of Africa along the path to what we, judging them from our Western standards, might regard as "enlightened". Our immediate response has been to applaud these events, to hope that they will provide the first steps along a journey which might terminate in the fulfilment of the great liberal dreams for the continent which, until very recently, were thought impossible. (The zenith of the ideal was, of course, the liberal democracy, especially the Westminster-variant thereof.) To make a series of perfunctory deductions of this kind is misleading for it ignores the real tensions which underpin political life all over the world, not only in Africa. For Africa, these ten-

sions arise primarily, though not exclusively, from three sources: the complexities of their pre-colonial history; the trauma of the colonial experience, and the frustrating pelmel of the international community into which African states have had to fit, or perish.

If one considers the ousting of the three dictators: Amin of Uganda, Nguema of Equatorial Guinea and Bokassa of the Central African Republic, a curious set of diverse circumstances are found to be at work. Amin and Bokassa both belong to what one might term "second generation" African leaders: those that came to power through military coups and who lived largely in the shadow of the events which gave rise to their power. Macias Nguema, on the other hand, is a "third generation" leader, who came to power through the ballot box when that country gained its independence from Spain in October 1968. Both Amin and Nguema ruled by absolute fear and genocide was a commonplace occurrence in the two countries: some 500 000 Ugandans are estimated to have been killed and some 300 000 Equatorial Guineans are estimated to have either been killed or to have fled in the 11 years of Nguema's dictatorship.⁺ Bokassa was not much better. Less notorious for acts of mass genocide, he, nonetheless, was personally involved in the massacre of 100 school children in April 1978, and is said to have led his troops in the beating up of vagrants and beggars of Bangui in 1972. All three cowed internal opposition, though ironically various combinations of internal opposition and exiled movements ultimately contributed to their respective downfalls. For Amin, the war with Tanzania and the rise of the Uganda National Liberation Front; for Bokassa, the rise of the external opposition under a former Prime Minister; for Nguema, domestic pressure and what was probably a palace coup.

All three, as a result of their excesses, ruined the infant economies of their respective countries, leaving in their wake an immense task of reconstruction. However, despite all these problems, they are now gone and, certainly for the people living in those countries, a type of miracle *might* have taken place. A reservation is however, that as we know, the situation in for example, Uganda, is today not a comfortable one. Ugandans are still losing their lives, and inflation — that most banal of all social indicators — is running at 200 percent. Quite clearly therefore, the task of reconstruction in all three states is immense and is not made easier by the ongoing confusion and uncertainty.

⁺But there is no way of verifying these figures

Changing Reactions

How does one judge the removal of these men in the ambit of political developments on the continent this year? It is too superficial to respond to their going like the *Daily News* of Tanzania did when it commented, on the fall of Nguema, that "it (was) part of the larger eclipse of all dictatorial regimes in Africa and elsewhere. The days of the Shahs, Amins, Somozas and the Marcias are numbered." One needs rather to look at the forces which kept men such as these in power, for it is here that one may find the true genesis of their authority. What is common in all three cases is the fact that patronage of one (or a number) of other states sustained them in their position. In Uganda it was, for example, the Western world, particularly the British, who, initially, welcomed Amin as a better political prospect than his predecessor and, despite the widespread publicity given to the regime, was his victualler almost to the end. In the case of Bokassa, it was almost certainly the French, for the relationship between Bokassa and Giscard d'Estaing was warm, even intimate. In Equatorial Guinea's case it was the close relationship between Franco Spain and Nguema which provided both his patronage and his shield.

This is the first of two common themes which emerge from the removal of these men and it needs to be expatiated on. For obvious reasons, the relationship between former colonies and the metropole country have been amicable simply as a matter of course. (The only possible exception in modern times was the churlishness of Sekou Toure who sent the vengeful French packing in the late fifties). For both sets of elites — the metropole elite and the colonial elite — the relationship has been a rewarding one, though, its exclusivity has possibly been the cause of a great deal of hardship, particularly in Africa since the decolonisation period. Firstly, it has largely alienated the average African peasant from the ruling elite and in so doing, helped to impoverish him thus hampering all round development. Secondly, it has created a sense of confidence in European capitals that their own position in these states was secured through the patronage which they were able to offer. The curious complementarity and collision of these two courses is obvious: in cases where the metropole has felt confident it has not — under the guise of the non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries rubric — sought to intervene and has only done so — like the French in the Central African Republic — when their own protégé was in danger of being unseated by uncertain pressures, pressures beyond their control. For the former colonies, and their rulers, the continued patronage of

the metropole has been both the course to, and cause of, power. Bilateral relations between African states and the former metropolises have, therefore, been predicated in this system of patronage which had limited the freedom of manoeuvre of both the indigenous political movement of the African people and of the metropolitan. As a result of this double bind it may be that the Bokassas, Amin and Nguemas have appeared to be the rule in recent years, rather than the exception.

However, it is uncomfortable to leave the analysis there, for the former colonial powers, too, have had legitimate fears that if they uncoupled their fortunes from these men, they were certain to be replaced by their chief international rivals, i.e. *the Soviets*, etc. (Moreover, of course, when push came to shove in Uganda, Amin played the Soviet card.) There was therefore, arguably, no other course for them to take.

We may be on the brink of some changes in this regard for two reasons. First, it is possible to argue that the level of bilateral relationships is in the process of being eroded and is being replaced by the growth of multilateral relations which, obviously, undermines the power of patronage which is unilaterally available. This is especially true in regard to Europe (read EC) where the chief vehicle for European relations with African states has become the Lomé Conventions Mark I and II. This particular relationship, to which we will return, is the most virulent form of economic association, but its cumulative effect has been to weaken the entrenched elites and it may also, through all-round exposure, weaken the exclusivity of purpose which a particular metropole held over political events in the former colonies, through opening up the process somewhat.

The second fact, which may seem to run counter to the first, is that the metropolises appear to be taking a more thoughtful and sophisticated approach to their former colonies. The political demise of each of these men appears to have been possible only when the former metropolises — under prompting or with the tacit support of certain key African countries — sought to pull the proverbial rug from under their feet. It seems almost as if there has been connivance, certainly consultation, along a far broader range of opinions than that previously available. What appears to have happened is that the minds of the two sides seem to have been operating along a similar tract. This latter point is both good and bad, since it is evidence of a continued involvement of the metropolises in African affairs of, perhaps, a more virile kind.

OAU Charter

This brings us logically to the other African states and their role in perpetuating these regimes, and this is the second major theme to be scrutinised for there appear to be common threads operative. A dual conditioning factor is in motion: the bilateral relations between African states and their multilateral association through the Organisation of African Unity. It is too facile to argue that African leaders each sustain their power (perhaps even cling to power) under the "we shall all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately" dictum. That each state reinforces the other and that the unwritten law of the OAU is to avoid divisive issues. (African states have been deeply divided on a number of issues from Biafra to dialogue or détente with the white South.)

A possible explanation for the behaviour of African States is that a central contradiction runs through African international politics which places them in a bind regarding their relations with each other, and this contradiction is embodied in the OAU Charter. This is the clash between Article III (the "principles" article) of the Charter — which sets out in essence the notion of "non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states", etc., and Article II (the "purposes" article) which endorses more universally accepted "values" such as "sovereignty", "territorial integrity", "human rights", etc. (This is not an exclusively African dilemma but one which is embodied in many international organizations, e.g. the UN.) However, African states in their efforts to keep the OAU as a viable organization, an organization which reflects their determination to co-operate, have been over-diligent in respect of the Principles Article at the expense of the Purposes Article. This has resulted in a reluctance to pursue the *purposes* of the organization to their logical conclusion. The result has been a hesitancy to move openly against other African states for fear of rupturing the Organization and thereby setting the clock of African co-operation back. As a result, other African states, for worse rather than for better, have been impotent to move against erring states like the three under consideration, although African opinion has, on the whole, been opposed to these states. For example, the *Daily News* (Kenya) — reflective of African opinion — had this to say of Nguema:

"His repressive rule started from the day he assumed office. His country has been dubbed 'the concentration camp of Africa', likened to the famous death camps of Auschwitz and Dachau in which hundreds of thousands of Jews lost their lives under Nazi rule."

So, notwithstanding their disdain for these rulers, fear of fracturing the fragile mechanism of African political co-operation has meant a reluctance to topple these men. (African unity has of course always operated under the patina of a fundamental compromise).

Here, thankfully, another turning point may have been reached. While it is true that the OAU condemned President Nyerere's position on Uganda at the most recent OAU Conference, what has happened — and this may be crucial — is that a precedent has now been established and it may be that the *purposes* of the Charter might come to dominate the *principles* question. (This opens, of course, an entirely new can of worms especially in regard to successionist movements on the continent.) Though its immediate effects seem to be that the OAU will not again be supine in the face of leaders of this kind. (As a footnote one should note that acrimony was especially high between Nigeria and Tanzania, but a probable explanation for this lies in the echoes of the Biafran situation which Tanzania's stand raised in the minds of the Nigerians.)

There can, of course, be no iron guarantee that the present or future course of African politics or any other politics, will not produce their fair share of Amins, Bokassas and Nguemas, though one can suggest that this combination of African apprehension and outside pressure will lead to a waning in the fortunes — political or other — of such adventurers.

Nigeria and Ghana: Important Symbols

A far more problematical set of questions is raised when one considers the transformations which have taken place this year in two countries, Nigeria and Ghana, from military dictatorships to democratic governments. Symbolically the two countries are, of course, very important: Nigeria because it is the largest and richest African country, and Ghana because it was the spiritual home of African Independence, it being the first country to gain independence in 1957. Evidence of outside pressure is, frankly, difficult to see and therefore there appears to be a *prima facie* case for stating that these transformations were generated by indigenous forces. The transformations, given the checkered post-independence paths of both countries, are events of great importance and both can, in this sense, be equated with the miraculous transformation of Spain after the death of Franco.

In Nigeria the hankering after a return to civilian rule has been a feature of government since the overthrow of General Gowon in 1975 and the military has set about this transformation in a purposeful and goal-orientated fashion. They closely

monitored the emergence of the political parties after 13 years and probably set the seal for the election of Mr Shagari and his right-of-centre National Party of Nigeria. While it is true that some muted noises were made during the elections which conjured up the spectre of old tribal affiliations in Nigeria, despite the re-drawing of the political map of the country, these were quickly doused by the military. Moreover, President Shagari's victory can in part be seen as evidence of the breakdown in tribal affiliations, for his party was the only one which managed to permeate throughout the country.

The transformation period was essentially a smooth one with General Obasanjo and the President-elect conferring almost daily. This probably bodes well for the future since the military have surrendered power soberly and, with their determination to do things well, are likely to ensure that the new experiment works out. The military have thus imposed democracy on the country. Moreover, blessed as the Nigerians are with considerable oil wealth, it may be possible to keep the favourable circumstances operative, though an important caveat is that astute economic management will be necessary, but Shagari's background looks, certainly on paper, as if he might appreciate this factor.

Ghana's transformation is far more dramatic, even romantic, and probably for these reasons is less assured of ultimate success than the Nigerian experiment. The roots of the Ghanaian transformation are to be found in the overthrow of General Acheampong in 1978 and his replacement by General Akuffo. A tentative lunge was made towards transferring the government to civilian rule and this may well have taken place had it not been for a junior officer movement which feared that, following the transfer of power, the military junta would retire taking their riches with them. The thrust of the junior officer objections was two-fold: firstly, that the military's prestige had taken a considerable knock and, secondly, that there was a country-wide need for some deeper social and economic justice. The junior officer movement was brought to a head after an abortive coup in May this year and after the government put the ring leader, Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings, on trial.

The trial mobilised widespread support for Rawlings throughout the country and goaded the junior officers into action once again. They sprung Rawlings from jail and, at the same time, successfully overthrew the government. Rawlings then set about trying to clean the country up — thus enacting one of the grievances of his supporters — and, in so doing, created an international uproar by executing both Acheampong and Akuffo and various others who had, in the opinion of what

seemed like kangaroo courts, been corrupt. Remarkably, however, Rawlings pressed ahead with the planned elections and transfer of power to a civilian government. As someone remarked, the Ghana election was unique, coming two weeks after a coup and two days after the new military leaders had demonstrated their power by executing a former head of state.

The probable key to an understanding of the post-election circumstances lies both in the personalities of Rawlings and of the new President, Dr Hilla Limann. Rawlings has stated that if the new government engaged in corruption it would be unseated and resisted and this surely means that the civilian performance will be closely monitored by the military, particularly these junior officers. In addition, Rawlings's actions have dramatically overthrown the traditional relationship between the civilians and the military and the traditional structures in the military itself. In retrospect the Rawlings coup can best probably be described as a rebellion against authority. These pressures, plus a crippled economy, face President Limann who achieved his victory by playing on the memory and dreams of Kwame Nkrumah.

For obvious reasons, one should perhaps be more cautious over the chances of success in Ghana than in Nigeria, at least one common theme emerges from both sets of circumstances. The military, a traditional source of political power in African states, have abdicated power and have set these two countries along a path of democracy — not of the one-party kind either. They have, moreover, set a precedent towards this end and, having wagered their respective reputations on the democratic solution, will be anxious to see it succeed. A second and minor observation is that there appears scant evidence, as suggested, that there was any outside involvement in these transformations. The acid test in both cases will, of course, be whether the military and the personalities involved can refrain from some political activity. Whether, for example, General Obasanjo will be content to “farm chickens” as he said he wants to, and whether Flight Lt. Rawlings will be content to fly aircraft. However, both transfers are important shifts and both will be anxiously watched by other states. Moreover, both are, judged from any point of view, small miracles.

Two Destructive Myths

Having dealt — however speciously — with some miracles, we need to address two myths which have grown vociferously in South Africa in recent years and which appear to have been nurtured by certain sections of the media. In essence, they are two

sides of the same coin for both deal with the ticklish issue of outside, particularly East/West, involvement in Africa. There is a growing chorus of voices which claim two complementary things:

- a) that the West has abandoned its options in Africa, or, if it has not abandoned them, then it certainly is so supine that it cannot restore them, and
- b) that Africa represents a political vacuum which, in the wake of the West's approach, is being filled by the Soviets. Both these positions are disturbing and destructive for ultimately both are intent on scoring not very subtle political points without trying to get to grips with understanding the complexities of the international world and political life in Africa.

If we examine the point about the West (and Western options) three factors are operative. Firstly it seems possible to agree that each of the miracles examined has broken in favour of the West. Either through Western involvement — in the fall of the dictatorships — or by default in the case of the transfers of power. Therefore, the West continues to either sway African opinion or, alternatively, to present a model to which African countries turn for political inspiration.

Secondly, there seems little doubt that Western (particularly American) influence is strong in certain key African countries — particularly Nigeria. This is not only a function of the West's need for Nigerian oil — though it obviously plays a role — but US diplomacy in Nigeria has been innovative, astute and highly motivated and thanks for this must go to that much maligned man, Andy Young, who has had the foresight to foster a Nigerian policy which is probably the envy of the Kremlin. Behind Young is the figure of Donald Easum, until recently US Ambassador in Lagos. The joint persuasiveness of these men and the willingness of the Nigerians to act as mediators in the Namibian issue have frequently brought that long standing embroglio closer to a settlement in recent years. The chain of pressure Washington/Lagos/Luanda/Swago cannot be underrated, and bears testimony to the ingenuity of Western policy-makers and Nigeria's willingness to be part of a force for conflict resolution throughout the continent.

Thirdly, and probably more important over the longer term, we have Western, particularly European, economic and trade links with Africa: or, the so-called Lomé nexus which was referred to earlier. This is a factor which for reasons best known to themselves, is often ignored by South African media, despite the fact that it touches, in a carom fashion, on some aspects of South

Africa's own foreign policy. This is not the place to enter into the fascinating history of EEC relations with the states of Africa, though it is important to highlight some of the main aspects of the new agreement. (The new agreement succeeds the first Lomé Convention which was signed in February 1975, and which itself succeeded the first two Yaoundé Conventions of 1963 and 1969.) The new Convention rests on four basic principles:

- Security: the convention runs for five years and it is legally binding;
- Equality between the two regional blocs, the ACP group and the EEC;
- The trade/aid package covers measures which are sufficiently wide to provide something for everybody;
- The convention is embodied in legal institutions of consultation and law-making which are a permanent feature of the relationship.

In purely cash terms this association is the most comprehensive trade and aid agreement of all times outside of colonialism between two sets of regional states and it means that the EEC is obligated to absorb some \$15-billion worth of imports from the African, Caribbean and Pacific states (the so-called ACP group), per annum. In addition per annum, the EEC, through the Lomé Convention, provides the ACP group of states with aid running at \$850-million. (Under the Lomé II accord, these figures will be boosted somewhat.) Regretfully one cannot enter into the real debate on the political economy of this relationship which can, depending where one stands, be seen as the most sophisticated form of neo-colonialism or, alternatively, the only working outcome of the realities of international trade (and its distribution) and an act of great generosity on the part of the EEC.

The central point to be made is that the West, through the EEC, is intensely involved in a far-ranging functional relationship with almost every African state. As a composite package, Lomé far outweighs anything the "other side" can offer the states of Africa: either bilaterally or multilaterally through its own economic grouping, Comecon. The four principles upon which it rests represent an apogee of co-operation and provide the Western world with a valuable inroad into creating stability in Africa and into pursuing their own form of influence in the continent, (whether for good or evil).

