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**WHAT DO WE THINK?**  
**A Survey of White Opinion on Foreign Policy Issues**  
**— Number Two —**

**Analysed by**  
**DEON GELDENHUYS**

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**OCCASIONAL PAPER**

**The South African Institute  
of  
International Affairs**



**GELEENTHEIDSPUBLIKASIE**

**Die Suid-Afrikaanse Instituut  
van  
Internasionale Aangeleenthede**

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The first survey of white opinion on foreign policy issues, also entitled What Do We Think?, was published by the SAIIA in 1982. The present Paper is the second in what is intended to be a biennial series of similar surveys.

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

WHAT DO WE THINK ?

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- Number Two -

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In November, 1982, the South African Institute of International Affairs published the first-ever scientific survey of white South African opinion on specifically foreign policy issues. Although the survey was undertaken as part of a larger study on South African foreign policy (which has since appeared)<sup>1)</sup>, it was decided at the time to repeat the survey after a two year interval. By comparing the findings, one could establish shifts and consistencies in white public opinion.

Like the first, this second survey was also conducted for the SAIIA by Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd (M & M).

As the title of the two studies indicates, these surveys were confined to the opinions of Whites. This is a limitation which is admittedly open to criticism. Thus it can be argued that although black opinion carries much less weight with government than white opinion, the foreign policy makers cannot afford to ignore the former. Furthermore, there is a clear link between external opinion on South Africa's domestic policies and local black opinion. The inclusion of black respondents would also have allowed for comparisons of their opinions with those of Whites. It could also have been revealing to sample the opinions of Coloureds and Indians on foreign policy issues on the eve of their entry into the new tricameral Parliament.

While a good case can thus certainly be made for a broader-based survey, the two all-white surveys can be explained on a number of grounds. With political power still the monopoly of Whites, South Africa's foreign policy making remains the exclusive preserve of the white elite. Insofar as the foreign policy makers take cognisance of domestic public opinion, they can therefore be expected to consider primarily white opinion. An entirely different, yet very real, consideration was cost. To have included black, coloured and Indian respondents would have meant a massive increase in the already considerable costs of the all-white surveys. It nonetheless remains the ideal to involve all four race groups in surveys of this kind.

To establish the content of white public opinion, the two surveys focused on three main areas: First, the respondents' knowledge of foreign affairs. Second, their opinions on a number of salient foreign policy issues, which could, among other things, indicate the respondents' threat perceptions and their "hawkish" or "doveish" inclinations. Third, correlations between opinion on external and certain contentious domestic political issues. Except for three minor changes - to accommodate changes in the political environment in the two-year interval - exactly the same questionnaire was used in the two surveys.

The political developments that have taken place since the earlier survey was done, seem to have influenced white opinion - or vice versa. On the domestic front, the most important event in white politics was undoubtedly the referendum on the new constitution. Held in November 1983, the referendum produced a two-thirds majority in favour of implementing the new deal that provides for a tricameral Parliament for Whites,

Coloureds and Indians. The approved constitution comes into effect in September 1984.

Externally, South Africans' main preoccupation has been developments in Southern Africa. The Republic's relations with most of its neighbouring black states steadily deteriorated from 1980 onwards. It was in that year that the banned African National Congress (ANC) began with a new campaign of sabotage aimed at both hard and soft targets inside South Africa. The Republic responded with military attacks on and economic pressure against adjacent black states suspected of harbouring ANC insurgents. This new forward or offensive strategy was soon labelled "destabilisation" by Pretoria's critics. The main targets of South Africa's wrath were Mozambique and Lesotho. Meanwhile South Africa continued to take its war against SWAPO into Angolan territory.

The end of 1983 and the first months of 1984 saw some startling developments in conflict-ridden Southern Africa : South Africa entered into peace agreements with three black states; Swaziland, Angola and Mozambique. The most celebrated of the treaties is the Accord of Nkomati, concluded between South Africa and Mozambique in March 1984.

It is against this background that some revealing shifts in white opinion over the past two years have to be viewed. The most significant - albeit not radical - changes concern questions of security and war, with Whites becoming less threat conscious, more conciliatory towards "enemies" and also less gloomy about South Africa's future. On domestic (racial) issues, the verligte point of view has gained some ground. Set against these changes is a strong pattern of consistency, where responses to most of the questions were remarkably similar in the two surveys.

The findings of these surveys can be compared with those of a recent survey of elite opinion on South African foreign policy<sup>2</sup>). In this pioneering study, the opinions of seven South African elite groups, including Blacks, Coloureds and Indians, were sampled. Among the wide range of questions put to the elites, were many of those used in our two surveys of white public opinion on foreign policy issues.

2. SURVEY METHOD

Both surveys were conducted by M & M by means of a self-completion questionnaire (see annexure for the second questionnaire) sent to M & M's nationally representative white consumer panel. The panel for the 1982 survey consisted of approximately 2 400 members, and of some 2 200 for the present survey. The questionnaires for the second survey were sent out in April 1984 and the bulk of the responses was received within four weeks. The vast majority of the 1 839 completed questionnaires on which the results are based, were subject to a slight weighting procedure to ensure that the demographic characteristics of the sample corresponded with that of the total white population. In the earlier survey, 1 999 questionnaires were returned and it was not necessary to apply a similar weighting procedure. The weighting has a negligible effect on the results of the survey.

