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SOUTHERN
AFRICA
IN A
GLOBAL
PERSPECTIVE

CHESTER A. CROCKEE

Dr Chester Crocker is the former United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, a post he held from early 1981 to April 1989. He is currently at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy of Georgetown University in Washington DC, and he is a Distinguished Fellow of the US Institute of Peace, which is an independent non-partisan government institution created and wholly funded by the US Congress.

Dr Crocker was born in 1941 and is married to Saone Baron, with three daughters. Before taking up his senior government appointment in 1981, he was Director of African Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University, and he had previously lectured in the Foreign Service Programme of the same university. His earlier appointments, after graduating from Ohio State University and Johns Hopkins University, included that of News Editor with Africa Report, lecturer at American University and Staff Officer with the National Security Council.

Dr Crocker is the co-author (with Richard Bissell) of South Africa into the 1980s, published in 1979. He is also the author of many articles and papers, including a notable one published in the American quarterly Foreign Affairs at the end of 1980, shortly before he took office, entitled South Africa: Strategy for Change, and one published by the SAIIA in 1981, South Africa's Defence Posture: Coping with Vulnerability. Most recently, Foreign Affairs published his article, Southern Africa: Eight Years Later, in mid-1989.

Dr Crocker first visited the SA Institute of International Affairs in 1979, when he spent over a month doing research at Jan Smuts House. On his recent visit to South Africa (November 1989) he was the guest of the Witwatersrand and Natal (Durban and Pietermaritzburg) Branches of the SAIIA. His visit marked the Golden Jubilee of these Branches of the Institute which were founded in 1939, five years after the establishment of the Institute itself and its Cape Town Branch in 1934. He addressed gala dinners in Durban and Johannesburg on 20 and 22 November 1989, respectively. This Paper is based on the texts of his speeches on those occasions.

It should be noted that any opinions expressed in this article are the responsibility of the author and not of the Institute.

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CHESTER A. CROCKER

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The South African Institute
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Jan Smuts House
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa

I. INTRODUCTION

It is a great pleasure for me to return to South Africa after an absence of several years, and to do so as a private citizen once again after eight and a half years in public service. I am attached to this region - Africa - and its peoples and, despite the many headaches I acquired along the way, my respect for them still grows. One reason for that respect is that I have come to believe that African leaders across the continent face the world's most daunting challenges. And some African leaders have not given up hope; they are not resigned to becoming a permanent, peripheral backwater which the dynamic parts of the world simply ignore and from which they increasingly disengage.

It is also a great pleasure for me to return to South Africa under the auspices of its Institute of International Affairs. Ten years ago the Institute and its distinguished leader John Barratt gave me outstanding support as a visiting scholar, so this is a sort of homecoming. While the Institute is without a trace of blame for what transpired when I entered government service, the fact is that I owe a lot to this institution. And I am not alone. The Institute, through its tradition of building international linkages and informing South Africans of the world beyond its borders, epitomizes what is so urgently required here: expanded involvement with the broader world. The lesson of the 20th century is that societies which cut themselves off from their global environment - or which are shunned and isolated by it - are doomed to fail, politically and economically.

II. THE IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT GLOBAL DYNAMICS

Tonight, I would like to offer some observations about global political dynamics and to draw some implications for this region's own dynamics. We live in interesting times, times of dramatic change and constantly shifting intellectual fashions. Two years ago, the Yale University historian Paul Kennedy triggered one such fashion by writing of the decline of America as a great power. The idea enchanted many Western intellectuals and

even some stockbrokers and bond traders who suddenly had more time to read books after the 1987 crash. But something happened to undermine the new fashion: the Soviets decided to decline first.

Today, having obviously won the Cold War, the West is engaged in debating what it all means, what new global system should replace the familiar one of the past 40 years, and how to assure that the victory of Western political values and economic liberties is permanent. In this heady atmosphere, all sorts of ideas germinate. One such notion is the fashionable doctrine that history is dead, that the political-philosophical-ideological struggles of man since Plato to define the perfect society are over: Western economic liberalism and democratic principles have won. At one level, of course, that is true, but that victory is a rather abstract proposition for most people in most nations.