To analyse Soviet involvement in Africa is a hazardous undertaking for it is a subject apparently shrouded in arcane intentions — which few have bothered to identify; it is a subject based on

misperception and a subject highly charged with emotion. To try to encapsulate its ebbs and flows in a few brief comments is obviously an impossible task, so it is perhaps best to concentrate on two dimensions: one of a theoretical nature and the other with more mundane roots. First, on the general level of theory, there can be little doubt that the Soviet Third World policy is grounded on opportunism. (It is not a factor unique to the Kremlin. Indeed, looked at from any perspective, opportunism plays an important role in any foreign policy.) This being so, any instability in the Third World is utilised by the Soviets in an effort to promote their interests: economic, political, social or ideological. In areas of extreme instability, like the Horn of Africa, Soviet foreign policy is adventurous, even daring. The risks which they take are often out of proportion to the gains which they expect to achieve, and as a result their policy shows a candour which, judged from our perspective, is remarkable. In retrospect, however, the true policy emerges as petulant, highly unstable and, apart from the pursuit of the lodestar — the world domination theory, cannot be regarded as a success. Witness in recent years the vicissitudes of the Soviets in the Horn of Africa and the continuing inability of the Soviets (or the Cubans) to stabilise the situation in Angola. Moreover, one is continually reminded, in thinking on this problem, of Raymond Aron's telling indictment in his study *Peace and War*, that:

"The African Republic may be converted to the new faith when governed by converts, but it is not subject to the same pressures, exposed to the same sanctions, as the satellites near the temporal and spiritual capital. States which become people's republics or socialist democracies in Africa or South America, have not been restrained by the Soviet Union, as Poland and Hungary are still, they are not alienated to the same degree from their own autonomy."

South Africa's own working relationship with the People's Republic of Mocambique demonstrates the validity of Aron's observation.

On a more superficial level, the Soviet Union faces an uncertain economic and political future and this will inhibit their capacity to fulfil their global aspirations. Economically impoverished and facing an uncertain political future with the age and illness of Party Leader, Leonid Brezhnev, the imponderable fortunes of the Eighties will, looked at from this perspective, be as uncertain for the Soviets as it will be for all States. Africa's global position (and the role of the Soviets in Africa) will be contingent on how the Soviets can manage their own affairs. It is true this analysis lends itself to the most challenging of refutations. The

central point is, however, that in placing the discourse of Africa's future in the parameters of the East/West debate, one tends — almost by definition — to overlook Africa's own chronically impoverished position and really avoid seeing the wood for the trees. Africa's central problem, as Robin Hallet has said, is economic, not political.

Mirrors and a Lesson for South Africa

What now of the third theme of this paper — mirrors? Quite obviously, one need look no further than the development of events in both Rhodesia and Namibia to appreciate the lessons for South Africa. The day-to-day events in those countries represent a lesson to all South Africans of any persuasion and need not detain us here. One of a number of common themes to emerge from both these struggles, *viz.* the nature of the post-decolonization economic dispensation can be speculated on. In both one sees an impoverished majority facing the political determination of a (relatively-speaking) rich minority to retain power and wealth. Both the claims of the Patriotic Front and Swapo appear to rest fundamentally on the fact that the existing constitutional proposals for a resolution of the two conflicts, do not come to grips with the need to establish an orderly and purposeful path to the transfer — or, put more correctly, redistribution — of economic wealth in these countries. In this sense, both those conflicts and the conflict for power in South Africa are conflicts for economic power. The extremities of the various positions is in direct proportion to how far removed this central economic question is from the agenda at any of the talks so far.

While it might be true that the leaders of Swapo and the Patriotic Front — as we are reminded so often — seek power for power's sake, equally those wishing to retain wealth seek it for the sake of wealth alone. There appears in this hiatus to be no way to bridge the gap between the two sides. In Zimbabwe Rhodesia, the war may go on in a frightening spiral of conflict which threatens, if it were to deteriorate much further, to engulf the entire sub-continent. In Namibia, the conflict itself is still at a nascent stage, but will, if the two sides do not manage to make concessions, escalate at a rapid pace. The West has, through its efforts in London, and through the endeavours of the so-called "Gang of Five", put a tremendous amount of prestige behind the search for peace in these two states. Their motives for doing so are complex, resting of course on their own fears for their interests in the region. If they fail in either situation, their prestige will have suffered, and the tensions will geometrically increase.

It appears naïve to believe that the West will push either of the sides in the two conflicts into a serious discourse on how, if at all, wealth is to be redistributed in these countries. The mechanisms for the transfer of wealth in Western societies themselves have such complex historical roots and, arguably, this re-allocation of wealth has not yet been accomplished. How then, one can legitimately ask, should they intervene in this process in these two countries? All that they can be asked to do is to present a series of constitutional alternatives and to try to bridge the gap by presenting various permutations of these proposals in trying to find a satisfactory outcome. However, and this is the central point of the argument, it may be that these proposals are sterile because they really do not go to the heart of the issue which is the question of wealth and its redistribution.

It is here that the most important lesson for South Africa lies. As another much maligned man, David Owen, reminded us during his visit to South Africa in 1979: "The real debate on South Africa's future is concerned with the redistribution of the country's wealth." It may be that if South Africans begin the debate on this question in earnest, they may avoid the reflective pitfalls we now see so glaringly mirrored in Rhodesia and Namibia.

This impressionistic paper has relied on broad and unrelated brushstrokes, and is obviously weakened as a result. However, we live in Africa and our destiny lies here; that the path to peace will be an easy one is not possible but we should make every effort to understand Africa fully. We constantly confuse ourselves by relying on stereotype interpretations of African events. We look too much, like the witch in Snow White, into the mirror asking (and believing) that we are the fairest of all, and not seeing that our views are conditioned, like those of the witch, by some myths, and this blinds us to a few important miracles.

AFTER BREZHNEV : WHO, AND WHAT?

Robin Knight

President Leonid Brezhnev's latest bout of ill health — at least his third this year — has again reminded the world that an era of unparalleled political stability in the Soviet Union is drawing rapidly to a close.

In mid-December Brezhnev turns 73 and everyone of his closest colleagues is similarly aged. Prime Minister Alexei Kosy-

gin is 75; chief theoretician Mikhail Suslow is 77; Brezhnev's number two in the Communist Party hierarchy, Andrei Kirilenko, is 73; Defence Minister Dmitri Ustinov is 71. Even Konstantin Chernenko, so often depicted as the Kremlin's rising star, is 68. Today the average age of the 14-man ruling Politburo is actually 70 years 1 month.

Clearly this situation cannot last for ever. Its interest now lies not only in what it tells us about the extraordinarily stable and cohesive system Brezhnev has constructed over the past fifteen years, but also in how it foreshadows the complete transformation of the present Soviet leadership during the next five years or so.

Before beginning a discussion about who and what may follow Brezhnev, one point ought to be made — from the inside, as it were — though living in Moscow as a foreigner hardly produces that feeling — which is: that no one in the Western world, and probably no one in the Communist bloc either, currently has any clear idea based on facts about what is likely to happen when Brezhnev departs. It is all “informed speculation”.

Compared with the days when Nikita Krushchev used to descend on Moscow diplomatic receptions to pontificate on any subject that occurred to him, including the leadership, today's Soviet leaders are bland, highly secretive and inaccessible. Less is known about the inner workings of the Kremlin in the 1970s even than in Stalin's time. To get a party official, however lowly, to discuss the future leadership is harder than to get him to talk about military affairs. It is simply not done.

This is not to say that hints are not dropped here and there from time to time. The Soviets' attachment to protocol at official functions often shows how people are moving up and down; the endless photographs of Soviet leaders meeting guests at airports and railway stations is another pointer. The choice of speakers at important Communist Party (CPSU) events is a third, and rumours originating from East European sources are a fourth. Who Brezhnev chooses to accompany him on trips abroad is a fifth, while diplomatic gossip is a sixth. One could go on. Kremlinology — or the piecing together of such fragments to make a whole — has become somewhat discredited in the West in recent years, but working in Moscow one finds it still remains the best analytical tool available, even if its limitations are more widely understood than they were in Stalin's time. Given these qualifications, what is likely to happen when Brezhnev finally leaves the scene?

How Brezhnev goes

A crucial issue will be how Brezhnev goes. If he dies in office one scenario is more likely than another. If he is pushed out, or pushed upstairs into an honorific, powerless post, a second set of possibilities opens up. At this stage the likeliest situation seems to be a continuation of the present one — that is, slow gradual decline culminating in his death in office. So many “opportunities” for Brezhnev to retire with honour have been passed up in recent years — the 25th CPSU Congress in 1976; Brezhnev’s 70th birthday the same year; the 60th anniversary celebrations of the 1917 Revolution in 1977 — that the only plausible conclusion is that Brezhnev wants to hang on to the bitter end. His colleagues, too, must have concurred in this development since it is apparent that Brezhnev is now shouldering far less of the Kremlin’s day-to-day work, and letting others do more. Given the past ruthlessness of top Soviet politics, the probable explanation for this is that a collective decision has been taken to tamper with the existing power structure as little as possible for as long as possible.

Yet common-sense argues that Brezhnev may eventually become too feeble to continue in his present role and so be forced to retire, at least from his job as General Secretary of the CPSU. An opportunity to do so gracefully will occur sometime in 1980-81 when the 26th Congress of the CPSU is scheduled. Still, precedent is firmly against such a development. To date no Soviet leader of Brezhnev’s stature has ever given up his position voluntarily.

The future, in fact, is fraught with dangers and uncertainties for every single member of today’s Politburo. On paper, at least, there has been no more baffling or uncertain situation in the Kremlin since Stalin died twenty-six years ago. Younger men in the pyramidal power structure which leads up from the 287-man Central Committee through the powerful executive Secretariat into the Politburo may well be frustrated by the lack of opportunity to advance which has been so characteristic of the top echelons of the CPSU in the 1970s. But prudence and history dictate caution in a situation where the Brezhnev coterie still controls all the levers of power. So until the actual moment of Brezhnev’s departure, however that occurs, it is unlikely that the outside world will see any visible sign of the jostling for power which today, in all probability, is going on behind closed doors in the Kremlin.

The contrast with Brezhnev’s succession in 1964 could not be greater. Looking back now it is clear that the Politburo at the time was deeply divided on policy matters. Khrushchev’s per-

sonality upset many of his associates. The humiliation of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 was still fresh in the minds of the military, which was also at odds with Khrushchev over other issues. Many party officials had been scandalized by some of Khrushchev's more hair-brained reforms, particularly ones which reduced their powers. At the same time Brezhnev stood out — as the designated number two, the man with wide experience, the obvious future leader with supporters in all the right places. He was Russian, young enough to have a future, yet old enough in a system which respects age, to be well regarded.

There is, however, no similar situation today. However hard one peers into the murky mists surrounding the Kremlin it is impossible to detect signs of competing power groups or real policy differences. At the same time Brezhnev has pointedly refrained from grooming a successor. Preferring to govern by achieving consensus within the Politburo, and apparently conscious even now of the need to appease potential opponents, he has carefully avoided anything smacking of factionalism. One of the more curious and revealing aspects of Soviet politics in the 1970s has been the way one possible future leader after another — Alexander Shelepin, Dimtri Polyansky, Kyril Mazurov, Fedor Kulakov — has fallen by the wayside, while old-timers with no future, like Arvid Pelshe, now 80, have been kept on.

No succession mechanism

Equally important to realise is the fact that there is still no agreed mechanism in the Soviet system for changing leaders, sixty-two years after the 1917 Revolution. In the past each succession — there have been only three — has been determined largely by the circumstances at the time. Neither Lenin nor Stalin succeeded in designating his successor: perhaps that is why Brezhnev has not tried to, in public at least. Moreover each past leadership transition has been a lengthy process. It was only in 1934, ten years after Lenin's death, that Stalin could claim with certainty to have reached the top. In Khrushchev's case it was not until 1957, and the failure of a plot to overthrow him, that he clearly became pre-eminent four years after Stalin died. And Brezhnev's supremacy dates from 1969-70 — after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, and after he had faced down a challenge from Alexsei Kosygin.

The protracted nature of every Soviet succession to date would also seem to suggest that no one factor is decisive. On the other hand, despite repeated efforts to construct a "collective" leadership, on each occasion one man has eventually emerged alone at the top.

Partly this reflects something basic in the Soviet system — the way all contentious matters are shifted upwards for decision. The logical consequence is that in time decision-making imperatives determine that one person — usually the General Secretary of the CPSU — acquires greater influence than all others. But in addition, the nature of Soviet society with its insistent projection of the virtues of its leaders, sooner or later pushes one man forward. Many Russians, too, argue that the only way such a vast, disparate country can be held together and marched in the same general direction, is by concentrating the attention of party and government officials, as well as the masses, behind a single individual. This centralism is also something very much in the tradition of Russian history, pre-dating the 1917 Revolution by at least 150 years.

Status Factors

Having said that, there are some factors which seem more important than others in achieving the sort of status Brezhnev has enjoyed in the 1970s.

Past precedent and present realities indicate, for example, that control of — or at least the tacit support of — the KGB (state security police) and the armed forces is vital. Such backing will not automatically guarantee pre-eminence since support within the Politburo and the Communist Party bureaucracy are just as important, but without such backing no leadership candidate can hope to succeed.

Being the right age — probably in one's early to mid 60s — is another important qualification, since the verdict of the past is that it takes time to establish a dominant influence within the Politburo. It is also part of the record that most Soviet leaders who do reach the top stay there for a decade or more.

This reasoning points to a man — there are currently no women at all in the senior echelons of the CPSU — ten to fifteen years younger than Brezhnev as having the best chance to make a bid for the leadership. Malenkov, Stalin's designated heir, was twenty years younger than his boss, while Khrushchev — the eventual successor — was fourteen years younger. In his turn Khrushchev had three successive deputies, fourteen, fourteen and twelve years younger than himself.

Nationality is a third vital consideration, one better understood today by living in the USSR than by rational analysis outside. In recent years Great Russian chauvinism has been on the march and nowhere has this been more obvious than in the political sphere. Today it is inconceivable that a Georgian, like Stalin, could head the CPSU. During the 1970s Russians have been

installed in the key jobs of Second Secretaries — important because they are directly responsible for ensuring that Kremlin directives are carried out, and for reporting back to Moscow on local political developments — in all fourteen of the non-Russian Republics of the USSR, including the Ukraine which, until 1976, had been independent and powerful enough to escape this fate. With Russians likely to become a numerical minority in the Soviet Union sometime during the reign of Brezhnev's successor, this is not the moment to expect a non-Russian to dominate Soviet politics.

Possession of the vital job of General Secretary of the Communist Party, plus broad support within the CPSU, and as wide experience as possible in internal and external affairs, are three other important necessities.

It can be asserted with safety that no one can hope to succeed Brezhnev who does not also aspire to win his job as General Secretary of the CPSU. Khrushchev is the supreme example of this truism of Soviet life — a man who ranked number five in the Soviet hierarchy after Stalin's death, but a man who realised that control of the party apparatus in Soviet conditions means control of the country. Brezhnev, too, understood this reality well; more than any other single factor it was his clever manipulation of party cadres in the 1960s which ensured his later pre-eminence.

At the same time it is necessary to have broad support, or a "tail", within the CPSU — supporters and colleagues who have worked with one at all levels on the way up. Today Brezhnev is surrounded by such people — the so-called Dnepropetrovsk Mafia, named after a city which played a central role in Brezhnev's early rise. Any future leader is likely to need the same kind of backing in order to manipulate the party machine to best advantage. This points, therefore, to a man who has risen through the provincial party network but who now resides and works at the centre in Moscow.

On this argument those Politburo members totally dependent on Brezhnev — like Chernenko, Dinmukhamed Kunaev and Vladimir Shcherbitsky — start at a serious disadvantage once their patron leaves the scene. So, too, do provincial party bosses like Grigory Romanov (Leningrad), and again Vladimir Shcherbitsky (Ukraine) and Kunaev (Kazakhstan) who have had little chance to sway party bureaucrats in the Secretariat and Central Committee offices located in Moscow. And individuals like Yuri Andropov (head of the KGB), Dimitri Ustinov (Defence Minister), and Andrei Gromyko (Foreign Minister) all suffer from the narrowness of their background, as, primarily, government offi-

cial. This criticism also applies to Chernenko, who has no known record in provincial party work.

The experience factor is harder to assess. From the outside a modern Soviet leader, given the hierarchical nature of decision-making in the CPSU, really ought to have a broad knowledge of foreign affairs, military matters, party organisation, the economy and agriculture. Some higher education would seem to be essential. In reality, because of Brezhnev's conscious policy of not grooming a successor, none of the "younger" candidates — men in their mid 60s — have this sort of background today. Several older possibilities such as Kosygin, Suslov and Kirilenko do fit the bill, but only Kirilenko now seems robust enough to stand the strain of the top job.

Using the above criteria — relationships with the KGB and armed forces; age; nationality; CPSU support; experience at the top — the unfortunate conclusion is that none of the existing Politburo, from which Brezhnev's successor is virtually certain to emerge, is well qualified to lead the USSR in the 1980s.

On age grounds alone, Kosygin (76 in February), Pelshe (81 in February), Kirilenko (73), Gromyko (70), Suslov (77) and Ustinov (71), would be no more than stop-gaps. And on nationality grounds, Gromyko (Byelorussian), Kunaev (Kazakh), Pelshe (Latvian), and Shcherbitsky (Ukrainian) also seemed ruled out.