Approximately one-third of M-& M's panel members are normally replaced each year. At the very most half the members on the panel for our 1982 survey would still have been on the panel for the second survey.

The composition of the 1984 sample according to the respondents' sex, age, home language, household income and party political loyalties was as follows :

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	1 839	100,0
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	913	49,6
Female	926	50,4
<u>Age</u>		
16 - 24 years	440	23,9
25 - 34 years	396	21,5
35 - 49 years	473	25,7
50 years or older	530	28,8
<u>Language</u>		
Afrikaans	1 055	57,4
English	785	42,7
<u>Monthly income</u>		
Under R600	112	6,1
R600 - R1 199	615	33,4
R1 200 - R1 999	545	29,6
R2 000 or over	567	30,8
<u>Political party</u>		
	N = 1 505*	
National Party (NP)	889	59,1
Progressive Federal Party (PFP)	275	18,3
Conservative Party (CP)	201	13,4
New Republic Party (NRP)	84	5,6
Herstigste Nasionale Party (HNP)	32	2,1

\*The determination of party loyalties is based on responses to the question on how respondents would vote if a general election were to be held now (i.e. April 1984). Of the total sample of 1 839 respondents, 1 637 were registered voters, but 7,2% of them indicated that they would not vote. This leaves a figure of 1 505.

Although criticism can be levelled against the use of an existing consumer panel (instead of a sample drawn specifically for the survey) and postal questionnaires (as opposed to personal interviews), M & M's own political surveys have proved the reliability of this particular survey method. For example, a survey conducted in August - September 1983 found that 67,4% of the votes cast in November 1983 referendum on the new constitution would be in favour and 32,6% against. The actual result was 66,3% in favour of the new deal and 33,7% against. Two months before the April 1984 general election, an M & M opinion poll found that 57% of the voters would support the National Party, 22% the official opposition, the Progressive Federal Party, 11% the New Republic Party and 8% the Herstigte Nasionale Party. In the event, the National Party polled 57,7% of the votes cast, against 19,7% for the official opposition. The New Republic Party gained only 6,9%, whereas the Herstigte Nasionale Party fared much better with 14,2% of the votes. M & M's predictions of support for the two major parties were nonetheless remarkably accurate.

With minor changes, the same list of questions was used in our two surveys. A statement dropped from the second survey read: "In the light of the threat against South Africa young women should also be called up for a form of compulsory military service." Because there were a number of other questions that focus on respondents' threat perceptions, this statement could justifiably be omitted. In its place (the questionnaire had to be the same length for the two surveys - not least for reasons of cost) we put the following statement: "Mozambique can be trusted to carry out the terms of the recent non-aggression pact with South Africa." Given the novelty and high visibility of the Nkomati Accord, it seemed important to sample white reaction to the agreement. Finally, the wording of one statement was brought in line with recent events. "The time has arrived for Coloureds and Indians to sit with Whites in the same Parliament", it was stated in the 1982 survey. This has been changed to: "It is to be welcomed that Coloureds and Indians will serve with Whites in the same Parliament." Four response options were given to each of the 14 statements contained in the two surveys: definitely agree, inclined to agree, definitely disagree and inclined to disagree.

A brief word should also be said about the survey method used in the study of elite opinion on South African foreign policy. A stratified selected sample of 731 individuals of elite status was chosen, representing seven elite groups. Five of the groups were exclusively white: politicians, bureaucrats, media, academics and business. Blacks formed a separate group and Coloureds and Indians jointly the seventh. The overall percentage response to a postal questionnaire was 61,2, ranging from a 91,1% high for the academic elite to a 36,1% low for the black elite. The number of responses per elite group on which the survey results are based, were as follows: business - 51; academic - 83; media - 70; political - 69; bureaucratic - 90; Black - 39, and Coloured and Indian - 45. For our study we will only be interested in elite responses to those statements that also feature in our two surveys.



### 3. A COMPARISON OF SURVEY FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Maggie Versus Masire : What The White Public Knows

In the case of policy makers, their level of knowledge of public policy issues is a crucial variable determining the quality of decisions. Among the general public, one can hardly expect a level of knowledge approximating that of the policy makers. For one thing, the man in the street simply does not have access to the same specialised sources of information. Knowledge of public policy issues, we pointed out in our first survey, is not a prerequisite for the ordinary citizen holding an opinion thereon. However, the more knowledgeable a person is, the better the chances that the related opinion will be relatively sound or balanced.