The struggle to realize it in practical terms around the globe has a long way to go. Unlike the Namibians who have just participated in one of the most democratic experiences in African history, the majority of mankind lives under governments that were never elected and that probably would not survive free and fair elections.

So I have a problem with the notion that history is dead. It is certainly a growth industry in the Soviet Union where a forecaster recently quipped: "I can predict the future but the past changes almost every day." The burdens of history are evident in the struggles for perestroika: how do you move toward a market economy when the entrepreneurs have been killed off, and the people have forgotten the meaning of work? How does a governing party celebrating 72 years in power rewrite its past when that past includes the liquidation of 40 million Soviet citizens? I'm not so sure that history is dead in Europe or Asia either. Marxism, the last of the Utopian philosophies, most certainly is dead in Europe. One has to visit out of the way places like South Africa to find people who can, with a straight face, carry banners around saying things like "Workers of the World Unite". One has to visit places like Cuba, Ethiopia or North Korea to find people who run Stalinist regimes and who

believe that classical marxism - which I define as "ministerial ownership of the means of production" - can work.

Leninism is also dead in Europe. As a technique for conspiring to seize and hold a monopoly of power, Leninism is under basic challenge in Eastern Europe and the USSR. China's Leninists, by contrast, have just voted themselves another, perhaps final, term of office. In a sense, they are reverting to a deep historical tradition of seeking modernization without westernization and using the party and the army to crush dissent. This attempt will ultimately discredit both institutions, and Beijing's Leninists will fail. A great nation like China cannot realize its potential through repression and isolation from the world dynamics of westernization.

Within the decaying Eastern empire once centrally controlled from Moscow, the Brezhnev doctrine has been replaced, we are told, by the Frank Sinatra doctrine - each former satellite will be free to "do it my way", as the song goes. This decision unleashes the two most powerful ideas in modern western history - nationalism and liberalism. A symbol of all these trends is the extraordinary breaching of the Berlin Wall and the now legalized mass migration of East Germans to West Berlin and West Germany. Why did it happen and what does it mean? It happened because no other action by the bankrupt East German regime could avert an explosion on the front line of world politics, a territory hosting 400,000 Soviet soldiers. It happened because the Soviet Union recognized this and told the old leadership to stand aside before it was swept aside in a physical clash. We do not yet know when the new Germany will emerge from the death of marxism, nor do we know what roles will be played by nationalism and liberalism in the new Germany. But we do know that a new Europe will be built on these foundations, a new, more self-confident regional superpower may arise. Europe's voice - long muffled and weakened by the legacy of two world wars, the decolonization process and the responsibilities of the Cold War - may once again reach its potential.

Within the USSR, however, the primary alternative to a constantly

redefined marxism-leninism is the principle of nationalism. The Soviet leadership is now paying an enormous price for decades of a policy of "separate development" in which local orientations and loyalties have taken root in the party and state structures of fifteen union republics, eighteen autonomous republics, 23 autonomous provinces and 48 autonomous regions (all of which are themselves multinational). Sound familiar? Consider the debate currently under way in Moscow between one school that favours a confederal model of perestroika with sovereign republics enjoying greater cultural, political and economic autonomy, and another school that argues for an integrative perestroika in which "the individual rather than the group should be the subject of political rights", and where the USSR is everyone's common home. I did not make this up. I am quoting from the distinguished Berkeley University Soviet expert Gail Lapidus in the latest issue of Foreign Affairs. The question of national versus local jurisdiction is central to the future of this land of Great Russians, Azerbaijanis, Estonians, Kazakhs and Ukrainians. Western liberalism will have to shout to be heard at all.