The next possibility, somewhat increased by assessments like the one above, is that no single individual will succeed Brezhnev. As time has passed, with no apparent moves being made to prepare for the future, this has seemed increasingly the likeliest outcome after Brezhnev goes.

Again, precedent is worth examining. After Stalin's death a troika of Malenkov, Beria and Molotov initially assumed power. When Khrushchev was deposed he, too, was succeeded at first by three men — Brezhnev as head of the CPSU, Kosygin as head of the government, and Nikolai Podgorny as titular head of state.

Today, having combined the jobs of head of state, chief of the armed forces, and leader of the party, Brezhnev has created a situation where his successor, if he is able to step directly into his shoes, could theoretically maximise his authority more quickly than in the past. More likely, however, is that Brezhnev's jobs will be divided once he goes, as happened after Khrushchev's downfall. It is even conceivable that Brezhnev could stay on as head of state while yielding his post as CPSU General Secretary, since this is a situation where the players are making up the rules as the game proceeds.

Possible Candidates For Leadership

What can be said about the various individuals who seem likeliest to inherit Brezhnev's mantle? In order of possible future importance, they looked like this as 1979 ended.

Kirilenko, Andrei Pavlovich (born September 8th 1906). Actually three months older than Brezhnev, Kirilenko is a long-standing associate of the Soviet leader and has been his deputy in the CPSU hierarchy throughout the 1970s. An aviation engineer by training, Kirilenko first attracted attention as boss of the important industrial centre of Sverdlovsk. He became a full Politburo member in 1962.

Russian by nationality, he rarely meets Westerners resident in Moscow and has no personal knowledge of the West. Best known for his remark in 1976 that it is "good" that in the Soviet Union 70 "is only considered middle age", he appears robust and healthy. Yet his age, and his failure to be confirmed formally as Brezhnev's heir, places question marks over his future. So, too, does the emergence of Konstantin Chernenko in the last three years as a rival for power within the CPSU. And this year Kirilenko has suffered one obvious setback when a protégé, Yuri Ryabov, was removed from the CPSU Secretariat and another possible blow when a picture of Soviet leaders was doctored to exclude him. Clearly, the longer Brezhnev hangs on, the weaker become Kirilenko's chances of succeeding him.

Chernenko, Konstantin Ustinovich (born September 24th 1911). In the normally staid world of the Kremlin, Chernenko is a phenomenon — a man who rocketed from being a personal aide to Brezhnev until 1977, to full Politburo membership a year later. As such he has to be taken seriously. Yet there are numerous question marks over his future, particularly his ability to survive politically once Brezhnev departs.

Apparently of Russian peasant origin — (though his name is Ukrainian and he grew up in the Ukraine) — Chernenko lacks the regional party experience and industrial management background that has helped so many other Soviet leaders to rise to the top. But he has Brezhnev's ear, is the only Politburo member also involved in the day-to-day affairs of the Secretariat — which gives him wide influence — is thought to have a central role in determining key party reports, and accompanies Brezhnev on all major international occasions such as the meeting with President Carter in Vienna this summer.

The harsh truth is, however, that since 1917 no Soviet leader has managed to anoint his successor, and if Brezhnev is outlasted by men like Suslov and Kosygin, it seems improbable it will happen this time either. More likely, Chernenko's current

prominence is directly related to Brezhnev's growing frailties — as a man who can stand in when needed, handle chores, protect his chief, and so on.

Suslov, Mikhail Andreevich (born November 21st 1902) and *Kosygin*, Aleksei Nikolaevich (born February 21st 1904) rate as the two most senior and influential Politburo members after Brezhnev. As such they appear certain to influence the shape and style of any new leadership, providing they are still in power when the changeover occurs.

Neither is keen to replace Brezhnev directly — Suslov rejected the leading party position back in 1964 in order to retain control of ideological affairs and, at 77, is in failing health. Kosygin has tried to retire several times in the last three years and is also in variable health following successive heart attacks.

Andropov, Yuri Vladimirovich (born June 15th 1914). Head of the KGB since 1967, Andropov actually has one of the widest backgrounds of any of the “younger” members of the Politburo. People who have met him describe him as a complex person, who, on occasions, has seemed almost “liberal” in the Kremlin context.

Russian by birth, Andropov first achieved prominence as Soviet Ambassador to Hungary at the time of the 1956 uprising. He, too, is not known to have visited the West. Between 1957-67 he was closely associated with Suslov when responsible for CPSU relations with other ruling Communist parties. In a contested succession his ties with both Suslov and other Brezhnev appointees in the Politburo might be an asset. But fear of a KGB takeover of the party, plus the damage to the Soviet Union's international image resulting from such a mans' reaching the top, weakens his chances.

Romanov, Grigori Vasilevich (born February 7th 1923). The youngest Politburo member, now ages 56, Romanov has little chance of directly succeeding Brezhnev, but if, a collective leadership is formed, he could well be part of it.

Now party boss of Leningrad, Romanov has a background in industry and has risen rapidly. Tough and peppery, he is known to be a hardliner on East-West relations and human rights issues. He is not thought to be a close Brezhnev associate. While time is on his side, at present he lacks national experience, and he must overcome the mistrust of Leningraders which has prevailed in Moscow since the 1920s.

Shcherbitsky, Vladimir Vasilevich (born February 17th 1918) heads the Ukrainian party organisation and, on his record, is among the ablest members of the ruling elite. A close Brezhnev associate, he suffers from being Ukrainian and from being

based out of Moscow. He has frequently been spoken of as a possible successor to Kosygin as Head of the Government.

Grishin, Viktor Xanovich (born September 18th 1914) has belonged to the Politburo since 1971 and heads the Moscow party organisation. As such he is playing a central role in preparations for the 1980 Olympics and has already warned Muscovites to beware of ideological contamination from the 300,000 Westerners expected to visit the city next July.

If things go well next year Grishin, a Russian, stands to move up as a transitional figure acceptable to others in the Politburo. In this case the post of General Secretary of the CPSU, rather than any other, seems his likeliest destination. If the Olympics backfire, however, he is the man likeliest to pay the price. A colourless, strictly orthodox apparatchik, Grishin commands little widespread popularity even in Moscow.

Of the remainder of the present Politburo, both Ustinov and Gromyko are potential Prime Ministers given their lengthy experience inside the government machine. Pelshe and Kunaev however seem to be at a dead end.

Beside the fourteen members of the Politburo, virtually the only people with any real chance of influencing decisions about the future leadership of this nation of 262 million people are the six non-voting members of the Politburo, the four Secretaries of the CPSU Central Committee who do not also have Politburo rank, and the 287 members of the Central Committee. Probably the best the latter can hope for, however, is to be consulted individually.

This appears to be and is an extremely elitist situation. Nevertheless, the 25-man grouping above the Central Committee does include the heads of all major state and party bodies in the USSR, party bosses of all the bigger Republics as well as the cities of Moscow and Leningrad, the head of the government bureaucracy, the chiefs of the armed forces and secret police, and the men who are charged with putting party directives into practice — in short, very nearly everybody who counts in the modern Soviet Union.

Moreover, the recent history of the USSR suggests that a degree of lobbying and discussion will go on behind the scenes before Brezhnev's successor(s) emerges; Brezhnev himself was the choice of his peers. A military-backed coup, or an attempt by one faction to impose a leader by force, is probably less likely now than at any other time in Soviet history.

The KGB's Influence

Against this, the machinery of terror remains virtually intact

in the Soviet Union today. Any sufficiently ruthless schemer able to secure KGB-military backing, in theory could still turn the clock back in an attempt to consolidate his position. Such a move nowadays would probably have a disastrous impact on the increasingly sophisticated Soviet economy, but when the prize has been great enough Soviet politicians have never been noted for their restraint.

If it is difficult to be sure who will succeed Brezhnev, or how the succession will occur, there is far more certainty about the policy implications of his departure. In short, few profound changes are in view. Perhaps the major reason for this assessment is the legacy Brezhnev will bequeath to his successors. It may be too much to say that Brezhnev has legitimized the Soviet system and ensured its permanence, but it cannot be doubted that he has had a profound impact which should comfortably outlast him.

There is, first of all, his style of leadership with its emphasis on loyalty, stability, consensus, and performance. Personalities still count — witness the fate of ambitious pretenders to the throne, like Shelepin, earlier in the 70s. Brezhnev has accomplished what once seemed impossible under Soviet conditions — permitting the 140 regional party chiefs who really run the country a degree of autonomy and responsibility, freedom to run their fiefdoms as they see best and, within limits, an end to fear for their personal safety.

One result of this is that Brezhnev will leave behind him a much more conservative, mature unrevolutionary society — certainly far more self-confident but, equally, much less susceptible to change. He will also hand on a number of policies in agriculture, industrial investment, military expenditure and foreign affairs which will be hard, if not impossible, to alter in the 1980s. And he will bequeath what is probably the most inert, largest and unresponsive bureaucracy in the world — none of which points to substantial change.

Assuming that most of the present Politburo survive him, Brezhnev's policies — or those decided under his stewardship — will also probably endure because so many of the current leadership are so closely identified with them. At least half of today's Politburo owe their prominence to Brezhnev. Given the innate conservatism of Russian life, one doubts whether these men will repudiate Brezhnev when he is gone, unless real disaster looms.

Nor does it seem reasonable to expect, as do many analysts in the West, that younger CPSU officials — men in their 50s today — will be markedly different in outlook to their predecessors. Radicalism and unorthodoxy are simply prescriptions for obli-

vion in the modern USSR. Instead it is loyalty and orthodoxy to the party that enable people to get ahead, plus the right connections and the avoidance of mistakes. By and large, too, party officials continue to have remarkably little contact with the non-Communist world, unlike their counterparts in commerce and industry. The latter, it is true, are a far more sophisticated group than formerly, but they are not the ones likely to inherit political power.

The changes in policy that do seem possible after Brezhnev are actually far from reassuring. Particularly in the human rights field — which encompasses emigration, press freedom, cultural life, workers' rights, legal accountability of officials, and so on — a tightening up seems much more likely than a loosening of the screw.

Historically this has always been the case during leadership transition phases. Brezhnev himself, for all his benign image as the architect of detente, has in fact been as tough as any Soviet leader, bar Stalin, where internal dissent is concerned. Moreover, during uncertain periods the influence of the military — never liberal — tends to rise, and there are fewer party curbs on KGB activity. Indeed, forever dogged by that curious Russian combination of a massive inferiority complex and an arrogant ruthlessness, Soviet Communists invariably tend to crackdown hard when under internal and external pressure. It is not for nothing that Moscow's dissident community now regards the post-Brezhnev period with undisguised concern.

For the West the chances are that the new Soviet leadership will, for a time, be more awkward to deal with while it consolidates its position at home. Numerous military negotiations, like SALT-3, the European force reduction talks, and more marginal matters such as discussions over Indian Ocean demilitarization, will probably stall for a time. Generally, a loss of momentum is likely in all East-West dealings with the Soviets.

Against this, few radical changes of direction in foreign affairs are likely in the longterm. Whilst the concept of detente is associated with Brezhnev he has always been careful to take potentially reluctant colleagues, like Suslov and Ustinov, with him. Arguments will go on for ever about the existence or otherwise of "hawks" and "doves" in the Politburo; all one can report after three years' Kremlin-watching is that the differences, if they exist at all, are minute. The distinction usually is between tough and super-tough.

The Soviets In Africa After Brezhnev

Where does this leave Soviet policy toward Africa? Briefly,

equally strong argument favours no basic changes.

Ideology notwithstanding, the backbone of Soviet foreign policy today, as for many years past, is pragmatism and opportunism. The new Soviet leadership will inherit a situation where gains on the African continent in the past five years far outweigh losses. The argument "Why change a winning formula?" will be difficult to rebut.

Secondly, the chances are that the Kremlin now expects further gains in Africa whatever happens, based on the existence of three genuinely pro-Moscow regimes on the continent — (Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia) — and the example they will hopefully provide for other African states. From the Kremlin's viewpoint this is a marked improvement from the days when the Soviets had to rely on wishy-washy Socialist governments to demonstrate the efficacy of Marxist policies.

Thirdly, Africa is cheap — and domestic economic constraints are going to place greater limits on what the new Soviet leadership can do abroad in the 1980s. Taken together these two factors indicate that the Kremlin will continue involving itself in a part of the world that costs it relatively little but gains it immeasurable propaganda kudos in the Third World.

Finally there is the negative argument — what is the alternative to existing policies? For Moscow to get out of Africa now would be to undercut the Soviets' cherished superpower status, to trouble vulnerable allies like the Afghans and possibly push them into neutrality, and to appear to ditch a cause (black liberation in Southern Africa) just at the point where Soviet backing is vital.

Once Brezhnev goes, trouble is in fact likeliest inside the Soviet bloc itself, in Eastern Europe. Within four years of gaining power, both Brezhnev and Khrushchev faced major crises in the Soviet empire. Today the situation in Poland, especially, is every bit as troublesome, and soon Moscow will also have to decide how to handle the post-Tito era in Yugoslavia. For the most part Brezhnev has been content since 1968 to allow East European leaders to work out their problems their own way, always providing the central role of the Communist Party was not endangered. Another leader might well reject this laissez-faire approach particularly if, as could be the case in Yugoslavia, local factions encourage Soviet intervention.

To sum up, the Soviet Union will very soon be in a transitional period that could well last throughout the 1980s, before another pre-eminent leader emerges. In the meantime a form of collective leadership is probable, meaning less certainty of direction, more political in-fighting, and less room for manoeuvre in inter-

national dealings with Soviet leaders, each one of whom will be more inclined than now to look over his shoulder. Indeed, it could well be that in a few years' time the rest of the world will look back on the Brezhnev era almost with nostalgia.

THE ARABS IN AFRICA: ISLAMIC PHILANTHROPY OR PETRO-COLONIALISM?

Philip Frankel

When twenty-first century analysts look back on international developments in the 1970's they are bound to be impressed by the fact that this was a period which saw the partial displacement of an already-eroding East-West political and ideological "iron curtain" as the major division in mankind by a curtain of poverty separating the world's rich and poor nations along an alternative North-South geographic axis. Commentators concerned more specifically with African events will doubtlessly characterise the decade as one where new states shed the pristine innocence of the first heady years of independence to move ahead in a politically disjointed and inappropriately slow fashion to address the massive problems of underdevelopment, both by cultivating closer associations with the world's poor in their struggle to reconstitute the international economic order and by intensifying linkages with important global actors with a view to attracting their sympathies and, more concretely, their resources, to the socio-economic problems facing the continent.

Arab Challenge

In both of these areas African states have watched the challenge posed to the developed world by the oil-exporting Arab countries since the early seventies with growing interest, not only because petroleum-related wealth in Arab coffers is seen as a potential reservoir of assistance to African and other Third World countries in meeting their pressing developmental needs, but also because of the particular complex of cultural, political and economic ties which have, for better and often worse, bound Arabs to the black continent for centuries. The new oil-rich Arab states, it should be borne in mind, have resonated since ancient times on the cultural and economic life of the African continent, particularly that of the East coast states, and today no less than two-thirds of the population of the Arab world lives on African

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soil — depending on the criteria one employs to define this complex social category. About a quarter of Africa's population is Arab — again depending on one's criteria of Arabism — and millions of Africans have adopted the Islamic faith as an alternative to both traditional religions with their increasingly redundant symbolisms in the modern world, and to Christianity with its long-standing colonial associations. Eight Arab states are members of the Organisation of African Unity and, as advocates of intensified Afro-Arab contacts are apt to point out, the Arab states are still underdeveloped countries, despite their recent accumulation of wealth, with stakes not dissimilar to those of the Africans in the reconstitution of the international economic order. The track record of OPEC relations with Third World countries also lends weight to African Arabophiles who have taken note of OPEC's 1975 refusal to negotiate with industrialised countries on energy questions in the absence of other raw materials being included on the agenda, of fairly consistent OPEC support for the convening of special sessions of the United Nations to consider a new international economic order, and of the fact that OPEC states have already committed over 5% of their combined gross domestic product to development assistance, i.e. an amount about 15 times proportionately higher than that of industrialised countries, although with an average per capita income of around 1,600 dollars per annum they are clearly under no moral compulsion to do so.

One can in fact identify some sort of Afro-Arab liaison dating back to the Bandung Conference of 1955, although until the early seventies the rhetoric of "Afro-Arab unity" was largely devoid of substance, with African states maintaining close relations with Israel and studiously reticent in their involvement with Middle-Eastern issues. Since the 1974 adoption of a resolution by Arab oil ministers to create a special fund for Africa (SAFFA) to alleviate the difficulties experienced by African states in meeting increased oil prices, Afro-Arab relations have however experienced an unprecedented take-off. By 1976 when SAFFA was administratively absorbed into the newly-created Arab Bank for the Economic Development of Africa (ABEDA) in a move to more deeply institutionalise Arab involvement in African development, it had already distributed over 200 million dollars amongst 32 African countries. ABEDA itself has not only subsequently formulated a five-year continent-wide programme for African development, but it has also involved itself in a variety of projects in some two dozen African states at a cost of over 100 million dollars. The Arab states have also proved to be an important source of technical assistance for the

Africans despite their own limited resources: an Arab fund for technical assistance (AAFTA) has been established with initial capital of 15 million dollars and already by 1975 some one thousand Arab technicians, the majority drawn from Egypt, were working under its auspices in such disparate countries as Sudan, Uganda, Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands. Complementing these efforts are those of the Afro-Arab Oil Assistance Fund, established under OAPEC (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries) in Cairo during 1976 to provide long-term soft loans to offset increased African oil-import bills, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab-African Bank, both already established during the sixties, and, more recently, the Islamic Bank, formed in 1974 to distribute interest-free loans to African states such as Gambia, Mali, Niger, Chad, Upper Volta and Senegal, all of which are deemed to have "significant Muslim populations".