To get an indication of the white public's knowledge of public policy issues, the two surveys first asked respondents to provide the names of eight prominent public figures in South Africa and abroad. The percentages of correct responses in the two surveys were as follows :

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
	(N = 1839)	(N = 1999)
Prime Minister of Britain (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher)	98,0	94,4
President of Mozambique (Pres. Samora Machel)	89,5	74,6
Prime Minister of Zimbabwe (Mr. Robert Mugabe)	91,7	88,2
SA Minister of Defence (Gen. Magnus Malan)	88,1	72,9
Prime Minister of New Zealand (Sir Robert Muldoon)	37,0	69,5
President of France (Pres. Francois Mitterand)	60,4	56,3
President of Botswana (Dr. Quett Masire)	12,4	5,5
Director General of SA Dept. of Foreign Affairs	6,8	41,8
(1982: Dr. Brand Fourie; 1984: Mr. Hans van Dalsen)		

With the exception of the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister of New Zealand, all the incumbents have become better known to the South African public over the past two years. President Machel's improved rating is obviously due to the highly publicised new relationship between Pretoria and Maputo. General Malan similarly owes his improved position to the considerable media exposure he has enjoyed over the past two years: he was frequently in the news, helping make war and peace in Southern Africa.

Although Botswana's head of state has more than doubled his familiarity and swapped the position at the bottom of the list with the Director General of Foreign Affairs, he remains a little known leader in South Africa. Compared with Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Botswana does not feature prominently in South Africans' perceptions of their regional environment.

In the 1982 survey, 12% of the respondents erroneously named Chief Lucas Mangope, President of Bophuthatswana, as Botswana's head of state. In the latest survey, this figure dropped to 6%. It is not surprising that Mr. van Dalsen is virtually unknown to the white public. He has been in office for only two years (after his predecessor's sixteen years) and, more important, he adopts a very low public profile compared with Dr. Fourie. The fact that over 60% of the respondents failed to answer this particular question might nonetheless indicate an awareness of a change of incumbent.

Prime Minister Muldoon's greatly reduced ranking can also be explained by events. In 1981, a South African rugby team undertook a highly controversial tour of New Zealand, thus placing Mr. Muldoon in the limelight. Since the latest survey was conducted, Mr. Muldoon has been replaced as Prime Minister by Mr. David Lange. He too may become a familiar figure in South Africa as the controversy over a future All Black rugby tour to South Africa heats up.

When the total sample of respondents is broken down into sub-groups, one finds that some variables have a bearing on people's opinions. The 1982 survey found that men were generally a good deal better informed than women. No similarly distinct trend emerged with regard to two other variables, language and party political preferences. In the earlier survey answers to the eight factual questions mentioned showed that income level and age influenced respondents' degree of knowledge of public affairs. Members of the highest income group tended to be best informed and those in the lowest group the least informed. Similarly, people 50 years or older were generally better informed than their juniors, with the youngest group (16-24) displaying the greatest measure of ignorance.

The later survey confirmed most of these trends, based on responses to the eight questions. Men were consistently and considerably better informed than women; among income groups the highest earners were most knowledgeable and the lowest the least knowledgeable; likewise, the over-50s were clearly best informed and the under-24s the least informed. An important difference between the two surveys concerns the influence of party political support as a variable. In the 1984 survey, HNP supporters were consistently the least knowledgeable. At the other end of the scale, NRP supporters fared the best.

Both surveys included four further questions to test respondents' knowledge of public policy issues. The first asked what UN Resolution 435 deals with. Over three-quarters of the respondents in 1984 knew it was related to the SWA/Namibian issue, against 61% in 1982. Like the answers to the eight questions already referred to, responses to the present question confirm that knowledge is related to income, sex and age.

The next two questions asked respondents what the abbreviations ANC and SWAPO stand for. The two surveys registered virtually identical responses. Nearly 80% correctly indicated that ANC stands for the African National Congress; when the number who used "Council" instead of "Congress" is added, the figure in both surveys exceeded 90%. The South West Africa People's Organisation was correctly identified by about 87% of the respondents in both surveys.

Finally, respondents were asked whether the United States allows South Africa to buy military arms from her. In 1982, two out of every three respondents correctly indicated that the USA forbids arms sales, whereas in 1984 three out of every four respondents gave the correct reply. Conversely, a significantly smaller number of respondents were misinformed on this question in 1984 compared with 1982.

Too much should not be read into the relatively high level of correct responses to the various factual questions. They were all admittedly

simple and dealt with topical matters of immediate relevance to South Africa. One would indeed have been surprised if the degree of knowledge had been lower. Perhaps the results do no more than confirm the general rule that the public at large is well informed only on those foreign policy issues that are of direct concern or heavily publicised and relatively easy to comprehend. One should nonetheless take cognizance of the role of certain variables in determining white South Africans' knowledge of public affairs.

### 3.2 Carry A Big Stick In A Dangerous World: The White Public's Threat Perceptions

This section of the questionnaire deals with issues both more important and interesting than the public's level of knowledge. The focus is now on the white community's perceptions of threat and of ways to combat the threat. In 1982, the expressions "total onslaught" and "total national strategy" featured prominently in official statements. Two years later, these terms are much less in evidence; they might even be falling into deliberate disuse. Does this mean that South Africa is today less threatened than in 1982? This section looks at white South Africans' answer to the question. We will also refer to the perceptions of elite groups.

Respondents were presented with 14 statements and could choose any of the four response options. In the subsequent discussion, the terms "agree" and "disagree" will mostly be used, each being a combination of the "inclined" and "definitely" agree and disagree responses. The very small "no response" percentages are not indicated in any of the following tables, but they can be calculated from the figures given.