III. THE THIRD WORLD IN PERSPECTIVE

My point is that history is not finished yet. Nor have we entered a golden age in which military power and armed conflict are strictly passé. And that is especially true in the so-called Third World - a category of nations that does not really exist but which is taken to mean everywhere except North America, Europe, the USSR, China, Japan, and Australia. For whatever the fate of these places, all the "isms" - even marxism - are still contending for influence in the Third World. 95 percent of all the wars that have occurred since 1945 have taken place in the Third World, and that horrible reality shows no signs of ending. Why is this so? After all, General Secretary Gorbachev and his team have apparently rejected the legacy of Third World expansionism they inherited and come to recognize that their Third World entanglements were a costly waste of time and money and political credibility. And many Americans are now arguing that we in the US should now concentrate our energies only on important

regions - East Asia and Eurasia - and disengage from the Third World. But that misses the point: it is not Moscow and Washington or Beijing and London that have caused the clash of "isms" and the hideous price tag of Third World turmoil.

In fact, a most persuasive case can be made that the world's great powers have by the very carefully ritualized nature of their competition actually restrained local conflicts. Sometimes, by their diplomatic involvement, as in the US and British efforts in Southern Africa over the last ten years, they have actually helped resolve such conflicts. And it is by no means clear that superpower disengagement from the Third World would by itself enhance regional stability in such places as the Persian Gulf, South Asia, the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa or Southeast Asia. In the first place, it is fatuous to equate US and Soviet involvements around the world. The purposes and results of their efforts differ fundamentally. Secondly, is it not likely that superpower disengagement could have a rather unsettling result, altering local power balances and even setting in train heightened regional arms races? Of course, it is theoretically possible that regional powers will learn from the US-Soviet example and settle their differences amicably. And, it is possible, too, that the arms exporting nations will adopt a mutual self-denying ordinance in an effort to restrain local conflicts. But I am not going to hold my breath waiting for these things to happen.

The reasons for conflict in the Third World lie elsewhere - in the inherent societal and regional frictions set in motion by the emergence of a global system of Western-style nation-states during the latter half of this century. Historically, independent nations have fought when they had conflicting goals and disagreed about their relative power. Within states, civil wars have occurred when the question of how to organize governmental power was in dispute or when the geographic limits of the nation itself were contested. The Third World will be the last arena to eliminate such conflicts because it represents those regions and societies most recently organized into a series of modern nation states. That process simultaneously imposes on these countries and their governmental lead-

ers an awesome range of challenges: how to build effective state institutions, how to organize economic systems to advance the general welfare, how to build new nations out of polyglot, multi-ethnic societies, and, finally, how to create a legitimate political order.

Thus, it should not surprise us that the Third World - consisting of the globe's poorest societies, those that can least afford the extravagant waste of violent conflict - remains a laboratory for the clash of "isms." Leninism, for example, has offered some political leaders a model for seizing and monopolizing power, in the name of the people but in the interest of themselves and their power base. Marxism has been utilized as a rationale for ministerial profiteering in the name of the people. Nationalism, often allied to a sort of crude anti-imperialism, has been used as a means to unity in fragmented societies, and a source of legitimacy that is otherwise lacking. It is not easy to build the future in Third World states, many of which have only a set of clichés for a past. When these Western "isms" do not suffice, we have seen leaders who exploit anti-Westernism itself - for that is essentially what Islamic fundamentalism represents - as an ideological rationale for holding power and organizing the state.

But, wait, I can hear you say: doesn't the track record of the past 40 years in the Third World give us fairly conclusive results from this laboratory of the "isms"? Is it not fairly obvious by now that democracy and free market economics are the answer? Just look at the newly industrialized countries, the so-called Asian Tigers, some of which are not only booming economically but moving toward more decent norms of political behaviour. Just compare the results in Botswana, to take a case nearer to home, with those in Tanzania or Burkina Faso! Or, if large numbers impress you, just consider the fact that much of Latin America has moved to democratic rule - or the results of economic liberalization in democratic India, a country that now boasts a middle class of some 200 million people. Surely, there's no contest, in fact, and history will end when more of the Third World simply wakes up to these realities. Surely, that day will also usher in an end to violent conflict in the Third World.