This multilateral network is paralleled bilaterally through economic linkages forged between a number of individual African and Arab states, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in particular. The full extent of Libya's black African aid program is unknown given President Khadaffi's penchant for conspiratorial diplomacy, yet it is a well-documented fact that Libya has provided loans to such states as the Sudan, Niger, Uganda and Mauritania, that it has joined with the World Bank to invest in Zaire's mining sector, and that Libyans have entered into a number of joint enterprises with African states — with Togo for an oil refinery, with Mali to build up its cattle industry and with Liberia to form a holding company for commercial, agricultural and industrial development. The Saudis have also emerged as important aid givers to the African continent since 1974 in which year alone their commitments amounted to some 550 million dollars. Saudi money has been fed into the economies of Uganda, Gabon, Mali and Niger and in 1975 a Saudi Arabian Development Fund was established whose first African recipient, the Sudan, received an interest free loan of 28 million dollars. The Kuwaitis, in actuality the first Arab state to undertake a bilateral aid program to Africa, have also substantially extended their activities since 1973, founding a Kuwait-Senegal bank and promoting such diverse projects as cattle-raising in Uganda, tea-growing in Rwanda, a spinning factory in Tanzania, and a thermo power station in Ghana. They have also established an aid and development fund upon which the Saudi fund is modelled, which has invested heavily in the Sudan, Mali and Mauritania. Mention should also be made of Arab development efforts along the lines of the joint Saudi-Kuwait-Libyan-Egyptian project to assist Guinea in exploiting and processing its

bauxite reserves and a similar joint Arab project to refinance the Mauritanian copper industry following the 1975 fall in international copper prices. Finally, the Arabs have indirectly contributed assistance to a mass of African states through the International Monetary Fund where they contribute nearly 45% of total borrowing under oil facility arrangements.

Political-Economic Interaction

Economic and political ties of necessity reinforce one another so that the past five years of Afro-Arab economic relations have also stimulated coincidences of political interest which have in their turn reciprocally crystallised the emerging economic interaction. At the political level what has in fact been involved is an agreement in which Arab concerns in the Middle East are traded off against African desires to bring about the liberation of the white-dominated Southern portion of the continent. Arab activities, in both the Casablanca Group prior to the formation of the OAU and in the OAU itself, have always been highly coloured by the desire to mobilise African support for Arab positions on Middle-Eastern issues, and while during the sixties those efforts bore little fruit — even with Egypt and Algeria serving on the OAU's Liberation Committee and providing funds and training facilities for Southern African freedom fighters, by the early seventies the climate had appreciably changed with African states increasingly seduced by Arab offers of economic assistance in return for less ambiguous attitudes. The culmination of these developments was of course the mass decision by African states to sever diplomatic relations with Israel following the outbreak of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the subsequent November 1973 decision of the OAU Council of Ministers equating Zionism with apartheid as similar forms of colonialism. In what was to be an important political *quid pro quo* setting the tone for the first serious attempt to institutionalise Afro-Arab contacts at the Cairo conference in March 1977, Arab states almost immediately complied with the Africa call to extend their oil embargo to South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia.

The Cairo meeting itself took important steps to regularise Afro-Arab contacts in the form of a charter of political and economic co-operation making provision, *inter alia*, for the establishment of a commission of 26 (12 ministers from the OAU and Arab League respectively plus the secretaries-general of the two organisations) to meet every 18 months, and a number of standing executive committees — for mining, finance, trade, industry, energy etc — backed by a jointly financed OAU-Arab

League Special Fund. At the same time it is not entirely clear in the light of subsequent events whether these elaborate structures are pace-setters for future Afro-Arab developments, as some commentators contend, or whether, as others would assert, Afro-Arab liaison is more illusory than real with Cairo being little more than the grand symbolic gestures to which nations of the world are so heavily prone. Much of course depends on the fact that Arab oil policy and African developmental needs are not entirely reconcilable. The politics of oil are undoubtedly a source of spiritual comfort to Africans and other underdeveloped states insofar as they indicate that industrialised states can be effectively confronted, yet the fact of the matter is that OPEC oil price policies have been deeply injurious to fragile African economies, and the various decisions to raise oil prices since 1973 have seriously impaired what little prospects that continent's states have had for self-reliance and reasonably autonomous development for the immediate future. Indirectly, oil prices have encouraged economic recession in the developed world, one effect of which has been to reduce its demand for the primary products which are the main foreign exchange-earners for the overwhelming majority of Africa's poor states, and another of which has been to dissuade a hard-pressed Europe and United States to expand their African aid programmes and their African investments. Since African countries are dependent upon oil more than any other energy source, oil prices have directly raised their import bills at a time when most of them are confronted by serious balance of payments problems and foreign debt. It has in fact been conservatively estimated by the Council of Ministers of the OAU that Africa's total oil bill rose by almost 1 billion dollars during 1974 alone, and this calculation it should be borne in mind, is based on an average price of seven dollars per barrel, i.e. a level which has long since been superseded.

Arab Aid — Tokenism?

The fact that, as one commentator succinctly puts it, "the reward for black African support for Arab policy against Israel is economic crisis" is a serious enough impediment on the positive development of Afro-Arab relations, yet what immeasurably aggravates the situation has been the way that the Arab states have responded to African claims for some sort of assistance or compensation. In the first place the Arabs have rejected African contentions that at least part of the economic damage can be offset through preferential oil price structures: on the contrary, the Arabs have made it abundantly clear since 1973, when an extra-

ordinary OAU meeting raised the possibility of OPEC by-passing the Western oil companies to sell directly to Africa, that they are not prepared to condone the idea of fixing oil prices apart from negotiations between OPEC and the international oil consortiums. To offer preferential rates to the Africans would, from their point of view, increase the risk of cheap oil finding its way into European and American markets and would in so doing prejudice their own vital interests. This was the basic point emerging from the meeting between Arab oil ministers and African representatives held in Cairo in January 1974 when the limits of Arab charity were set at a 200 million dollar loan to the OAU to be distributed amongst African countries in accord with OAU standards. The Arabs have additionally rejected the notion of regularised compensation along the lines called for by the Tanzanians at Cairo in 1977, namely that they contribute 440 million dollars annually over a five-year period, they have resisted OPEC suggestions that a two-tier price system be erected for the benefit of Africa's poorest countries, nor do they support the idea of an Arab-supported African oil distribution network as proposed by the OAU's Oil Committee.

If the periodic meetings of the OAU are any indicators of African feelings towards the Arab states then most of the black states tend to see themselves with increasing conviction as inadequately compensated victims of Arab tokenism. Quite apart from Afro-Arab differences over the mechanics of compensation this stems from the differential between Arab promises of economic assistance and Arab practices. At the 1977 Cairo meeting African delegates stressed that solidarity could only be measured in the real terms of economic aid, yet there have been enormous delays in translating Arab technical and financial commitments into operational reality and in many cases these have seriously skewed African development programmes formulated in anticipation of promised Arab assistance. The African Development Bank for example has suffered severe liquidity problems due to over-commitments precisely because Arab promises of capital inputs have been so slow to materialise. African leaders have also expressed dissatisfaction at the selectivity of Arab development aid and with the clear determination of the Arab group to keep tight control over their own money. In 1975 the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development estimated that 90% of the 4.7 billion dollars disbursed by OPEC during 1974 was channeled to other Arab and Muslim countries and although it is difficult to elicit systematic comparable data for Africa, there are good reasons for believing that Arab-African states, or those with strong Muslim populations

can do better in attracting Arab oil money than can others. On matters of control the Arabs have shown a sharp disinclination to channel funds through African organisations and in a fashion which sows considerable suspicion, they have preferred to concentrate their funds in Arab-controlled institutions. The Arab Bank and the Arab-African Fund for Technical Assistance are both dominated by the Arab League with OAU organs in little more than the role of sleeping partners. In June 1974 the OAU requested that the African Development Bank be entrusted with the administration of the Special Arab Fund for Africa: the Arabs agreed and then quietly redeposited all but 25 million dollars with the Arab League which henceforth disbursed the money gratuitously using ADB criteria.

It should be emphasised that there are many Africans in development planning circles who are prepared to concede the merits of the Arab argument that African economies are insufficiently developed to absorb massive capital inputs, while there is an undoubted African constituency for the view that Arab oil price increases could prove beneficial to African primary product exporters in the long-run by forcing industrialised countries to pay higher prices for all types of raw materials. The mainstream of African opinion however tends to the conclusion that despite the distribution of some 1,75 billion dollars by the Arab group since 1974, Arab economic assistance does not carry the hoped-for developmental punch and what little it does is soon eroded by rising import prices. This sense of disillusionment is also compounded by the fact that reinforcing political quid pro quos underlying the Afro-Arab nexus have not proved entirely satisfactory to either of the two partners. Despite Arab pressures the African states are still clearly concerned with distancing themselves from the tortuous political problems of the Arab world and although there is only limited evidence to suggest that Israel can easily recover its diplomatic position in the wake of the 1973 debacle, the present level of African hostility to the Jewish state is far too equivocal and low-key measured by the majority of Arab tastes. Almost without exception the African states have recognised the PLO as the authentic representative of the Palestinian people, yet they have almost all continued to defend Israel's right to existence as an independent entity and have refused to condone her expulsion from the United Nations. This clearly emerged from the 1975 OAU Kampala Summit and from the subsequent General Assembly debate in November on the resolution equating Zionism with racism where only 28 African votes favoured the Arab position, eight of them

deriving from states who were also incidentally members of the Arab League.

Arab/African Identification

Arab relations with the world, as most scholars recognise, lean very heavily on support given to national issues, and Africa's degree of political ambivalency clearly does not accord with the Arab *raison d'être* for intensive relations with the continent, despite the fact that the 1977 Cairo conference agreed that principles of Afro-Arab co-operation need not necessarily depend on African support for the Arab group on all political issues. Neither for that matter is the wide degree of toleration displayed by the Arabs on the issue so close to African hearts, i.e. the liberation of Southern Africa. In general the Africans have failed to appreciate that the problems presented by South African apartheid, and by Rhodesia and Namibia create very little interest in the Arab world, and that despite the support given by some Arab states to the Southern African liberation movements — Egypt and Algeria through the OAU's Liberation Committee, Iraq to ZANU — Southern African issues have a limited emotive value and low policy-making profile in Middle-Eastern circles. Black Africa north of the Zambezi has not of course divorced itself from economically transacting with Southern Africa, yet there is still the pervasive feeling in African circles that Arab-South African trade contacts, talk of bartering Saudi oil for South African gold and the sale of military aircraft by Jordan to Rhodesia, is poor compensation for what the Africans, if not necessarily the Arabs see as solidarity and support given in the anti-Zionist struggle.

The formation of political values is of course never entirely independent of culturally-determined systems of meaning and if it is exceedingly difficult to bring about a meeting of African and Arab political minds on the important issue of what constitutes meaningful political support, much has also to do with the fact that the Afro-Arab liaison takes place against a cultural backdrop which is more conducive to sharpening political differences than smoothing their elimination. One must resist the crude image of African leaders responding to Arab overtures with visions of the latter's historic involvement in the enslavement of African peoples, yet the fact remains that Afro-Arab relations are constructed on the basis of a legacy where the interaction of the one to the other has often, if not always, been that of master to slave. There is in addition, a distinctive cultural paternalism in Arab policy manifest in its interest in dissemi-

nating the Arab language, Koranic education and Islamic religion which resonates very unfavourably on a post-colonial African consciousness in the process of establishing its own autonomy. Gamal Nasser's belief, expressed in his 'Philosophy of the Revolution' that it is the Arab task in Africa "to spread the light of knowledge and civilisation up to the very depths of the virgin jungles" does not, with its connotations of cultural imperialism, rest very easily with the African search for authenticity, particularly when backed up by political actions showing a distinctive favouritism for Arab-African states in the north of the continent or for black states ambiguously situated on the fringes of the great Arab-African continental divide. The discrimination experienced by Blacks in some Arab-African countries and such culture-related political conflicts as those which have occurred in Sudan, Mauritania and the bloody Zanzibari revolution of 1964 are still fresh in African minds, while Arab involvement in the Eritrean rebellion in support of Muslim insurgents and the tendency of Arab Africans to vigorously contest key organisational positions in the OAU and the African Development Bank all fuel African anxiety that the costs of Arab co-operation may well be an undesirable and over-extended Arab involvement in the affairs of the black continent.

Future Relations Fragmented, Transitory

What then are the prospects for future Afro-Arab relations: is it realistic to anticipate a fruitful and growing liaison with increased Arab weight behind Africa in pursuit of its internal and international objectives, or are the limits of mutual trust and confidence so tightly constrained by economic, political and cultural considerations as to preclude any arrangement other than that which is transitory and basically fragile?

Prediction is of course a hazardous activity in the complex and dynamic field of international politics, yet if there is any truth to be derived from the experience of the relations between states it is that political alliances endure only to the extent that they are forged out of a complementarity of interests and/or an interchange of resources between potential partners. In this context the future of Afro-Arab relations ranges from mixed to bleak. At the level of economic interaction, African expectations that demonstrations of solidarity on issues close to the Arab heart have largely failed to stimulate Arab philanthropy on a scale in any way appropriate to the magnitude of the continent's socio-economic problems. Quite to the contrary, the narrow pursuit of national interests by the Arab states has wrought havoc with the oil-sensitive African economies. The future will most cer-

tainly turn on the rectification of the economic damage caused by oil prices, either in the form of massive capital transfers, increased oil credits or the creation of an Arab-supported African oil company along the lines suggested by the chairman of the OAU Oil Committee, Mansour Khalid. From the Arab point of view Africa holds out the prospect of preferential treatment in the purchase of foodstuffs — the Sudan is already widely regarded in the Arab world as a massive potential granary — yet whether the Arab nouveau riche join the African poor in support of a new international economic order, or whether they are prepared to make the necessary economic concessions to the Africans, is more likely to be determined by the technological and market requirements of the Arab states for the foreseeable future. Put simply, a technology-scarce industrially-underdeveloped Africa is no magnet of attraction for upwardly mobile Arab entrepreneurial elements.

At the political level there are also few grounds for optimism although Africa's oil producing states, Nigeria in particular, could conceivably function as conduits for interchange either bilaterally or through OAPEC. Both the OAU and the Arab League have major tasks before them if they are to co-ordinate solid backing for militant stands on the Middle East, in the case of the OAU, and on Southern Africa, in the case of the latter. Afro-Arab collaboration is in any event heavily situational drawing inspiration from the presence of conflict in the Middle East and Southern African regions, and it logically follows that substantial alterations in the political conditions in these areas, in the form of an Arab-Israeli settlement or genuine power-sharing in Southern Africa, will radically cut into the political value of the two partners for each other. This process could conceivably be attenuated by creative political leadership yet since the death of Nasser, arguably the most important individual link between the Arab and African worlds, there have been no leaders of comparable stature in either camp to effectively perform the bridge-building role. Enhanced political liaison is also likely to be impeded if not undercut by the widespread feeling amongst Africans that the material inequalities between the African and Arab states must necessarily translate into some new and insidious form of petro-dollar neo-colonialism. The tendency of the Arabs to remain remarkably obtuse in defining their interests in Africa — to refuse to articulate "what they believe they are paying for" in the words of one African statesman — tends to fuel this psychology to the point where Africans are often forced to remind their erstwhile compatriots that the continent is not simply up for sale. Finally it should be borne in mind that nei-

ther the African nor Arab states constitute coherent political blocs, although we have treated them as such for analytical purposes. Both have experienced considerable difficulty in promoting internal co-ordination and if Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism are still in a state of disarray it is difficult to conceive of anything but fragmented, highly individualised and transitory coalition building across Arab-African boundaries.

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: A CONSTELLATION OF STATES?

Deon Geldenhuys and Denis Venter

South African policy-makers have long advocated the idea of regional co-operation in Southern Africa. Under the premiership of Mr P.W. Botha, this policy objective — officially designated a constellation of Southern African states — has been given greater prominence than previously and the ends and means of the policy have also been outlined in more detail than before.

This article sets out to examine the feasibility of the idea of a constellation of states as expounded by official spokesmen. The need for greater terminological clarity is stressed, particularly in view of the relative political novelty of the concept. Some of the elements embodied in the idea are however not novel, as is illustrated by a brief exposé of the development of South African ideas on regional co-operation. Finally, an attempt is also made to assess the viability of the constellation idea measured against certain theoretical criteria applicable to regional politics.

Terminology of regional co-operation in the Southern African context

It is a truism that the social sciences can hardly lay any claim to precision, because of the many imponderables ruling the human environment and indeed mankind's entire existence. One of the major characteristics of the modern world is the unprecedented explosion in knowledge in almost every sphere of human endeavour and this has inevitably led to an unusually large degree of inexactness in the human sciences. Although no form of social science can profess to be an exact science — only the natural sciences come anywhere near such a definition — a more concerted effort should certainly be made to strive towards a larger measure of terminological precision.