#### 3.2.1 The threat that can never be taken too seriously

In view of the South African government's long-standing preoccupation with a communist threat against the country, respondents were asked to react to the following statement: "The communist threat against South Africa is exaggerated by the government." In both surveys no less than 79,9% disagreed with the statement; 18,4% agreed in 1982 and 18,8% in 1984. The vast majority of white South Africans seem to share the government's perception of a serious communist threat and they do not believe that the threat has lessened in the past two years.

A breakdown of these aggregate figures for both surveys reveals significant variations of opinion between the two language groups and between the followers of the PFP and other parties. The other variables - sex, age and income - produced no similar differences.

In the 1984 survey, 87.8% of the Afrikaans respondents disagreed that the government exaggerated the communist threat, against 69,1% of the English-speakers; these figures closely correspond with those of 1982. The number of party followers disagreeing with the statement in 1982 and 1984 was as follows :

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
NP	90,6%	93,6%
PFP	48,0%	56,1%
CP	87,5%	(NCP) 89,6%
NRP	75,0%	77,7%
HNP	84,4%	81,8%

English-speakers and PFP supporters - two categories that overlap to some degree - were the only two sub-groups registering significant doubts about the credibility of the communist threat as perceived by the government. English-speakers' reservations should not be exaggerated, for seven out of every ten of them agreed with the government's assessment of the threat. By contrast, less than half the PFP supporters took this view. Perhaps followers of the PFP, more than those of any other white political party, were concerned about the threat to security resulting from the government's racial policies. The other feature of PFP opinion is that in 1984, 8% fewer disagreed with the statement on the communist threat, compared with 1982. Put differently, the number of PFP supporters who said the government exaggerates the communist threat, has grown by 8% over the past two years. This might be explained by South Africa's recent agreements with neighbouring states and the setbacks they supposedly represent for the Soviet Union. Opinion among the followers of the other parties has remained remarkably consistent since 1982.

Among the elite groups, disagreement with the statement was greatest among politicians (94,1%) and bureaucrats (82,8%). These findings are not surprising, for the politicians were all National Party supporters, and the bureaucrats can be expected largely to share their political masters' perceptions. As for the remaining white elites, the greatest scepticism of the government's views on the communist threat came from the academics, with 64,2% agreeing that the government was exaggerating the communist threat, followed by 50,7% for the media. Just over half the businessmen disagreed that the government exaggerates the threat. Seven out of every ten members of the black elite agreed with the statement. By contrast, and perhaps surprisingly, 67,5% of the Coloured and Indian elite indicated agreement with the government's perception of the communist danger.

### 3.2.2 The threat from across the Limpopo

In 1982, seven out of every ten white South Africans saw Zimbabwe as a threat to South Africa's security. Presented with the statement, "The government of Zimbabwe constitutes a threat to South Africa's safety", 62,6% of the respondents registered agreement and 34,5% disagreed in 1984. Not only has the number of people subscribing to the statement dropped over the past two years, but the intensity of agreement has also declined. In the earlier survey, 22,7% of the respondents "definitely" agreed and the remaining 47,8% were "inclined" to agree. In the 1984 survey, the response in the latter category was identical, but those "definitely" agreeing dropped to 14,9%.

This declining threat consciousness was evident among the various sub-groups too. For example, the number of Afrikaans-speakers seeing Zimbabwe as a threat dropped from 76,7% in 1982 to 67,2% in 1984, and among female respondents from 76,2% to 65,7%. Inevitably, some respondents

in 1984 still revealed a greater measure of agreement with the statement than the average figure (62,6%). This was pronounced in the case of the 16 - 24 year olds (70,2%) and respondents living in the Orange Free State (75,5%). The difference was marginal (under 5%) with females, Afrikaans-speakers, the 25 - 34 year age group, NP followers and residents of the Transvaal.

The latter figures suggest interesting variations of opinion within sub-groups. In 1984, 10,8% more Afrikaans-speakers than English-speakers agreed that Zimbabwe was a threat to South Africa (14,5% more in 1982), and 6,1% more females than males (11,7% more in 1981). Among age groups, those in the 16 - 24 bracket were most threat conscious (70,2%) and the over 50s the least (59,1%).

Geography also has a bearing on threat perception. As in 1982, Free Staters were again strongest in their agreement with the statement on Zimbabwe, with a figure of 75,5% (81% in 1982), followed by respondents in the Transvaal. Under 60% of those in Natal and the Cape Province agreed that Zimbabwe threatened South Africa's safety. Although in all four provinces the extent of agreement was smaller in 1984 than in 1982, the drop was most marked in Natal (16,1%) and Transvaal (10,3%). The latter changes may well be explained by recent developments in Southern Africa. South Africa's regional security, the respondents probably reasoned, has been enhanced by its accords with neighbouring states. As regards Zimbabwe specifically, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe has scrupulously upheld his undertaking not to harbour insurgents operating against South Africa. The Free State response is still puzzling, considering that the province is far removed from Zimbabwe. Perhaps the explanation we offered in our earlier survey is still valid: the conservative political orientation of the Free State might influence people to take a dim view of black-ruled states, particularly one politically and ideologically so openly antagonistic towards South Africa as Zimbabwe.