Well, I admit it's a strong case, but it also misses an awkward point: in much of the Third World there is no political accountability. That means there is no capacity on the part of the people and their local institutions to demand that national leaders do what they should do: respect the rule of law, resist the vast temptations of official corruption, permit a genuinely free press to operate, tolerate political opposition and create a climate where men and women can freely enjoy the fruits of their labour and entrepreneurial skill. To put it another way, in much of the Third World, leaders are in business for themselves and a rather narrow group of supporters, whatever "ism" they may use to rationalize their power. When the results of such rule become intolerable, governments are changed but usually by the army in the name of the people and whatever "ism" is handy. For the people themselves of such countries, nothing much alters after violent changes of government.

Third World nations that remain trapped in this morass of left and rightwing autocracy are the real losers of our age. Since they have nothing much to offer the dynamic, vibrant societies of the West - or, today, the failed Marxist societies of the East - their linkages to the world are eroded. Investors and bankers lose confidence and leave. In our "information age", they are not totally ignored. But the attention they receive is not like the attention received by successful societies: instead they become theme parks, Disneyworlds of barbarity and deprivation, places for which funds are raised by rock concerts. Saddest of all, these countries lose their best and brightest citizens. Unable to vote meaningfully and shape their destiny locally, they vote with their feet. Expatriates in the cities of Europe and North America bear witness to the agonies of Africa and the Middle East, Central America and Southeast Asia.

IV. SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

Let me shift the focus, now, by drawing certain implications for Southern Africa itself. I am not one of those in the West who have written off this region. During the 1980s, I was privileged to lead my country's

efforts to unravel the wars and reduce the polarization in this wonderful region. That experience leads me to say that the time has arrived for Southern Africans from the Cape to the Copperbelt to reflect on where they stand and to recognize the choices before them.

Since the second half of 1987, this region has seen the emergence of a peace dynamic that could transform it. This dynamic was crystallized with the signature by Angola, Cuba and South Africa in December 1988 of interlocking treaties that represent the final end of the colonial era in Africa. Namibia will soon achieve independence as South Africa ends its 75 years of quasi-colonial control. Angola will have a second chance, a second independence as Cuba ends its 15 year military intervention, setting the stage for Angolans to make peace with each other. Neither land has known peace since the early 1960s. Nor is this dynamic confined to Namibia and Angola. Zimbabwe's nationalist movements have buried their hatchets, and the countryside of that beautiful land is at peace for the first time in 20 years. In Mozambique, a delicate process of internal reconciliation is under way, backed by Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, the US, UK, and Soviet Union. In South Africa itself, something interesting and hopeful is happening just a few years after its citizens confronted the abyss of violence and destruction. Three years ago, on my last visit here, State President Botha told me that sanctions were my problem, not his. Today, a new State President is telling his power base that South Africa is not their private possession.

My purpose here tonight is not to claim credit for these developments, nor is it to deliver yet another American Sermon from the Mount. More useful, it seems to me, would be to identify certain principles derived from our experience in the 1980s and the ultimate success of the peacemakers. Southern Africans need to understand what has happened so they can build on it. One of those principles applied in the 1980s was realism. It never made sense to treat Namibia in isolation from its regional context, as if it were part of another planet. The question of Cuban troops in Angola was central to South African official thinking from the day they were introduced, just as South Africa's presence in Namibia

and its military intervention in Angola from Namibian bases were central to Angolan and Cuban thinking. Sometimes, when you face an intractable problem - like Namibia - it makes sense to break it down into pieces and seek to deal with them seriatim or by a series of trade-offs. That approach was tried and it failed because there were no trade-offs available within the context of a strictly Namibian settlement that could offer the basis for a deal. So we decided to link the intractable problem of Namibia to the seemingly intractable problem of Angola. This radically altered the structure of negotiation, expanding the range of trade-offs and the number of parties.