Politics, especially, suffers from the phenomenon of different and sometimes widely divergent concepts being bandied around without the users having any conceptual clarity on the nature and content thereof, or having at all considered perceptions of

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connotations attached, or motivations attributed to, or even fears created by, their use of such terms. Hence the need for "a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen an awareness of the phenomena". Where terminology is loose, where common usage inadequately expresses notions and distinctions which we feel important, our best precision is found in being aware of the nature of our tools, of the different senses in which the same words are used, in trying to keep as sharp as possible distinctions we believe to be crucial, and in trying to keep each contextual meaning as clear as possible."¹ Experience shows that thinking may change and viewpoints may be modified through precision in the use of terminology. Thus, an important part of analysis is to obtain clarity on the phenomena to be analysed and, if possible, to create so-called "operational definitions"; that is, the precise measure applicable to the concept. Precision is needed not merely to ensure logical thinking, but also to enable written and verbal communication between those studying a particular phenomenon.² The determined pursuit of terminological precision facilitates the greatest possible measure of conceptual clarity necessary for goal-oriented policy-making and is, therefore, not merely a challenge to the political scientist, but indeed his duty and responsibility.

For these reasons it is rather disconcerting to note the various and sometimes widely divergent concepts emanating from official quarters, all trying to embody the idea of regional co-operation in Southern Africa. These terms range from *common market* and *economic power bloc* through *commonwealth* and *association to constellation*; the latter being linked with the apparently growing notion of a subcontinental *alliance* structure. In order to put each of these concepts in a proper contextual framework, they will have to be defined more closely.

First of all a closer look needs to be taken at economic integration which can be defined either as a process, when it entails specific action taken to abolish discriminatory measures among different economic units (nation-states); or as a state of affairs, when it may denote the absence of such discriminatory measures among national economies.³ There are several forms of economic integration, however, representing varying degrees of integration, namely a free-trade area, a customs union, a common market, an economic union, and complete economic integration. In a free-trade area, tariffs and quotas between member countries are removed, but individual tariffs against non-members are retained. The establishment of a customs union involves the removal of discriminatory measures pertaining to commodity movements within the union and the intro-

duction of equal tariffs in trade with non-member countries. An even higher form of economic integration is attained in a common market, where restrictions on trade and production factor movements (capital and labour) are abolished. In an economic union, national economic policies are to some degree harmonised, in order to remove discriminatory measures due to disparities in economic policy. Finally, when a supranational authority whose decisions are binding on member states comes into existence, effecting the unification of monetary, fiscal, social and other policies, total economic integration is reached.⁴

	No tariff or quota	Common external tariff	Free movement of production factors	Harmonisation of economic policies	Unification of socio-economic and political decision-making
Free-trade area	X				
Customs union	X	X			
Common market	X	X	X		
Economic union	X	X	X	X	
Complete economic integration	X	X	X	X	X

The concept *common market* is used for that form of economic integration which goes beyond establishing a mere free-trade area of a customs union. It is created through the progressive reduction and elimination of all physical and fiscal restrictions on the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour between member countries, the harmonisation of their economic policies, especially relating to production and marketing, and the consolidation of separate external tariffs into a single tariff system applicable to imports from outside the common market.⁵ The cardinal political question surrounding a common market is whether this form of economic integration may lead eventually toward closer political unification, thus gradually narrowing the parameters of national sovereignty. Political institutions for joint economic decision-making are essential and invariably new supranational political and administrative agencies are created.⁶

The term *bloc* has become well established in a figurative political sense and *inter alia* denotes a number of states united for mutual support and with a common interest or purpose. A bloc comes into being when a group of states is merged into a formation which intends cohesive and assertive economic, political and/or military action. *Power* cannot readily be quantified and is therefore a relative concept. Some states are certainly more "powerful" than others in a military, economic or some other particular sense, but power as such cannot really be defined. It can be treated as a way of describing the influence exercised by one state on another along a spectrum commencing with arguments and persuasion through economic or diplomatic pressures to the final use of military force. Power should be derived from legitimized authority, but because it has acquired a wrong connotation and is very often equated with the inequitable use of force, it should be applied with great care not only in scholarly writing, but also in official pronouncements.⁸

The term *commonwealth* was often employed by 17th century writers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, to signify the concept of the organised political community. For them it meant much the same as *civitas* or *res publica* did for the Romans, or as "the state" does in the 20th century. Modern usage has, however, further extended the term, notably in the British imperial context. As various British colonies evolved from a status subordinate to the United Kingdom into a free association of equal partners, the new relationship became known as a commonwealth. In a practical sense a commonwealth may be regarded as an answer to the problem of maintaining fruitful relations between new states and their former colonial masters without impairing the sovereign status or independence which these states have acquired.⁹ Thus, Britain and the dominions were "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations".¹⁰ As a voluntary association of independent, sovereign states, the Commonwealth is notable for its lack of a formal constitution; for its emphasis upon consultation rather than action; and for the stress traditionally laid upon informality in its operations.¹¹ The essence of the Commonwealth system, therefore, is to articulate for discussion whatever common aims member countries may have and to arrive at decisions by consensus within the broad framework provided for co-operation and consultation, despite frequently divergent interests. There are no formal treaty ties, specific

agreements or commitments, and no permanent institutions exist, except for a secretariat.¹²

Although in more "specific" terms the concept *association* refers to a general psychological principle and in social science usage denotes a special-purpose group or organisation with its own administrative structure and functionaries¹³; in its most general usage the term relates to the process by which individuals, groups or states become linked to one another and the groupings which form as a result of such a linkage.¹⁴ An association may therefore be defined as a cluster of individuals, groups or states united for a specific purpose or purposes and held together by recognised or sanctioned modes of procedure and behaviour.¹⁵ The concept association sometimes merely implies the casual juxtaposition of units, but some degree of organisation, however rudimentary or transient, seems imperative. Furthermore, the purposes of an association undergo change in the process of realisation, but it must also be remembered that these purposes are not uniform and that units may join a particular association for quite different and even conflicting motives. Finally, associations must not be regarded as the embodiment of a unitary mind, but rather as trial and error experiments which have grown up after much searching and which only gradually attain clarity and coherence.¹⁶

The concept *constellation* is rarely used in a socio-political context, except in the sense of taking advantage of "the shifting constellation (pattern, arrangement), of power" in the world.¹⁷ In ecological terms it could also refer to "interdependent units having a common centre".¹⁸ Usually, however, the term constellation is identified with astronomy and signifies certain fixed groupings of stars¹⁹, the juxtaposition of which are (for different reasons) also of interest to astrologers.²⁰ Because of its primary identification with clearly non-political phenomena, the use of the concept constellation in a strictly political sense is bound to lead to confusion, varying interpretations (or misrepresentations) and perhaps even ridicule.

Despite its dubious relevance to politics and its proneness to diverse interpretations, the concept constellation is nonetheless, in the Southern African context, associated with the notion of an *alliance* structure with its concomitant overtones of fixed relationships and explicit commitments. In international relations as well as in international law, the term *alliance* signifies a contractual relationship between two or more states for mutual military assistance in the event of an attack against any member, or an agreement to advance their mutual interests.²¹ Although an element of co-operation is inherent in this concept, so is the facing

of actual, potential or figurative opposition and the accompanying pledge or provision for military support under certain agreed-upon circumstances.²² Some propagandistic advantages may be gained by applying the term to loose agreements for co-operation, but this use obscures the peculiarly far-reaching commitment contained in military pacts by which a state formally promises to join another in fighting a common enemy.²³

States sometimes seek external assistance to combat so-called "subversion" and to augment the inadequacies of national defences. Alliances are therefore for purposes of international security in many instances. Furthermore, subversion can be attributed to a foreign power and made to appear as though it were an external threat. Greater powers also have an interest in maintaining favourably disposed governments in smaller states within their spheres of influence, and alliance structures could give them the opportunity of intervention to ensure this. Thus, alliances seem to be strongest between large and small states which have interacting internal and strategic interests. The functional role of alliance structures is mainly to preserve existing political and social structures.²⁴

Alliances are instruments of, and are primarily used in, the context of national security affairs.²⁵ They may extend to forms of co-operation other than military, but they are unlikely to survive if the original common threat lessens or disappears. Sometimes they may also serve as stepping stones to more intimate and lasting bonds culminating in confederal or federal unity among the one-time sovereign parties.²⁶ Thus, alliances gain in stability by incorporating a more than military identification of interest among their members, or they may serve as springboards toward political integration.²⁷

An alliance is therefore a configuration of power in which a state seeks security and opportunity to advance its national interests by linking its power with that of one or more states with similar interests. It implies a decision by a state to alter or maintain a local, regional or global power equilibrium. Many contemporary alliances have been expanded into regional organisations for co-operation in economic, social, administrative and conflict resolution as well as military matters. While alliances may contribute to a sense of security and provide a deterrent to aggression, they may also contribute to international tension and the formation of counter-alliances.²⁸ Alliance policy has been associated historically with balance of power politics, and together with the principle of collective security has been criticized both in principle and on grounds of historical evidence as tending to produce arms races, frequent crises, and to make war both more

likely to occur and more widespread.²⁹

Finally, to emphasize once again the cardinal importance of exactitude in terminology, two examples will suffice to illustrate how apparently well-meaning, innocent policy pronouncements can be taken out of context, labelled with rather derogatory connotations and turned against the particular country whose policies have become a target for international criticism. It has indeed been a long-standing foreign policy objective of the South African Government to develop "a pattern of peaceful co-existence" in Southern Africa by fostering "closer economic co-operation", thus creating conditions of "general prosperity" in the region.³⁰ The critics of South Africa's policies in the sub-continent have, however, twisted these rather vague and general policy aims to suggest that it signifies the Republic's recipe for the creation of a "co-prosperity sphere".³¹ Invariably, the South African system has been portrayed as a "dual economy", with a clear distinction being drawn between "rich/capitalist and poor/peasant-worker sectors", exploiting cheap labour by way of political and military coercion. This model, stressing the dichotomy between "oppressor" and "oppressed", is then hooked onto the Southern African situation³², with the apparent motive of attaching to the Republic's regional policy the same unsavoury image as was projected by Japan's policy of economic exploitation and territorial expansion in Manchuria and South East Asia in the late 1930s and early 1940s.³³ Thus, it is implied that South Africa entertains similar hegemonistic aspirations in the Southern African regional context; hence the use of the term "co-prosperity sphere".

Similarly the South African Government's quest for economic co-operation in the Southern African region by pursuing the idea of a "common market", has invariably been portrayed as a ploy to establish "a systematised economic hegemony over the whole southern subcontinent". This "vision of the future" was based on "the pattern of the solar system. Inside South Africa, around the sun of Pretoria, there would revolve the little planets of the 'Bantustans'. Not far beyond them likewise in obedient orbit, there were . . . Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, each firmly in the grip of the South African economy. Beyond these . . ., reaching into African space, there should be many other planets as far as the outermost pull of South African influence . . .".³⁴ The term constellation, it should be added, has also been identified with Moscow's ambitions in Africa: the Soviet Union's intention is "setting up a constellation of pro-Soviet Marxist States throughout Africa".³⁵ The foregoing suggests that the latest concept of a "constellation of states in Southern Africa" is very sus-

ceptible to misrepresentation of motives, and the proponents of regional co-operation under this rubric need to take cognizance of the negative connotations inherent in it.

The development of South African ideas on regional co-operation: from Smuts to Vorster

South African pronouncements on relations with Africa have through the years shown two fundamental and enduring characteristics, which largely correspond with basic objectives states commonly pursue in their foreign relations. First and foremost, South Africa has always approached relations with Africa from the point of view of its own political, economic and military interests. Second, and flowing from the first, South Africa has tried to influence the course of events in Africa in a direction favourable to its interests. South Africa has in fact considered itself entitled to aspire to leadership in Africa in various fields by virtue of its level of development and its large permanent white population. South Africa has also seen itself as a kind of catalyst of co-operation, to which it has long committed itself. In short, South Africa has been intent on securing a role for itself in shaping events in Africa in such a way that a stable context favourable to South Africa's security, prosperity and domestic political order can be created beyond its borders.

South African thinking on relations with Africa before 1945 was on a rather grandiose scale. General J.C. Smuts, for example, was attracted to the idea of pan-African co-operation and he urged that relations in Africa be conducted "in the spirit of a small League of Nations".³⁶ Such statements should be seen in the context of the time: South Africa's was essentially a relationship with European colonial powers. This is clearly borne out in General Smuts' suggestion in 1943 of "colonial reorganisation" in the British Empire to create new "colonial groups" in which neighbouring Dominions would involve themselves, thus making them "sharers and partners" in the Empire.³⁷ This would of course give South Africa a hand in plotting Africa's future course. South Africa's political and military interests, more specifically, are reflected in the vision of Mr Oswald Pirow, General Hertzog's Minister of Defence, of two or three federations in the area between the Union and the Sudan, linked to South Africa "by a common Native policy" and "directly flowing" from that, "a common defence policy".³⁸

Given its closer identification with the European colonial powers and its peculiar domestic socio-political arrangements, South Africa had great difficulty in adjusting to the vastly changed post-war international environment, particularly in

Africa. General Smuts' suggestion that a commission, composed of colonial powers and others with economic and military interests in Africa (thus also South Africa) be established to formulate a common policy for the continent³⁹, shows South Africa's preoccupation with the colonial order and also confirms the two characteristics of South Africa's relations with Africa mentioned earlier. On a more pragmatic level, General Smuts introduced an important new theme: he was committed to ensure the "knitting together" of the parts of Southern Africa⁴⁰ and courted the idea of an organisation for co-operation in the region on the lines of the Pan-American Union.⁴¹ Such co-operation would, however, have been an essentially inter-imperial affair.

The stark contrast between South African thinking and international trends in the first post-war decade was nowhere clearer illustrated than in Dr D.F. Malan's Africa Charter. This anachronistic statement of policy in effect sought to consolidate the colonial order in Africa by, *inter alia*, declaring that the development of Africa should be guided along the lines of "Western European Christian civilization" and that the militarisation of the "native of Africa" should be prevented since it could endanger "our white civilization".⁴²

South Africa's concern with creating a favourable African environment was further reflected in its participation in a series of talks on the defence of Africa and the Middle East involving also the colonial powers, Commonwealth and United States⁴³, and South Africa's (fruitless) pursuit of the ideal of creating an Africa Defence Organisation for anti-communist states with interests in Africa.⁴⁴ South Africa saw its defence responsibilities extending well beyond its borders and actually prepared itself (by building up an armoured task force) to fight elsewhere in Africa.⁴⁵ In the field of race relations, South Africa regarded it as its "right" to give a lead to Western Europe⁴⁶, and Mr J.G. Strijdom made no secret of the fact that he considered apartheid exportable to Africa, providing the only acceptable formula for white-black relations.⁴⁷ Mr Eric Louw, Minister of External Affairs, suggested periodic *ad hoc* discussions on common interests — of which racial policy was one — between foreign states with African interests (thus colonial powers), South Africa and Rhodesia.⁴⁸ Another link which South Africa had also long been cultivating, was that with other white communities in Africa, particularly in British territories, thus making race a powerful cohesive factor.⁴⁹

While South Africa still closely identified with the colonial order in the 1950s, there was at the same time a growing realisation that the political face of Africa was set for irrevocable

change and that South Africa's fortunes no longer lay in an exclusive relationship with the colonial powers. In a celebrated statement of March 1957, Mr Louw urged that South Africa must "accept its future role in Africa as a vocation and must in all respects play its full part as an African power". At the same time, however, South Africa could become a "permanent link between the Western nations on the one hand and the population of Africa south of the Sahara on the other".⁵⁰ This statement was clearly an attempt to bridge the gap between the declining and ascending orders in Africa by keeping one foot in each.

To give effect to its "role in Africa", South Africa participated in the activities of the Commission for Scientific Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara (CSA), the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara (CCTA) and the Fund for Mutual Assistance in Africa South of the Sahara (FAMA).⁵¹ Scientific and technical co-operation and aid, channeled through multilateral organisations, formed the basis of South Africa's attempts at *rapprochement* with Africa in the 1950s. What is more, South Africa considered itself a leader in the field of dispensing aid and co-operation and also used its abilities to impress upon the colonial powers the Union's importance in Africa.⁵² It should however be borne in mind that such aid and co-operation and also South Africa's consular representation in a number of African territories⁵³, was essentially a relationship between the Union and the colonial powers in control of these territories.

Major political developments within South Africa and in Southern Africa, together with the unremitting hostility of newly independent black states towards South Africa, however prompted it to narrow the focus from "Africa south of the Sahara" to its immediate neighbours.