Finally, an interesting comparison can be drawn between the responses to the above statement and the previous one on communism. Both surveys show that white South Africans regarded the communist threat as considerably more serious than that of Zimbabwe. But whereas the consciousness of a communist threat was identical in the two surveys, the latter survey showed a nearly 8% drop in the number of people regarding Zimbabwe as a threat.

### 3.2.3 The hottest pursuit

We now turn to ways in which South Africa can combat perceived threats to its security, specifically those from its immediate environment. In recent years South Africa has repeatedly resorted to coercion against perceived foes or supporters of its enemies. Thus cross-border military raids have been launched against the ANC and SWAPO and economic pressure applied against Lesotho and probably also other surrounding countries seen to be endangering South Africa's safety.

Our two surveys produced virtually identical overall responses to the following statement : "South Africa should militarily attack terrorist bases in its neighbouring states (like the ANC base near Maputo)." In 1982, 81,1% of the respondents agreed and 81,6% in 1984; the percentage disagreement remained constant at 16,6%. There were no significant changes in the intensity of agreement and disagreement in the two surveys either; in both, no less than 60% of those agreeing with the statement, "definitely" agreed. Not one of the sub-groups based on sex, language, age and party support returned a percentage agreement of under 60% in either survey. There were nonetheless noticeable variations in opinion : more men than women agreed (8,9% difference in 1984) and more Afrikaners than English-speakers (9% difference in 1984). Among party followers, the following percentages of agreement were measured:

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
NP	83,4	86,2
PFP	70,9	73,2
CP	96,5	(NCP) 96,9
NRP	79,9	84,6
HNP	96,9	93,8

Although there is a fairly wide margin of difference in the extent of agreement between PFP followers and those of the other four parties, the overall impression is that of a decidedly militant or "hawkish" white voting public. The differences between the parties on the issue of attacking terrorist bases seem to be more a matter of degree than substance. The above figures nonetheless show a marked correlation between respondents' opinions on domestic and foreign policy issues : the more conservative a voter, the more militant he tends to be. Hawkishness therefore seems to be the foreign policy extension of a verkrampste domestic political orientation.

Some of the findings of our two surveys correspond with the results of a survey M & M had undertaken for the Sunday newspaper Rapport in July 1983. Asked what they thought of the South African Air Force attack on (supposed) ANC hide-outs in Maputo shortly before (in retaliation for the ANC car bomb blast in Pretoria), nearly 90% of the 1980 white respondents indicated agreement with the action. The lowest measure of agreement came from PFP supporters, with only 29,9% endorsing the raid. Just under half the English-speakers agreed. Respondents were then asked if the Defence Force should, in view of the Pretoria bomb attack, do everything in its power to destroy ANC bases in neighbouring states. Again, over 90% agreed - but under 20% of the PFP followers. The latter sub-groups' pronounced doveish views certainly do not conform with their militant responses in our two surveys.

The white public's generally tough stand on terrorist bases is widely shared by elite groups. The most hawkish group on this issue was the politicians (92,7% agreed with the statement), followed by the bureaucrats (90,6%), Coloureds and Indians (82,5%) and businessmen (80,8%).

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\*The term "terrorist", like its ideological opposite "freedom fighter", is admittedly highly subjective and value laden. However, among white South Africans it is an expression commonly and virtually exclusively used when referring to ANC (and SWAPO) insurgents. It is therefore extremely unlikely that the word "terrorist" as used in the surveys will unfairly influence respondents' opinions.

For academics, the measure of agreement was much smaller, at only 55,6%. Blacks took a diametrically opposed view to the other elite groups, with 83,8 % opposing attacks on terrorist bases. The inference to be drawn from the latter figure is that the Black elite sympathises with what Whites generally and the Coloured and Indian elite condemn as "terrorists". Other surveys of black public opinion tend to support the black elite's opinion on "terrorists", whereas surveys of Coloured and Indian public opinion present a more ambivalent picture of their views on terrorism than the elite survey conveys.<sup>3)</sup>

### 3.2.4 Don't feed the hand that bites

South Africa's export of food, particularly maize, to black states perceived as being hostile to the Republic and endangering its security, became a controversial domestic political issue in the early 1980s. The HNP took the lead in attacking the government for exporting food to states that harbour "terrorists" and so possibly feeding those very terrorists.

In our two surveys we presented the following statement : "South Africa should not export food to black states which support or harbour terrorists." In both surveys respondents were, surprisingly, a good deal less militant in their reaction to this statement than to the previous one. There was considerably more overall support for drastic military action than for the softer, more manageable measure of manipulating food exports. In the earlier survey 72,4% of those questioned agreed that food should be cut off, and 25,4% disagreed; in 1984, the corresponding figures are 68,4% and 30,0%.

Again, the variables of sex, language and party sympathy have a bearing on respondents' opinions. In both surveys, more women than men and more Afrikaans-speakers than English-speakers agreed (in all cases a difference of between 4 and 7%). Supporters of the two right-wing parties, the CP (NCP in 1982) and HNP, gave consistently greater support to stopping food exports than followers of the other three parties. Consider the following table showing percentage agreement :

<u>Supporters of</u>	<u>% agreement</u>	
	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
NP	66,9	75,7
PFP	54,9	59,8
CP	89,6	79,0 (NCP)
NRP	67,9	76,9
HNP	100,0	92,2

The figures show that whereas the extent of NP, PFP and NRP agreement has declined by between 5 and 9%, right-wing support has by contrast increased. This increasing militancy was also evident in HNP supporters' response to the previous question on terrorist bases. The least support for the use of the food weapon came from PFP supporters, with over 40% disagreeing with the statement.