This leads me to a second principle of the 1980s negotiation: that one must give in order to get. No one capitulated in the Namibia-Angola settlement. Everyone gained. This is called a "positive sum game"; it is to be contrasted with the "zero sum game" in which one side's gain is automatically translated into the other's loss. Positive sum games become possible when purely coercive solutions are no longer within anyone's reach. When each party has a veto over the unilateral solutions of other parties, it becomes possible to think of peace without losers. That is what has happened in this region.

That is why doctrines based on violence - the armed struggle, destabilization, hit squads, the state of emergency, necklacing, the total onslaught - have been discredited. In that sense, referring to my earlier comments about conflict in the Third World, Southern Africa now has a chance to escape from the trap of war between the "isms."

My third principle concerns the idea of stalemate and equilibrium. Scholars of conflict resolution have long debated the question of when a conflict is ripe for resolution (the title of a fine book by the US Africanist Bill Zartman). My preferred principle is that solutions often emerge when the parties are in some rough balance in the power equation and when there is a real prospect that the level of mutual pain could increase if no solution occurs. That, in general terms, is the case in Southern Africa today - not only in Namibia and Angola.

Fourth, mutually advantageous negotiation occurs as a process, not an event. I am aware that for some this may look like a slippery slope toward capitulation while others may view it as an excuse for delay. But this kind of "old thinking" is flawed. Our experience in the 1980s demonstrates conclusively that creative diplomacy can create new facts and that each new fact changes the ultimate equation of essential compromise. It is partly a matter of changing the climate in which parties interact. It is partly a question of parties acquiring a stake in the success of their own efforts. But above all, the process of negotiation can enable the parties to understand accurately each other's interests and priorities so that deals can be struck.

Fifth, successful negotiation requires strong parties, not weak ones. I realize that some voices in this region see it differently; they hope to hold power by dividing the antagonists or to gain it by forcing their enemy's capitulation. But when people seek to hold or acquire power in this fashion, they end up working harder and harder to get less and less. Such logic leads not to victory but to a wasteland. Our diplomacy in the 1980s ultimately succeeded when the top authorities in Luanda, Pretoria and Havana realized how much of a stake they had in the unity and cohesion of their negotiating partners.

Sixth, negotiation can only succeed if it increasingly develops a common language that can form the basis of certain agreed principles. This is the crucial ingredient in pre-negotiations, and I must frankly state that your region and your country have some distance still to go in this regard. Southern Africa is still debating two conceptions of how the external world should support the goal of regional economic development: one model calls for the West to bankroll a solidarity fund for SADC without South Africa; the other calls for the West to fund a Marshall Plan for the whole region right now. Well, the hard truth is that the West is not going to support either one. The first is sheer nonsense in economic terms and the second is at present a political non-starter. The West will support Southern Africa once again when it is in our interest to do so, i.e. when Southern Africans decide to make a success of their common

destiny. Similar examples can be cited from the concepts and terminology of the internal South African debate: you cannot build a common language from phrases like "transfer of power" or "group rights".

Finally, I would underscore the principle of local responsibility for decisions. The US did not impose or dictate the Namibia-Angola settlement of December 1988. Nor did the US and the Soviet Union, acting in parallel, do so. The role of outsiders in such conflicts must be properly understood. That role is finite. Yes, it is true that we offered the concepts and stuck with them through good times and bad; and we also provided a legitimate vehicle of communication and mediation. And, it is true that Moscow at a certain point ceased its efforts to discredit our diplomacy - once it became clear that it could succeed - and actually developed its own brand of constructive engagement. But the three signatories to the New York Accords took the tough decisions, recognized their stalemate and hammered out a new common language and shared principles.