The domestic political developments refer to the Bantu homelands policy as expounded by Dr H.F. Verwoerd. He envisaged that the homelands could proceed to full independence, upon which they could be linked to South Africa in a commonwealth type of relationship. The component units would be politically independent but economically interdependent.⁵⁴ The homelands formula formed the basis of Dr Verwoerd's approach to Southern Africa. At first he wanted to draw the three High Commission Territories into the homelands design and lead them to independence along the same route as the homelands — and thus prevent the adoption of policies in the Territories which ran counter to separate development.⁵⁵ Although Britain refused to transfer its political guardianship of

the Territories to South Africa and chose to lead them to independence according to the British recipe, Dr Verwoerd still saw a role for the Territories, when independent, in his scheme for Southern African co-operation. In the political sphere he foresaw a commonwealth evolving, which would be a consultative body of independent states "dealing with mutual political interests."⁵⁶ Economic links, he suggested, could be formalised in a co-ordinating body "on the principles of a common market"⁵⁷ Dr Verwoerd, it should be added, strongly believed in the primacy of economic interests over political considerations.⁵⁸

Dr Verwoerd's commonwealth-cum-common market designs can be explained in terms of South Africa's perception of its political, economic and military interests: the realisation of his proposals would have surrounded South Africa with a group of virtual client states. It should be added that Dr Verwoerd's plans for a regional grouping were not simply limited to South Africa and the High Commission Territories. On occasion, he spoke of a common market stretching as far north as the Congo (Zaire).⁵⁹

Reference should also be made to the place of (Southern) Rhodesia in South Africa's designs for the region. Historically, South Africa and Rhodesia have experienced something of a love-hate relationship, dating back to South Africa's unsuccessful bid to incorporate Rhodesia into the Union in the 1920s.⁶⁰ Rhodesia's anglophilic sentiments and its membership of the Central African Federation (1953-63) prevented it from drawing close to South Africa. However, the dissolution of the Federation paved the way for a new relationship and Dr Verwoerd was quick to suggest (in 1963) that if Rhodesia should become an independent state, it could lead to a new closer relationship with the Republic, whether "in some form of organised economic interdependence", such as in the European Economic Community, or "for common political interests" on the lines of the Commonwealth.⁶¹ Ironically, the way in which Rhodesia became "independent" in 1965 hindered rather than helped the establishment of stronger ties because it was politically inexpedient for South Africa to associate closely and in a formal manner with Britain's "rebel colony".

The Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique were, by and large, excluded from Dr Verwoerd's plans for regional co-operation. It was only in the latter half of the 1960s that growing economic links and a perceived common military threat encouraged a working relationship with the Republic.

A final important characteristic of South Africa's relations with Africa in the Verwoerd era was a willingness to provide direct, bilateral aid to black states. South Africa's departure

from the CCTA, CSA and FAMA meant that it could no longer channel aid to Africa through multilateral organisations. Realising the depth of the political alienation between South Africa and black Africa, Dr Verwoerd saw aid as a means of contact, even though he made such aid conditional upon the black states muting their hostility towards the Republic.⁶²

Although Dr Verwoerd came to recognise and in fact sought to accommodate in his regional designs the independence of black states, he too entertained the notion of South Africa serving as a link between Africa and the West.⁶³ This "schizophrenic" element in South Africa's external orientation reflected the search for an identity and role in an increasingly hostile world.

The independence of Botswana and Lesotho in 1966 and Swaziland in 1968, it would appear, offered South Africa the ideal opportunity to give effect to the Verwoerdian designs for a commonwealth-cum-common market arrangement in Southern Africa. Dr Verwoerd's successor, Mr B.J. Vorster, thought in less grandiose terms — at least initially — and merely committed himself "to maintaining the closest economic and technological co-operation among all the countries of the (Southern African) region, for their mutual benefit and joint development". He stressed that each nation thus involved would retain its political autonomy and therefore "the right freely to choose its own political, racial, cultural and economic systems".⁶⁴ This restatement of the established principle of political independence and economic interdependence was an obvious attempt to safeguard South Africa's political *status quo*. Perhaps Mr Vorster's cautious approach to regional relations was a matter of tactics, of gradually proceeding towards an ultimate Verwoerdian dispensation.

A major step towards formalising relations was the revision, in 1969, of the Customs Union Agreement of 1909 which involved South Africa and the three former High Commission Territories. Another was South Africa's establishment of diplomatic relations with Malawi in 1967 — to date the first and only such link with a black state (except independent former homelands). Malawi was well within South Africa's immediate sphere of interest; Southern Africa, Dr Hilgard Muller, Minister of Foreign Affairs, explained, stretched as far north as the Congo (Zaire).⁶⁵

The Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique drew conspicuously closer to South Africa in the later 1960s. In the economic field, South Africa agreed to purchase power from the planned Ruacana Falls and Cabora Bassa hydro-electric schemes in Angola and Mozambique respectively.⁶⁶ In the military

sphere, the sense of community was strengthened by the perception of a common threat in "terrorism".⁶⁷ Although no formal defence agreement existed, evidence suggests limited South African involvement in counter-insurgency operations in Angola and Mozambique.⁶⁸ The Republic was of course involved in its own war against guerrillas in SWA/Namibia since the mid-1960s. Rhodesia and South Africa also moved closer together. Rhodesia depended for its very survival on South Africa, which kept the economic life-line open to embattled Rhodesia. The Republic also became involved in the military conflict by despatching police units to Rhodesia in 1967.⁶⁹

South Africa, Mr Vorster insisted, would not tolerate terrorism or "communist domination" in Southern Africa and was determined to fight it even beyond the Republic's borders.⁷⁰ Another way in which South Africa sought to combat this threat was to offer non-aggression pacts to black states in 1970⁷¹ — this would have denied insurgents bases from which to operate against South Africa (and perhaps also other white-ruled countries). Thus, despite the absence of grand blueprints for regional relations, circumstances produced a powerful cohesive force between the white-ruled parts of Southern Africa.

In the case of the rest of Southern Africa, the cohesive factors of (white) race and a common threat were largely absent. What drew them — Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi — to South Africa, were geographical and economic factors and considerable aid from the Republic⁷², while Malawi also enjoyed diplomatic links. The provision of aid and assistance was in fact still a major tenet in South Africa's approach to Africa generally, and not only Southern Africa.⁷³

South Africa's successful establishment of close ties with its immediate black neighbours, together with growing domestic (white) confidence and affluence in the late 1960s, prompted the Republic to extend the frontiers of its interests in Africa.⁷⁴ In 1967 Mr Vorster launched his so-called outward movement. It amounted to a broad-based attempt to improve South Africa's relations over a wide front⁷⁵, but the thrust of the movement was clearly directed at Africa. Although further strengthening of ties in the Southern African region was part of the outward policy, South Africa appeared more interested in "bigger stakes", viz. reaching a *rapprochement* with black states further north carrying greater political weight and which were not in any sense "client states" of the Republic.

Despite some initial successes⁷⁶, the dialogue initiative — as the outward movement subsequently became known — soon petered out, primarily because of the Organization of African

Unity's intervention to end moves towards a *rapprochement* between black Africa and South Africa. This, together with the unresolved Rhodesian and SWA/Namibian issues, led South Africa to set its sights lower and to concentrate on consolidating its position in the sub-continent and on finding a regional solution to the area's conflicts.

Mr Vorster, in February 1974, defined regional co-operation in terms of a "power bloc" of sovereign independent states. Independence was indeed a condition for membership of the bloc, in which no state would be politically or constitutionally subordinate to another and in which domestic affairs remained within the exclusive domain of each state.⁷⁷ Moves towards creating a new pattern of relations in Southern Africa took a dramatic turn with Mr Vorster's famous Senate speech in October 1974, in which he said "Southern Africa has come to the cross-roads", and had to choose between peace and escalating conflict. Confidently asserting that the climate for peace and the normalisation of relations was good, he envisaged "peace, progress and development" in Southern Africa.⁷⁸ President Kenneth Kaunda's positive response and South Africa's declared public commitment to the elimination of racial discrimination and Mr Vorster's "give us six months" appeal all helped set the scene for the new era of détente.⁷⁹

South Africa entertained high hopes for détente. Dr Muller spoke hopefully of détente drawing together the states of Southern Africa in a strong bloc which could present a united front against its common enemies.⁸⁰ Mr Vorster foresaw an "economic power bloc"⁸¹ but also introduced a new concept: "a constellation of politically completely independent states" with close economic ties. As "the most developed country in Africa", South Africa intended taking the lead to bring this about.⁸²

The era of détente was short-lived, its demise caused mainly by the failure of the joint South African-Zambian settlement initiative for Rhodesia, and the Angolan war. The Angolan war also produced severe South African disillusionment with the West, particularly the United States, for allegedly leaving the Republic in the lurch. The Soweto riots caused a major domestic crisis and further undermined South Africa's foreign relations. Internally, South Africa began resorting to the politics of survival. The external corollary was a compound of introversion and dissociation, expressed in sporadic official suggestions that South Africa should become "neutral" in the East-West conflict, "look East" and side with the "Fifth World".⁸³ The regional option also attained a new prominence; in fact, it was the only feasible one among the various alternatives men-

tioned. The others were more a reflection of disillusionment, anger and anxiety than considered responses. South Africa's ideal in the sub-continent, the then Foreign Minister, Dr Muller, explained, was "a constellation of states . . . which peacefully cooperate with one another".⁸⁴

South Africa's emphasis on regional relations is, of course, nothing new. What is new about the post-1975 preoccupation with the region is the greatly changed environment in which it is set. First, South Africa and the West have become much more alienated than ever before, due, among other things, to the Angolan war, Soweto riots, Steve Biko's death, the October 1977 bannings, the Security Council's mandatory arms embargo of November 1977 and the repeated failure of Western settlement attempts in SWA/Namibia and also Rhodesia. Second, armed conflict in both SWA/Namibia and Rhodesia have escalated since the Angolan war. Third, Angola and Mozambique became independent under regimes highly antagonistic towards South Africa. Fourth, the independence of former homelands created new potential members for a Southern African association of states. In essence, the current South African designs for the sub-continent represent a defensive strategy; circumstances have forced the Republic to retreat behind the perimeters of Southern Africa.

The Botha era: a constellation of states

Although it is not Mr P.W. Botha's creation, the concept of a constellation of states has become firmly identified with the Prime Minister. Not only has he consistently used the expression, but he has also sought to give it a substance previously lacking. The pursuit of the idea of a constellation has indeed become Mr Botha's major foreign policy initiative and is being given the same priority as his predecessor's dialogue and détente moves. Mr Pik Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, even referred to it as "a new Great Trek".⁸⁵ The constellation idea has also engendered a considerable measure of public enthusiasm, notably among politicians, journalists and businessmen. There has, however, not been a corresponding amount of serious examination of the implications of the policy. This study, while laying no claims to comprehensiveness, seeks nevertheless to offer a brief analysis of the salient elements of the constellation proposal.

● The concept of a constellation, as was pointed out earlier, is susceptible to negative connotations. Nor have the doubts and suspicions about South Africa's motives been allayed by vague and often conflicting official pronouncements on the constellation design. It was not until November 1979 that the Prime

Minister first presented a fairly comprehensive and reasoned exposition of the constellation idea. The occasion was in fact a large gathering of businessmen, civil servants and others called together by Mr P.W. Botha at the Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg, to launch his constellation plans. In his address⁸⁶ (hereafter referred to as his Carlton speech), he touched upon the unfavourable interpretation of the motives behind a constellation. "In a constellation the constituent bodies have fixed positions *vis-à-vis* each other, unlike a solar system in which planets revolve around a central point", he explained. "In a constellation of states the countries concerned therefore derive from their fixed proximity to each other a common interest whilst maintaining their individual sovereign status. This concept thus specifically excludes a satellite relationship among any of the constituents."⁸⁷ While the Prime Minister's Carlton speech may have contributed towards allaying suspicions about his motives, and undoubtedly clarified in a sophisticated manner a number of uncertainties surrounding the concept of a constellation, it has to be added — as will subsequently be illustrated — that a good many questions remain.

- The advocacy of a constellation must be seen against the background of South Africa's and Southern Africa's international position. It is, as mentioned, clearly linked to the deterioration in the Republic's relations with the West⁸⁸; the escalating conflicts in SWA/Namibia and Zimbabwe Rhodesia* and South Africa's dissatisfaction with Western settlement efforts; South Africa's failure to reach a *modus vivendi* with black states further north, and finally threats to the Republic's own security and prosperity, particularly terrorism and sanctions. The creation of a constellation is therefore part and parcel of Mr Botha's "total national strategy"⁸⁹ and features in his twelve "policy principles".⁹⁰

- Related to the above is the South African notion that the "moderate" countries of Southern Africa all face a common "Marxist threat" and cannot rely on the West for support. "It is not only the Whites who stand alone at the southern point of Africa", Mr Pik Botha argued, but "every Black leader who desires order, freedom, peace and development for his people . . . also stands alone".⁹¹ The security of black and white was indivisible and unless they joined forces, common enemies would "shoot us off the branch like birds, one after the other".⁹² South Africa, it would appear, not merely wishes to keep Marxism out of Southern Africa but intends encouraging the development of a kind of counter-ideology. After expounding the grave and evil consequences of the "Marxist order" in his Carl-

*This article was written before the Lancaster House Agreement was signed.

ton speech, the Prime Minister extolled the virtues of "a regional order within which real freedom and material welfare can be maximised and the quality of life for all can be improved". The promotion of this state of affairs — its resemblance to Professor J.A. Lombard's book entitled *Freedom, Welfare and Order*⁹³ is too close to be co-incidental — is the goal he set for South Africa.⁹⁴ But despite the pronounced anti-Marxist strain of his expostulation, Mr P.W. Botha, in a press conference following his Carlton speech, still left open the possibility of Marxist states being included in a constellation.⁹⁵

● Because of what South Africa perceives as a common threat, military co-operation is a central element in the proposed constellation.⁹⁶ Included in Mr P.W. Botha's vision of a "geo-economic community of interests" in Southern Africa is "the concept of mutual defence against a common enemy".⁹⁷ Mr Pik Botha has likewise suggested that the countries in the sub-continent should "undertake joint responsibility for the security of the region."⁹⁸ The Prime Minister has also proposed a non-aggression treaty with the partners in a constellation — "an agreement which will involve the combating and destruction of terrorism, . . . and the mutual recognition of borders, . . . a joint decision to keep communism out of Southern Africa".⁹⁹ The implications of these statements are clearly far-reaching. It essentially means involving the members of a constellation in the maintenance of one another's security. Given the nature and perception of "terrorism" as a "common threat", the security in question could be both external and internal; it is, moreover, often very difficult to draw a clear distinction between the two. "Mutual defence" can be taken to mean that an attack on one member of a constellation will be construed as an attack on all, thus inviting a common response. It goes without saying that the "destruction of terrorism" at the very least means that countries will not provide sanctuary to "terrorists" operating against constellation partners. Keeping "communism" out of Southern Africa is of course linked to the "terrorist threat" in that South Africa typically regards "terrorism" as communist-inspired. As for the "mutual recognition of borders", this would imply the acceptance of the existence of independent homelands. A constellation is clearly based on the existing regional order (and such adjustments as may flow from South Africa's homelands policy). It should be added that the explicit advocacy of military co-operation was notably absent in Mr P.W. Botha's Carlton speech. This was probably a deliberate omission, resulting from a realisation that talk of military co-operation was highly prema-

ture and could discourage rather than encourage closer regional ties.

- A constellation can be interpreted as an attempt to seek regional "solutions" to regional problems. South Africa's disillusionment with Western peace initiatives in SWA/Namibia and Zimbabwe Rhodesia and generalised assertions about the harmful effects of great power involvement in the affairs of Southern Africa,¹⁰⁰ have led the Government to view a constellation as an alternative to Western settlement attempts.¹⁰¹ Another approach could be to see a constellation as a "form of insurance" or a fall-back position in the event of Western initiatives failing. South Africa has made it clear that it has a special responsibility towards the leaders of SWA/Namibia and Zimbabwe Rhodesia: "if we let (them) down", Mr Pik Botha said, "the whole of Southern Africa is going to disintegrate".¹⁰²

- A constellation is manifestly linked to South Africa's policy of separate development. Thus Mr P.W. Botha formulated his twelve "policy principles" within "the framework of multinational Southern Africa". The primary "policy principles" actually deal with the recognition and acceptance of multinationalism, "vertical differentiation" and "self-determination".¹⁰³ In similar vein, Mr Pik Botha spoke of the "basic ethnic movement" in Southern Africa which "will eventually include a constellation of States, Black and White".¹⁰⁴ The Prime Minister, probably realising that any identification of a constellation with apartheid would deter at least some prospective members, has however tried to divorce the two. In his Carlton press conference, he insisted that a constellation "has nothing to do with the policy of separate development" and that support for the constellation idea therefore did not amount to support of his Government's racial policies.¹⁰⁵ This statement is unlikely to remove suspicions about the linkage between a constellation and separate development because, as will be shown below, there is simply too much circumstantial evidence linking them.

- Although a constellation is related to South Africa's racial policies, the Government has acknowledged that the success of a constellation would require some changes in the policies. Mr Pik Botha singled out two issues necessitating "probing attention", viz. a fair division of land and political power, and unjust forms of racial discrimination.¹⁰⁶ Consolidated territory, it is presumably therefore hoped, would give the homelands the requisite political credibility (among blacks) and economic viability to enable them to play a meaningful role in any constellation.¹⁰⁷

● Apart from security considerations, South Africa sees various other common interests which could serve as the basis for and would be advanced by a constellation. Foremost among these — admittedly closely related to security — are peace, stability, order, development and prosperity.¹⁰⁸ Mr Pik Botha, perhaps rather prematurely, suggested that the countries of Southern Africa should develop “a common approach in the security field, the economic field and even the political field”.¹⁰⁹ Mr P.W. Botha added a further “binding principle” between the states in a constellation, viz. the Christian Western civilisation.¹¹⁰ This is a very familiar theme: it was already expounded in Dr Malan’s Africa Charter. Today, thirty years later, it is still bound to be viewed by blacks as an attempt to impose white values upon them in order to preserve white power. On a more mundane level, there are a host of other areas of common interest, including agriculture, commerce, transport, health, labour, power and energy, and scientific and technological development.¹¹¹ In his Carlton speech Mr P.W. Botha broadened the area of co-operation to include industrial development and exports, and suggested “the harmonisation of economic, fiscal, manpower and other policies”.¹¹² Some of the common interests have already been institutionalised, e.g. the Customs Union, Southern African Regional Commission for the Conservation and Utilization of the Soil (SARCCUS — established 1950) and Southern African Regional Tourism Conference (SARTOC — established 1973). These organisations are regarded by the Prime Minister as a basis for more comprehensive co-operation, but he was cautious on the question of further institutionalisation of co-operation. Acknowledging that it would be wholly inappropriate to imitate foreign models of co-operation, such as the European Economic Community which was designed for states of roughly equal levels of development, he merely stated the need for the creation of the “necessary structures . . . to handle effectively the numerous functions of co-operation”, leading to what he vaguely termed “a logical economic grouping”. He recognised that political will was the decisive factor in securing co-operation, adding that the political will “can often be significantly strengthened by expanding relations in non-political technical and economic fields”. In the final analysis, as Mr Botha correctly pointed out, “co-operation will have to be voluntary and will have to grow naturally and organically from within”.¹¹³ Such views represent a significant move away from earlier statements with their strong deterministic flavour, which assumed that non-political co-operation would necessarily spill over into other spheres.