The overall decline in the number of people favouring a ban on food exports to hostile black states can probably be explained by recent developments in Southern Africa. With South Africa concluding security

agreements with neighbouring states, there seemed little use for the food weapon. Also, a prolonged drought left South Africa with little food to offer black states; instead, the Republic had to import food to meet its domestic needs.

Elite opinions on the question of an embargo on food exports to hostile black states differ profoundly from white public opinion. Not one of the seven elite groups favoured such a ban. The discrepancy is not easy to explain. There might have been humanitarian considerations: stopping the export of food could condemn innocent people to starvation. Also, the government has publicly rejected demands to stop food exports to any of the neighbouring states for political or security reasons. The political and bureaucratic elites might have been influenced by this position. It can, somewhat cynically, be remarked that some of those opposing a complete embargo on food exports would not rule out the deliberate manipulation of exports for non-economic purposes. Finally, those members of elite groups sympathetic to the so-called freedom fighters would obviously come out against the use of the food weapon.

### 3.2.5 SWAPO : jaw,jaw or war,war

A remarkable shift of white opinion has been taking place on the issue of Pretoria talking to SWAPO. In the 1982 survey, only 37,6% of the respondents agreed with the statement, "South Africa should negotiate directly with SWAPO to reach a settlement in SWA/Namibia"; of this number, a mere 9,4% "definitely" agreed. Roughly 60% opposed direct talks with SWAPO. Our recent survey found that 50,9% of the respondents supported the view that South Africa should negotiate directly; of them, 13,8% indicated "definite" agreement. The percentage of respondents disagreeing correspondingly dropped to 45,6% in 1984.

The significance of this change of opinion becomes more apparent when the total sample of respondents agreeing (percentage) is broken down into various sub-groups.



	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	50,9	37,6
Male	51,9	34,9
Female	50,0	40,3
Afrikaans-speakers	45,7	30,9
English-speakers	57,8	46,9
16 - 24 years	57,9	40,0
25 - 34 years	48,0	36,6
35 - 49 years	45,5	37,1
50 + years	51,5	37,1
NP supporters	47,8	30,0
PFP supporters	67,6	51,6
CP supporters	38,8	16,8 (NCP)
NRP supporters	56,0	35,6
HNP supporters	43,8	24,1

Overall, 13,3% more Whites in 1984, compared with 1982, took the view that South Africa should negotiate directly with SWAPO. An increase in the measure of agreement with the statement is to be found among all the sub-groups listed in the table. The largest increases over the 1982 figures occurred among the supporters of political parties. The 22% difference between the 1982 figure for NCP supporters and 1984 figure for CP followers should be treated with caution. The CP is not simply the NCP under another name, but a new and incomparably stronger party into which the inconsequential NCP was absorbed. Also, the 1982 sample included only 31 voters who had NCP sympathies, compared with the 201 CP supporters in the second survey. Thus the determination of CP opinion might be more valid than the earlier measurement. It is indeed surprising that nearly four out of every ten CP supporters favoured direct talks between South Africa and SWAPO. Even more astonishing is the increase in the number of HNP followers taking this view : 19,7% more in 1984, making a total of 43,8%. The strong doveish orientation of so many supporters of the two right-wing parties does not conform with their uncompromising hawkish responses to earlier issues.

From a policy making point of view, the reaction of NP supporters is of particular importance. Today, nearly half of them agree that South Africa should enter into direct talks with SWAPO, compared with under a third in 1982. Well over half the NRP followers now share this view, with the greatest support - 67,6% - coming from supporters of the PFP. The latter are again the most doveish.

In line with larger numbers of NP, (N)CP and HNP supporters supporting talks with SWAPO, the percentage of Afrikaners agreeing has grown to nearly 46%, compared with a mere 30,9% in 1982. English support has over the last two years climbed to well over 50%.

Two further highly significant features emerge from the above table. Between 1982 and 1984 there were considerable increases in the number of

men (17,0%) and 16 - 24 year olds (18,9%) agreeing with the statement on talks with SWAPO. Over half the men and nearly 60% of the young respondents now favour direct negotiations. What makes these findings so important is that men do compulsory military service, which commonly involves a stint in the Namibian war zone; national servicemen are nearly all in the 16 - 24 year age category during their two-year training period.

These results bear comparison with a finding of an M & M survey recently conducted for Rapport. Published on 29 July 1984, the survey showed that two-thirds of the white respondents wanted South Africa to intensify efforts to resolve the Namibia conflict with the help of the Western powers. Only 15% of the respondents thought South Africa should proceed as if an international settlement were unattainable. A further 17% took the view that South Africa should withdraw from Namibia and hand over responsibility to the international community.