V. IS OPTIMISM WARRANTED?

I do not mean to imply by this last example that there is a direct comparability between the structure of the Namibian-Angola negotiations and the negotiations that could produce a post-apartheid South Africa. The situations are very different. The conflict in South Africa is an internal one and it can only be resolved by South Africans. It is also sui generis, unlike any conflict elsewhere in the Third World. No one, beyond your borders, is responsible for solving it. And there are very few role models. The USSR, the only modern state that has taken separate development as far as South Africa, is caught up in a web of nationality conflicts that risks making the place literally ungovernable. States that define themselves in multinational terms for the purposes of organizing power can only reap the whirlwind because nationalism is the philosophy of zero sum games. Even the second most powerful country on earth cannot make Apartheid work. For many South Africans, such comments are depressing. You are all familiar with the arguments and the reasons why your

problems represent an awesome challenge. I would like to stress the other side of the story, the reasons for hope. And they are many. I will cite a few:

- The majority of South Africa's people, whatever they may say, know in their hearts that they are all God's children and they must share or wreck their magnificent common land.
- Look around you at the rest of the Third World of which you are a part. Who do you wish to exchange places with? Despite the best efforts of party politicians, marxist intellectuals and, yes, the sanctioneers - you have not yet killed off the vibrant economy that remains a solid pillar for a free, democratic society. You are the envy of Soviet economic reformers. The Solidarity leaders of Poland would breathe a sigh of relief if they had access to the entrepreneurial genius available right here in South Africa. Chinese intellectuals would feel liberated in the atmosphere of your universities and your non-governmental organizations even under the wasteful and oppressive conditions of the state of Emergency.
- You have, by Third World standards, a very open society - and if my brief visit is any indication - you may become more open. Despite the call from some South Africans for collective punishment as the road to redemption - and the invitation from others that we in the West should do our damndest - your society and economy are still an integral part of the world system. And there are signs that these signals of political masochism by South Africans themselves are on the wane. When that happens, it signals that people on all sides are beginning to perceive their common interest in having the means to build their common future.

— It is true that many horrible things have taken place on South African soil. Physical and institutional violence still exists for the unenfranchised majority. But I would appeal that you look around you at the many societies that also experience these things and especially at those who have been able to transcend them. Every racial and cultural group in this great country has produced heroes and heroines: the best known are heroes of domination and resistance. The time has come to celebrate your peacemakers and reconcilers - and they are many. Every generation in every country writes its own history. In countries undergoing dramatic change, history is regularly rewritten. If you succeed, it will be in part because history has become a growth industry in South Africa.

— So, I would ask that South Africans look beyond your borders as well as within them. The external conditions you face may be the best you've had for decades. You are being invited to walk together and shape a common destiny. Most of us on the outside hope you will. Inside South Africa, a majority of people have now had the chance to look down into the abyss that awaits you - as sure as night follows day - if you do not. My own view remains, as it has long been, that South Africa has the best chance of any country on this vast continent to build a truly democratic and prosperous society.

Let me return to my main theme - the struggles still continuing between the vibrant, liberating philosophies that extend human freedom, and the dying ones that deny it and stultify it. History is to some degree shaped by these belief systems. But it has never been shaped by them alone: individual men and women have always played the crucial role, because only individuals - by their vision, courage, and ability to learn - make the hard choices that move institutions and entire societies. Think of some great individuals of our day. Many would cite Gorbachev, and I

will not disagree. But I would add others - Margaret Thatcher and George Schultz are on my list, for many reasons, but especially because they had the acumen and sheer courage to interpret accurately the death of marxism and the significance of Gorbachev.

And this is a final reason for hope. There are great men and women in the Third World as well, but they seldom have the same opportunity to shape their times. South Africa is richly endowed with great men and women in its political, cultural, religious and economic life. They have built political movements, corporate giants, labour unions, churches, newspapers, and marvels of engineering. But your great political leaders have never been wholly free. Some have been held literally behind bars. Others have been imprisoned by the limiting dogmas and institutions of exclusive nationalism and racism. When they become free, they will show the world why this is a land of hope.