- The constellation idea shows a strong dose of *realpolitik*: "there is no international friendship between nations", Mr P.W. Botha maintained, "only international interests"¹⁴ A constellation is clearly based on a community of interests. But he appears to attach a certain determinism to common interests, viz. that they would inevitably lead to increasing institutionalisation of relations, proceeding from the non-political to the political and even military spheres. The so-called spill-over effect seems inherent in the constellation idea.

- With its emphasis on stability and order, a constellation will inevitably be one of moderates, or "responsible leaders"¹⁵ (in South African terms.) This implies that South Africa's partners will be willing to co-operate on the basis of the existing regional political order and such changes as South Africa deems appropriate in its domestic arrangements. Mr P.W. Botha was probably conveying this very message when he spoke of the Republic's "willingness to go to the limit to avoid confrontation and to seek a *modus vivendi* which does not involve sacrifice of principles or undermining our stability"¹⁶

- There is considerable confusion as to precisely who the prospective members of a constellation would be. In probably one of the first attempts at defining the membership, Mr Pik Botha, in an address to the Swiss-South African Association in Zürich in March 1979, referred to "seven, eight, nine, ten" states with some 40 million people "south of the line Kunene/Zambezi"¹⁷ This would have included South Africa, SWA/Namibia, Zimbabwe Rhodesia, the BLS states, Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda — thus countries already independent (if only by South African standards) or proceeding towards independence. This view is in line with Mr P.W. Botha's earlier statement (in February) that "independent states" were the basis of co-operation in a constellation.¹⁸ The Premier subsequently broadened the base of a constellation to include both independent and non-independent members; in his tour of the self-governing (non-independent) black homelands he in fact canvassed the idea of a constellation and later reported a positive reaction on the part of homeland leaders.¹⁹ Yet a further change in composition was to follow: Mr P.W. Botha announced that urban blacks, too, could be accommodated in the constellation design.²⁰ In his Carlton speech, the Prime Minister dealt specifically with the issue of membership of a constellation, but it failed to remove the confusion. The first category was "national states within South Africa's boundaries", i.e. dependent homelands. Yet he had said, as quoted earlier, that members of a constellation will maintain "their individual sovereign status". The condition of

sovereignty of course precludes non-independent territories. Second, countries with which some co-operation and economic interaction already exist, such as members of the Rand Monetary Area and Customs Union. This refers to the BLS states and also independent ex-homelands. Third, he left open the possibility of including other countries in the region, hoping that Zambia, too, would join. There was no mention, however, of including urban blacks.¹²¹

● Not surprisingly, there is a good deal of uncertainty about the institutional framework needed to regulate relations between the widely disparate prospective members of a constellation. The Prime Minister envisaged, as a first step, the creation of "committees" in prospective member countries, apparently to prepare the groundwork for inter-state organs.¹²² This would be followed by the establishment of "international secretariats" which would be charged with executive functions.¹²³ The picture becomes vaguer as one proceeds to the next level, viz. the political superstructure or the organ whose decisions will be implemented by secretariats. Mr Pik Botha has spoken of a "Southern African directorate" composed of all member countries and meeting annually.¹²⁴ A National Party press advertisement called it a "Council of States",¹²⁵ a concept later also used by Mr P.W. Botha in his Carlton speech.¹²⁶ As for its powers, the advertisement states that it "will . . . not be a central or federal super-government exercising sovereignty over member states". Erroneously, the EEC is then cited as an analogous example of such an organ.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, mention of secretariats as executive agents suggests that the "directorate"/"Council of States" would be more than a mere consultative or deliberative organ but would be empowered to take decisions on specified common matters. How decisions would be reached, whether they would be binding and on which matters such decisions can be taken, have not been spelled out. Regarding subjects fit for deliberation, Mr Pik Botha has said that even "political dispensations" could be discussed, provided each nation's self-determination is respected.¹²⁸ This seems a departure from South Africa's established adherence to the principle of domestic jurisdiction, but internal affairs can hardly be excluded from the agenda if the Foreign Minister favours a "common approach" in the "political field".¹²⁹ The Prime Minister's Carlton speech, while showing a greater appreciation of political factors than previous statements, still failed to remove all confusion about the structuring of a constellation. "The concept 'constellation of states' does not primarily denote a formal organisation, but rather a grouping of states with common interests and develop-

ing mutual relationships, and between which a clear desire to extend areas of co-operation exists." Unlike the National Party's cited press advertisement, he said foreign models of co-operation such as the EEC were unsuited to Southern African conditions. More important, he conceded that "(I)n taking into account political realities, it will not be possible, for the present, to establish common consultative structures and secretariats". Yet, the "comprehensive system of co-operation" he envisaged for the region "will only be able to function successfully if it is eventually supported by an efficient institutional framework".¹³⁰ The Carlton statement in effect admits that previous official pronouncements on the creation of formal structures were premature and failed to give due consideration to political factors. The long-term aim nonetheless appears to be a formal organisation, presumably based on the assumption that the "political realities" then prevailing would be favourable.

- Flowing from the previous point is the contentious question of the ultimate political destination of a constellation. In this regard official pronouncements are notably confused, even contradictory. At first, Mr P.W. Botha tended to evade the issue by stating that talk of a constellation evolving into a confederation or even federation was "premature",¹³¹ and should be left "to the future".¹³² In due course he became more forthcoming: in September 1979 he told the National Party's Transvaal congress that when permanent forms of co-operation emerged from a constellation, it could be called a confederation. Although adding that this was different to a federation, to which he was opposed,¹³³ he had said the previous month that the development of a constellation into a federation was a possibility (adding the rider "but I do not say it will come about").¹³⁴ Dr Piet Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development, also envisaged the development of a Southern African confederation¹³⁵ and left the door wide open for an eventual federation.¹³⁶ Dr A.P. Treurnicht, Minister of Public Works, not unexpectedly ruled out the possibility of a constellation developing into a federation.¹³⁷

- South Africa has claimed that there is a growing realisation among black Southern African states that it is in their interests to co-operate with the Republic.¹³⁸ While this is no doubt true of at least some of the region's black states, cognizance has to be taken of moves to lessen the dependence of black states on the Republic and thus to draw them out of the South African orbit. This found clear expression in the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference held in Arusha, Tanzania, in July 1979.¹³⁹ Even if black states in the sub-continent appreciate the

need to co-operate with South Africa, this decidedly does not mean — as official spokesmen seem to assume — that these states necessarily favour increasingly close and institutionalised ties with the Republic. It is simply wrong to assume that black states — particularly Botswana, Lesotho and also Swaziland — see the creation of a constellation as inevitable, desirable and in their interests. This statement will be explained below; suffice it to caution again that the spill-over phenomenon is not necessarily operative. The negative reaction to the constellation idea from Botswana and Lesotho¹⁴⁰ bears this out. Even the Kwa-Zulu leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, has come out against the proposal.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, positive reaction has come from Zimbabwe Rhodesia¹⁴², SWA/Namibia¹⁴³, Transkei¹⁴⁴, Bophuthatswana¹⁴⁵, and, as mentioned, dependent black homelands.

- The list of positive and negative responses to the constellation proposal suggests a pattern: those favouring it are presently either international “outcasts” or fighting a revolutionary war, or simply parts of South Africa itself. Mr Pik Botha’s statement that international recognition for Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Zimbabwe Rhodesia and SWA/Namibia (when independent) was unlikely and the emphasis on their having to join forces against “radical onslaughts”¹⁴⁶, inevitably creates the impression that a constellation could be a defensive association of “pariahs”.¹⁴⁷

- South Africa sees a definite leadership role for itself in a constellation. It has initiated the idea and sees itself well placed to give effect to its proposal.¹⁴⁸ In fact, it is argued that South Africa’s “resources, experience, acclimatised technology and the geographical proximity to the other states of Southern Africa . . . lends irresistible momentum to the idea (of closer association in Southern Africa)”¹⁴⁹ This statement again illustrates the deterministic notions attached to regional co-operation. In his Carlton speech, the Prime Minister was more cautious, saying that South African assistance to countries in the region “can lead to the creation of a climate conducive to development and regional solidarity”. The achievement of “a more equitable regional distribution of economic development in Southern Africa” was in fact a central theme in Mr Botha’s Carlton speech. To this end, an inter-departmental “Committee for Economic and Development Co-operation in Southern Africa” (KEOSSA) had been established by the Government. The Prime Minister also held out the possibility of a development bank for Southern Africa being established.¹⁵⁰

- The sub-continent’s mineral wealth features prominently in South African statements on a constellation. Mr Pik Botha, for

example, said: "We (in Southern Africa) must accept that we have enough raw materials and material means to work out our own destiny."¹⁵¹ The implication of such statements is that the countries in the region can use their mineral wealth as a bargaining counter in their foreign relations, or even that they consider their raw materials so vital to particularly the West that the latter would be unable to inflict serious "punishment" if states in the region preferred internal solutions rather than international settlements of their conflict situations.

- To give effect to the constellation idea, the Prime Minister has assigned a primary role to the South African private sector. Their involvement not only reflects the importance of economic considerations in a constellation, but is also a major manifestation of Mr P.W. Botha's new commitment to "the principles of free enterprise and the market mechanism". He is patently keen to harness the resources of private enterprise in pursuit of the Government's regional designs and to establish a mutually beneficial partnership between government and big business. Development co-operation between governments, he maintained, "benefits private enterprise in the long term by contributing to order and stability in the region in question". In a section of his Carlton speech headed "The important contribution of our business sector to a Southern African strategy", the Prime Minister made it plain that "the greatest real contribution" to the extension of co-operation between states "lie (*sic*) in the domain of the business sector"; governments can only "create a framework"¹⁵². It can reasonably be inferred that private enterprise will be co-opted to prepare the groundwork for the creation of formal inter-governmental structures. By involving the private sector to pave the way, the Government clearly hopes to circumvent the inevitable political difficulties attached to official overtures to independent black states.

- Finally, reference again has to be made to the link between a constellation and South Africa's racial policies. It is hardly possible to escape the conclusion that a constellation is to some extent, at least, an attempt to resolve certain dilemmas in the policy of separate development — despite the Prime Minister's insistence that a constellation has nothing to do with the Government's racial policies. First, the official policy switch to involve dependent black homelands in a constellation appears to be an attempt to politically accommodate homelands refusing to accept independence. Second, the belated inclusion of urban blacks was probably similarly motivated by the need to provide them with political participation somewhere between a patently insufficient municipal status and power-sharing with whites, Indians and

Coloureds. Third, the Prime Minister has admitted that a constellation could resolve the highly contentious issue of black nationality.¹⁵³ Presumably, homeland blacks — whether in independent or dependent homelands — would become homeland citizens (thus exercising their political rights there) while remaining South African nationals (and thus entitled to South African passports). Fourth, the pressing issue of homelands consolidation could perhaps be eased somewhat in that white landowners could remain on land transferred to self-governing homelands because these homelands will remain integral parts of the Republic and the whites thus affected entitled to South African protection. A constellation could, however, also be used to effect a drastic re-drawing of Southern Africa's frontiers. Mr P.W. Botha has held out the possibility of "an eventual greater unity" between some present and former black homelands and Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.¹⁵⁴ This kind of thinking is nothing new; separate development theoreticians have long been proposing such drastic territorial partition.¹⁵⁵

The viability of the constellation idea

It must be emphasised at the outset that the idea of closer regional co-operation in Southern Africa has much to commend it. There are a variety of common interests of a technical, non-political nature which make co-operation between South Africa and black states in the region a matter of common sense. Such co-operation, as mentioned, already exists and has to a significant extent also been institutionalised. The constellation idea, as initially formulated, sought to extend the frontiers of co-operation to the more contentious political and military spheres and is also aimed at giving increasing institutional expression to these relations. In his Carlton speech, the Prime Minister however somewhat modified these earlier ideas. In this section, the viability of the constellation design will be assessed on the basis of what Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel term four pattern variables. A pattern variable, which is simply described as "a general category which interconnects social, economic, political, and organizational factors"¹⁵⁶, serves as a useful guide to the nature of the interaction to be expected in the kind of "subordinate system"¹⁵⁷ envisaged by the constellation idea. The four pattern variables, which will each be considered briefly, are the nature and level of cohesion, the nature of communications, the level of power, and the structure of relations.¹⁵⁸

(i) The nature and level of cohesion

Cohesion, as used by Cantori and Spiegel, refers to "the degree of similarity or complementarity in the properties of the

political entities being considered and the degree of interaction between these units". Cohesion can be subdivided into three categories: social, economic and political.

Social cohesiveness, with its focus on ethnicity, race, language, religion, culture, history and consciousness of a common heritage, is clearly low between white South Africa and the black states in the region. Among the black states, social cohesiveness is of course relatively high.

Economic cohesiveness refers to the distribution and complementarity of economic resources and also the character of trade patterns. South Africa's dominant position and the dependence of neighbouring black states on the Republic is obvious enough without entering into details. The constellation idea is largely predicated upon existing economic realities in the region and seeks to strengthen and formalise economic relations to a greater extent. The Customs Union would be seen as a starting point: first, its membership could be extended and second, the various members could then presumably proceed to the next rung on the ladder of economic integration. This would mean, as mentioned earlier, a common market. Given the requirements for a common market¹⁵⁹, there are indeed formidable obstacles in the way of creating one in Southern Africa. One of the major barriers is South Africa's racial policies and practices, which virtually rule out the free movement of labour between member countries. It should be mentioned that Mr P.W. Botha, in his Carlton speech, stated that in order to achieve equitable regional development "unnecessary restrictions on the flow of goods and services, as well as the flow of production factors should be avoided".¹⁶⁰ Once this has been brought about, the way to a common market will be clear. In the meantime, the best South Africa can hope for is to extend the membership of the Customs Union to, for example, Zimbabwe Rhodesia and SWA/Namibia upon their independence — and to try and ensure mutual acceptance and recognition of members of such a wider Customs Union. Independent former homelands have entered into customs and also monetary agreements with South Africa but since they are not recognised by the BLS states, they are unable to attend the full meetings of the Commissions of the Customs Union or Rand Monetary Area as equal members.

Any discussion on closer economic ties between black states has to consider a very fundamental issue, viz. whether this would actually be in the interests of the black states. Important political as well as economic considerations come into play. First, it is perfectly understandable that politically independent states would wish to achieve as large a measure of corresponding economic

independence as possible. Second, there is a limit to the extent to which an independent state would wish to formalise an economic dependency relationship. Third, the political and ideological differences between South Africa and most of its black neighbours adds a further edge to their economic dependence on the Republic and is bound to circumscribe the extent of institutionalisation of economic relations. It should be borne in mind that the BLS states have long committed themselves to lessening their economic dependence on South Africa, while Botswana and Lesotho have (much more than Swaziland) been at pains to demonstrate their political distance from the Republic. Black states' determination to lessen their economic dependence on South Africa also manifested itself in the Arusha Conference referred to earlier.

The measure of political cohesiveness is determined by the pattern and degree of complementarity of types of regime.¹⁶¹ This is clearly low, given the fact that South Africa practices white minority rule as opposed to black majority rule systems elsewhere in the region (excluding SWA/Namibia). It is primarily because of profound political and ideological differences that there is strong reason to doubt whether a constellation composed of all the countries listed by Mr Pik Botha is feasible. It is difficult to conceive the BLS states joining a constellation with independent former homelands because participation as equals might imply recognition of the latter's independence. A similar consideration would apply if an independent Namibia not recognised internationally were to join. The presence of dependent homelands as constituent units is also bound to create problems because the BLS states may well maintain that sharing company with the homelands could be taken as conferring legitimacy and respectability on separate development. In addition, black states are normally reluctant to enter into formal and overt relationships with South Africa due to political considerations. It has to be said that these factors which may keep the BLS states out of a constellation, could indeed equally apply to an independent, internationally recognised Zimbabwe — even under a Muzorewa government.

Organisational cohesion deals with the possible effects of membership of the United Nations and regional organisations on general cohesion. Although often more guarded than their fellow African members, the actions and attitudes of the black Southern African states in the UN on matters relating to South Africa are generally speaking not conducive to organisational cohesion and only underlines their political differences with the Republic. The lack of organisational cohesion is further accen-

tuated by some black states' membership of the Organisation of African Unity and the exclusion of South Africa and its closest regional partners. The same applies to the Commonwealth. If a constellation led to increased institutionalisation of relations in the region, this will of course have a positive bearing on organisational cohesion.