There are several possible explanations for white South Africans' more conciliatory attitude towards SWAPO. First, direct talks with SWAPO have been "legitimated" by South Africa's negotiations with Mozambique and Angola. If Pretoria could openly and directly talk and reach agreements with marxist governments, why not the same with SWAPO. (On 25 July 1984, the South African-appointed Administrator-General of Namibia, Dr. Willie van Niekerk, held direct talks with SWAPO leader Mr. Sam Nujoma on a possible ceasefire. The inconclusive talks, held in Cape Verde, were the first confirmed direct negotiations between a top South African representative and the SWAPO chief.) Second, the government has over the past year or so introduced a new theme in the domestic political debate over Namibia : continuing control of the territory is placing severe burdens on the South African economy - the clear message being that the Republic would like to be relieved of these demands on its already battered economy. This message may well have got through to white South Africans - thus their willingness to see the government talking to SWAPO in an effort to resolve the costly Namibian conflict. Third, white South Africans are, after nearly two decades, apparently becoming war-weary. Although South African loss of life has been small compared with SWAPO's, the protracted war has extracted its toll from white South Africans in terms of casualties and the hardship and disruption to community and family life caused by military duty in the Namibian "operational area". The war-weariness evidently does not mean that white South Africans believe the war against SWAPO cannot be won.

Confidence in South Africa's military capability is clear from the response to the following statement : "South Africa cannot win a military struggle against SWAPO in the long run." In the 1984 survey, 74% of the respondents expressed disagreement and 24,2% agreed. These figures represent no real change from the earlier survey's findings. Both surveys however revealed marked differences of opinion between the language groups and between supporters of the various political parties. The following table shows the percentages of those disagreeing with the statement, thus in fact taking the view that South Africa can ultimately win the war against SWAPO.

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	74,0	72,3
Afrikaans-speakers	82,1	81,9
English-speakers	63,1	59,5
NP supporters	81,1	84,9
PFM supporters	44,4	47,3
CP supporters	82,1	(NCP) 87,9
NRP supporters	81,0	73,0
HNP supporters	90,6	84,8

The table shows that doubts about South Africa's chances of prevailing against SWAPO are pronounced among PFM followers and also strong among English-speakers. It was of course also from PFM ranks that the largest measure of support came for direct talks between South Africa and SWAPO. PFM supporters' endorsement of negotiations with SWAPO may well be related to their doubts about South Africa's ability to defeat SWAPO militarily. Followers of the NP and NRP and Afrikaans-speakers in 1984 likewise showed a strong willingness to support talks with SWAPO, but they at the same time seem confident about a military victory against SWAPO. For them, talking and fighting may not be mutually exclusive options. Thus they may argue that South Africa can negotiate with SWAPO from a position of strength and could wring concessions from the organisation. Should negotiations fail, these respondents would probably favour a tough South African military response - to force SWAPO to return to the negotiating table and heed Pretoria's demands for peace.

The elite groups displayed widely differing opinions on the questions of talking to and fighting against SWAPO. Only two elite groups' opinions on direct negotiations with SWAPO closely resembled that of white respondents in our 1984 survey. Among businessmen there was 48,9% agreement and 55% among Coloureds and Indians. Considerably higher proportions of the academic and media elites favoured direct talks between South Africa and SWAPO: 66,7% and 65,2% respectively. The black elite overwhelmingly supported such talks, with 89,2% agreeing. In sharp contrast with all these doveish orientations, the political and bureaucratic elites were strongly against direct negotiations : 82,3% and 69% respectively. Whereas white public opinion is remarkably conciliatory on this issue, the important political elite is decidedly uncompromising. This must represent a fairly unique instance of public opinion being well ahead of elite opinion on a vital foreign policy issue. What this finding may also suggest, is that the top political elite - the government - has yet to persuade (or inform?) the middle elite - Nationalist MPs - that talks with SWAPO are no longer taboo. As for the bureaucrats, there is already a sizeable minority adopting a conciliatory or doveish position on SWAPO.

The bureaucrats and Coloureds and Indians were the only two elite groups whose opinions on South Africa's ability to defeat SWAPO more or less corresponded with general white opinion. Thus 72,4% of the bureaucrats and 75,0% of the Coloureds and Indians disagreed with the statement that South Africa cannot win the military struggle. The political elite was strongly confident in the outcome of the war, with 88,3% disagreeing with the statement. The business, academic and media elites all expressed serious

reservations about South Africa's chances of winning against SWAPO, with between 48,2% and 61,7% agreeing with the above statement. The black elite, not surprisingly, overwhelmingly - 75,6% - agreed with the statement.

### 3.2.6 Some of our best friends are Marxists

Not all white South Africans shared the official elation over the Nkomati Accord. The most vociferous white critics are the right-wingers, who regard the agreement as an unnecessary and dangerous compromise with a sworn marxist enemy of South Africa. To get an indication of white South Africans' opinion on the Accord, our second survey contained this statement: "Mozambique can be trusted to carry out the terms of the recent non-aggression treaty with South Africa."