The dominant cohesive factor in Southern Africa is obviously the economic one. Since this is in a sense "forced" cohesion based on economic dependence, it would seem both politically and psychologically a weak foundation for closer ties between South Africa and its black neighbours. If a constellation is seen by potential partners as a design to formalise their economic dependence, it is bound to fail. If, on the other hand, it is seen as an instrument of economic development, it will doubtlessly attract interest. The degree of economic cohesiveness will, however, be circumscribed by the lack of political cohesiveness. Fundamental political and ideological differences between South Africa and black states are a major centrifugal force and present serious obstacles to closer, more formalised regional relations. Social cohesiveness is also low between white South Africa and its black neighbours, but this is of less importance than the lack of political cohesiveness and can in any case be compensated for by other factors of cohesion. In fact, South Africa is trying to build a constellation on a basis in which race plays no role (as it did in the days of the Portugese empire and UDI) as a cohesive force. Instead, the emphasis is placed on common threats and interests which supposedly override racial (and also political) differences. As for organisational cohesion, the Government is clearly anxious that a constellation would produce increasing institutionalisation of relations. It should be cautioned that the spill-over factor is not necessarily operative: the institutionalisation of relations in non-political, technical spheres will not automatically spill over into the political and even military spheres. The political climate within and outside the region militate against any such deterministic notions.

(ii) *The nature of communications*

This aspect involves personal and elite communications, mass media and transport. Personal communication across national frontiers in Southern Africa is conducted by various means, e.g. telecommunication and tourism, while labour migration can be considered an important indirect means of communication. Because, with the exception of labour migration, personal communication is largely a one-way flow from South Africa outwards and occurs along racial lines, its political relevance should

not be exaggerated. Politically meaningful communication across colour lines and national frontiers is essentially on the elite level, although formal diplomatic ties do not exist between South Africa and most of the surrounding black states. Communication through the mass media is also primarily a one-way transaction. Transport, finally, is a major means of communication in Southern Africa, with the Republic serving as the communications hub of the region and all the other states to a greater or lesser degree dependent on South Africa's transport network. Black states in the region are actively trying to lessen this dependence, however, as evidenced in, *inter alia*, the Botzama highway linking Francistown and Kazungula; Lesotho's planned new international airport; the Tazara railway and moves to reopen the Benguella railway, and the Arusha conference mentioned earlier.

It can reasonably be argued that a closer association between the various states of Southern Africa in more than just economic matters would require an increased flow of communication between them. On the highest level, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the states involved is essential. Communication should also trickle down to the grass roots level and transcend the racial barrier and become a two-way flow between South Africa and its partners (and between the latter themselves). In this regard, South Africa's racial policies and practices clearly pose a problem, in the same way as it obstructs the formation of a common market with a free flow of factors of production.

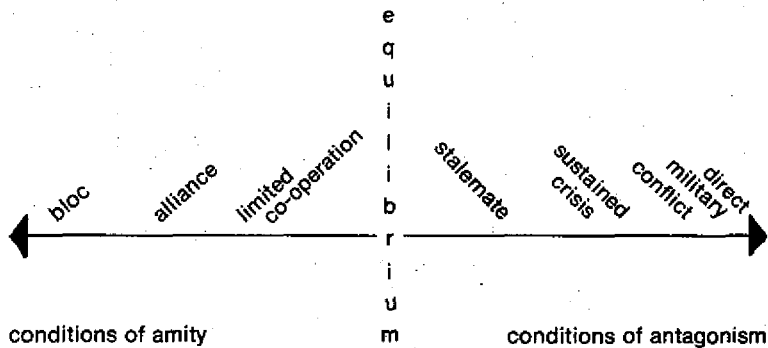
(iii) *The level of power*

Measured in terms of material and military components, it is obvious that there are vast discrepancies in the levels of national power between the states of Southern Africa. Profound differences in relative power need not necessarily obstruct closer relations. Thus weaker states may seek the protection of a stronger state. In Southern Africa, it is questionable whether many of the weaker states would wish to seek refuge in the Republic's military power. This would not only be politically unpalatable but also unfeasible as long as there is no shared perception of the threat against which they ought to be protected. Furthermore, it has already been pointed out that black states in the region may well view their economic inferiority *vis-à-vis* South Africa as good reason to loosen rather than strengthen ties with the Republic.

(iv) *The structure of relations*

By the structure of relations is meant the character of the relations between the states in the region, analysed in terms of the spectrum, causes and means of relations.

The *spectrum* of relations focuses on which states co-operate and which are in conflict. Cantori and Spiegel designed a spectrum of relations ranging from a bloc as the ultimate expression of amity, to direct military conflict as the extreme form of antagonism.



The state of relations in Southern Africa can best be depicted as one of limited or tentative co-operation, with clear elements of antagonism. A constellation is clearly aimed at extending the scope of co-operation and lessening the antagonism. Judging by official pronouncements, South Africa seems intent on creating an alliance, at least in the long run. An alliance, according to Cantori and Spiegel, involves an agreement between states to aid each other in specified ways, usually including military means. South African statements on "mutual defence" etc., fit in with an alliance. Talk of a "common approach" in the "political field" could imply even more, viz. a bloc where two or more states "act in international politics as if they were one political entity", according to Cantori and Spiegel. While the latter may well not be the Government's aim, this quite legitimate interpretation

illustrates once again the risks attendant upon imprecise and perhaps insufficiently considered statements.

The *causes* of relations consider the reasons for the prevailing state of relations and the implications for future relations.

The chances of creating a comprehensive Southern African alliance involving all the states Mr Pik Botha wishes to include in a constellation¹⁶², are slight under present circumstances. South Africa probably sees a common "Marxist" threat as the basis for an alliance. Cantori and Spiegel point out that a common enemy can indeed be "a stronger tie than mutual economic interest". The fact that South Africa perceives "Marxism" as the common enemy does, however, not mean that the other countries in the region also view it as a threat or that they rate it as important. This would seem to apply particularly to Botswana and Lesotho. A more fundamental obstacle in the way of a military alliance — and even a non-aggression pact — is that it would implicate the black parties in the entrenchment or defence of South Africa's domestic political order. While this may be of little or no concern to independent former homelands with little to lose in international politics, it probably weighs heavily with at least Botswana and Lesotho and may likewise influence an independent Zimbabwe and perhaps even Namibia.

The basic obstacle to closer military and political co-operation between black states and South Africa is the latter's racial policies. It also sets bounds to regional co-operation in other areas. Attempts at reducing or circumventing the negative, divisive effects of apartheid by emphasising factors of cohesion which cut across racial lines, will probably only produce limited and temporary success.

The *means* of relations refer to the instruments states employ to give effect to their relations. In the first instance, reference has to be made to the manner in which conflicts are resolved. In Southern Africa, the elementary diplomatic infrastructure which has an important function in conflict resolution, is largely absent. South Africa enjoys diplomatic relations with Bophuthatswana, Venda and (in a qualified sense) Zimbabwe Rhodesia, but not with the BLS states and Transkei. The BLS states refuse to recognise Zimbabwe Rhodesia and independent former homelands and thus have no diplomatic ties with them. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the various states of Southern Africa would seem a prerequisite for any closer association between them.

A second aspect deals with the consultative devices used by the states in the region. It has already been mentioned that a significant measure of institutionalisation of relations between South

Africa and black states in the region has taken place in non-political, technical matters. A constellation can be interpreted as an attempt to expand this process, both horizontally (to encompass more matters of a non-political, technical nature) and vertically (to include the more contentious political and military spheres). It is, however, recognised that Mr P.W. Botha in his Carlton speech modified earlier statements in this regard, although this comprehensive form of relationship apparently remains the long-term aim.

Conclusion

The greatest difficulty in assessing the constellation idea lies in the fact that it lacks a coherent intellectual basis. Without a clear conception of the substance of the idea, official pronouncements thereon are consequently vague and often contradictory. This, however, did not inhibit the proponents of a constellation from publicly expounding their idea with noted enthusiasm and conviction. Unfortunately, this was often done without due regard to the political climate in Southern Africa. The fact of the matter is that the states in the region on many issues operate on different cognitive maps. Their perceptions of "political reality" are therefore bound to differ. The constellation idea thus inevitably means different things to different people. Put more bluntly, South Africa has, at least initially, advocated the constellation idea with a notable lack of diplomatic sensitivity; the message was heavy on directness and light on diplomacy.

Mr P.W. Botha's Carlton speech indicates a growing awareness of the political implications flowing from divergent perceptions. Thus his modification of some of the initial over-ambitious elements in the constellation proposal. This specifically applies to the political and military dimensions of co-operation as well as the further institutionalisation of regional relations. The Carlton speech has indeed scaled down an initially rather grandiose design to more realistic and manageable proportions, given the nature of the Southern African political environment.

A further inference that can be drawn from the Carlton speech is that the focus of the constellation idea has now been narrowed to include primarily entities presently and formerly part of the territory of the Republic of South Africa. Thus the Prime Minister gave priority to the development of self-governing and independent "nation states". A constellation can therefore be seen as being, in the first instance, an "internal" arrangement to structure relations between present and former parts of the South African state. (This interpretation of course ties in with the earlier point about the linkage between the constella-

tion design and South Africa's racial policies.) Such an "inner" constellation, depending on the nature and extent of formal structures, may constitute a *de facto*, if not *de jure*, confederation, which could perhaps be a forerunner to an ultimate federation of South Africa.

It is recognised that a constellation could embrace non-South African territories, provided South Africa underplays the political and military dimensions and further substantive institutionalisation of relations. In his Carlton speech, the Prime Minister has in fact done just this, while at the same time placing renewed emphasis on co-operation for economic development. In this sense, a constellation would essentially be a generator of economic development in Southern Africa. If that were to happen, it can legitimately be asked whether a more neutral concept, such as an association of states, would not be more applicable. In this regard, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) provides an interesting parallel: its aims include the acceleration of economic growth and the promotion of co-operation in economic, technical and various other fields, and it operates through an annual ministerial conference and a series of committees.

In the final analysis, no South African foreign policy initiative can be considered without reference to the domestic base. Structural changes in South Africa's foreign relations are not feasible — least of all in Africa — without a domestic corollary. Black states will be more susceptible to the idea of a constellation or association of states in this subcontinent if it goes in tandem with a new dispensation which aims to satisfy not only the socio-economic but also the political aspirations of blacks — and especially urban blacks. Thus, the so-called "alienated elements" in the South African polity will have to be accommodated in the system in one way or another to ensure a viable substructure for regional co-operation.

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147. On the "pariah" concept, see Vale, P.C.J., "South Africa as a pariah international state", *International*

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 157. A subordinate system "consists of one state, or of two or more proximate and interacting states which have some common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social, and historical bonds, and whose sense of identity is sometimes increased by the actions and attitudes of states external to the system". *Ibid.*, pp. 6 & 7).
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BOOK REVIEW

NAMIBIA OLD AND NEW: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN LEADERS IN OVAMBOLAND

Gerhard Töttemeyer

C. Hurst and Co. London. 1978. 257 pp.

Ovamboland is at the very pivot of the conflict in Namibia. Not only does it contain the country's greatest concentration of population — nearly half of Namibia's people are Ovambos — but it is also the focal point of the territory's political, economic and military conflicts. As Namibia's most underdeveloped region and its main labour source — two factors which are not unconnected — Ovamboland provided the main impetus to the black nationalist and labour movements in the territory. It was there that SWAPO first launched its guerrilla war in 1966, and the South African Government made its most ambitious and extensive attempt to establish the institutional framework for an independent "ethnic" state.

Dr Gerhard Töttemeyer's study of Ovamboland therefore comes as a welcome addition to the political literature of Namibia. A reworking of a doctoral thesis Töttemeyer presented to Stellenbosch University in 1974, the book explores the development of Ovamboland from a "traditional society to a modern one" and attempts to pinpoint the main areas of conflict in the region.

The potential value of this work in an area in which so little serious research has been undertaken, is, however, undermined by the way in which Töttemeyer has chosen to approach his task. To begin with it is apparent that Töttemeyer has edited, rather than rewritten, the thesis he completed more than five years ago. Since then both the political situation in Namibia and Töttemeyer's views on that situation have changed significantly, with the result that the writer does justice neither to himself nor his subject matter. For example, the various references to the homeland, Owambo, which appeared in the thesis, have been replaced with the more neutral, geographical designation, Ovamboland, but essentially the book remains a study of a homeland, of homeland politics and the economics of homeland development.

Although much of Töttemeyer's own data suggests the existence of clearly defined class structures in Ovamboland, he dismisses the class thesis in half a paragraph (p. 9) and concentrates instead on locating the conflict in the region in the antagonism between "traditional" and "modern" elites. There is of course the obligatory section on migrant labour and the 1971 strikes, as well as a chapter on political parties, but these remain peripheral

to Töttemeyer's central concern.

Built into Töttemeyer's analysis is the assumption that the elites are "natural" leaders, and that the "masses" (i.e. everyone who does not qualify for inclusion within one or other of the elite groups) are politically inert and therefore passively follow the lead provided by the elites. Various unfortunate inferences flow from this assumption, one of them being that there is "no essential difference between the opinions of the modernising elites in Ovamboland and the political standpoint of SWAPO" (p. 197).

Although Töttemeyer has omitted the theoretical chapter of this thesis from the book, it is immediately apparent that he has used modernisation theory to structure his text. Assumptions of a dual economy, the inevitability of unilinear development and the inevitable antagonism of the "traditional" and "modern" pervade the work. One of the more obvious pitfalls of the modernisation approach adopted by Töttemeyer comes across in the absurd circularity of the pronouncement "... that no country can claim to be modern without being economically advanced and pursuing a progressive economic policy" (p. 142).

The untenability of the central assumption that there is a *necessary* antagonism between traditional and modern leaders, is clearly illustrated by the successful alliance between traditional leaders and sections of the emergent black bourgeoisie (Töttemeyer's "modernising elite") in the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance and other political organisations in Namibia. Strangely enough, Töttemeyer's own data suggests a strong and consistent alliance between the "commercial elite" (traders, businessmen etc.) and the traditional leaders in Ovamboland. That many of the other "elite groups" did show a preference for SWAPO does not necessarily mean, as Töttemeyer seems to assume, that this preference was a result of an antagonism between traditional and adopted ideologies or interests. The political positions adopted by the "modernised elite" (emergent petty bourgeoisie) can be more convincingly traced to such factors as the long-standing collaboration between traditional leaders and the South African authorities, the frustration of political ambitions by the traditional leaders' monopoly of power, and the frustration of economic aspirations by influx control and the system of migrant labour.

In spite of its defects, the book can still serve as a useful introduction to the political and economic problems of contemporary Ovamboland, particularly as so little research has been conducted into this vitally important region. There is much useful information to be gleaned from this study, and if you can filter

out Töttemeyer's more questionable assumptions, a fairly clear picture does emerge of the structure of interests and power in Ovamboland.

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Nashua (South Africa) (Pty) Limited
Nasionale Pers Beperk
Natal Tanning Extract Company Limited, The
Natal Witness (Pty) Limited, The
The National Mutual Life Association of Australia Limited, The
National Trading Company Limited
NCR Corporation of SA (Pty) Limited
Nedbank & Sytrets -- UAL Holdings Limited
Ots Elevator Company Limited
Ovenstone Investments Limited
Penny, John (Pty) Limited
Penny FitzPatrick Memorial Trust
Peterjays (Pty) Limited
Phelps Dodge Mining Limited
Pikington Brother (SA) (Pty) Limited
Pioneer Holdings & Finance Corporation Limited
Premier Milling Company Limited, The
Press Supplies Limited
Pretoria Portland Cement Company Limited
Price Waterhouse & Company
Protect Holdings Limited
Raphealy, Leo & Sons (Pty) Limited
Reel Lefebvre (Pty) Limited
Rembrandt Group Limited
Remmes Consolidated Holdings Limited
Retco Limited
Reunert & Lenz Limited
Rex Transform Clothing Company Limited
Richleigh Shoes (Pty) Limited
Rio Tinto Management Services (Pty) Limited
Roberts Construction Company Limited, The
The Santam
Schindler Lifts (SA) (Pty) Limited
Sealandair Shipping & Forwarding (Pty) Limited
Seardel Investment Corporation Limited
Sentrachem
Shell South Africa (Pty) Limited
Siemens Limited
Smith, C.G. & Company Limited
Smith, C.G. Sugar Limited
South African Associated Newspapers Limited
South African Bata Shoe Company Limited, The
South African Breweries Limited, The
The South African Manganese AMCOR Limited
South African Marine Corporation Limited
South African Sugar Association
South African Music Rights Organisation Limited
Standard Bank of South Africa Limited, The
Stewarts & Lloyds of SA Limited
Suid-Afrikaanse Steenkool-Olie- & Gas-korporasie Beperk (SASOL)
Suid-Afrikaanse Yster- & Staal-Industriële Korporasie Beperk (ISCOR)
Taubert & Corssan (Pty) Limited
Tiger Oats & National Milling Company Limited
Tongaat Group Limited, The
Total South Africa (Pty) Limited
Toyota South Africa Limited
Trust Bank van Afrika Beperk, Die
Truworths Limited
UDC Bank Limited
Union Carbide Africa and Middle East Inc.
Union Corporation Limited
United Building Society
United Tobacco Company Limited
Volkskas Beperk
Volkswagen of SA (Pty) Limited
W & A Investment Corporation Limited
Wiggins Teape (Pty) Limited
Woolworths (Pty) Limited