Of the 1839 respondents, 65,6% agreed with the statement and 31,8% disagreed. Of those agreeing, only 8,8% indicated "definite" agreement. Considering the novelty of the Nkomati Accord and the fact that Mozambique was until a few months ago popularly seen as a dangerous marxist opponent of South Africa, it is remarkable that nearly two-thirds of the white population take such a favourable view of Maputo's intentions. This confidence may have been inspired by numerous highly publicised actions demonstrating Mozambique's commitment to the Accord. The South African media has done a great deal to transform President Machel virtually overnight from a villain of the piece to a responsible statesman.

Most of the various sub-groups indicated agreement of over 60%. In only two cases did the majority disagree : 68,2% of the CP supporters and 81,3% of the HNP supporters disagreed that Mozambique would uphold the treaty. Only one other sub-group returned a percentage disagreement of over 40% : 41,7% of respondents in the Orange Free State disagreed with the statement. Their doubts about Mozambique's bona fides seem to be in line with their earlier views on Zimbabwe.

There was little difference in the responses of followers of the other three parties, with over 70% of each group indicating agreement. The only other significant variation of opinion occurred between the sexes, with 71,4% of the male respondents agreeing against approximately 60% of the females.

### 3.3 Dark Times Ahead For South Africa : The White Public's Perceptions Of The Future

In 1982, when our first survey was done, the South African government made great play of a communist-inspired "total onslaught" on the Republic. To counter the danger, the government devised a "total national strategy", aimed at mobilising the country's total resources for "survival". These themes tended to convey a rather gloomy official view of South Africa's future. Our first survey found that white South Africans were taking an even dimmer view of the future.

Since then, South Africans have witnessed a seemingly contradictory series of events. Domestically, the ANC has continued its spate of violent attacks on government and civilian targets, often leading to bloodshed.

Set against this, a new constitution allowing for Coloured and Indian representation in Parliament, is about to be implemented. Externally, the most important development to mention is, again, the Nkomati Accord, which led to the expulsion of ANC insurgents from Mozambique. How, then, have these events influenced white South Africans' views of the future?

### 3.3.1 The "terros" are coming

When presented with the statement, "A terrorist war like that in South West Africa will in time also develop in South Africa", no less than three out of every four respondents in 1982 indicated agreement. Of this figure, 25% said they "definitely" agreed. Of the 22,8% who expressed disagreement, a mere 3.3% "definitely" disagreed.

Our latest survey shows some significant shifts in opinion. The number of respondents agreeing with the statement has dropped from 75,3% to 62,8%. Of the latter number, 14,8% said they "definitely" agreed. Thus both the extent and intensity of agreement has dropped by well over 10%. In 1984, 35,4% of the respondents disagreed that a terrorist war was inevitable; 14,8% of them "definitely" disagreed. The increase in the extent and intensity of disagreement neatly mirrors the decrease in the level of agreement.

The over 60% agreement with the statement shows that the gloomy view of South Africa's future is still predominant. Many people might say it is only realistic to anticipate a Namibia-style terrorist war in South Africa. It nonetheless remains an important finding that 12,5% fewer South Africans in 1984, compared with 1982, consider a local terrorist war as inevitable. This could indicate a growing confidence in South Africa's ability to counter terrorism, whether by military or political means. The Nkomati Accord and the new constitution may have led more Whites to believe that these actions on the diplomatic and constitutional fronts improve the chances of a peaceful resolution of South Africa's racial problems.

The overall trend of fewer people seeing a terrorist war as inevitable was reflected in the opinions of virtually all the important sub-groups. The following table compares the percentage agreement with the statement on a terrorist war in the surveys of 1984 and 1982.

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	62,8	75,3
Males	60,0	75,5
Females	65,4	75,3
Afrikaans-speakers	66,7	75,1
English-speakers	57,3	75,9
NP supporters	59,5	71,2
PFP supporters	68,0	81,0
CP supporters	78,2	83,5 (NCP)
NRP supporters	51,2	76,9
HNP supporters	87,5	84,8
Cape Province respondents	65,4	72,6
Transvaal respondents	62,4	75,8
OFS respondents	74,8	82,7
Natal respondents	50,2	78,6

It was only among HNP followers that the number of people agreeing with the statement increased, but only marginally. The largest shifts of opinion occurred among NRP supporters (25,7%) and respondents in Natal (28,4%), making them the two groups least convinced of the certainty of a terrorist war in South Africa. There might be a correlation between the two figures, for Natal is the only province in which the NRP has a sizeable following. Although Transvaal respondents take a much gloomier view on this issue than the Natalians, it is significant that Transvaal agreement with the statement dropped by 13,4%. Transvaal and Natal, each bordering on several black states, would be particularly affected in the event of a Namibia-style terrorist war. The Nkomati Accord may have allayed - if only for the time being - some of their fears. Free State respondents in both our surveys were most convinced of an unavoidable terrorist war - an opinion that seems to correspond with their opinions on some earlier issues.

It came as no surprise that NP followers had growing doubts about a terrorist war developing in South Africa - for reasons we have already noted. Even PFP supporters are affected by the new breeze of optimism among white South Africans; 13% fewer of them in 1984 considered a terrorist war inevitable. A related but much larger shift of opinion is noticeable among English-speakers, with a difference of over 18% in the responses in our two surveys. White men - who would bear the brunt in large-scale counter-insurgency operations - have likewise become much less pessimistic about the future.

Among the four age groups, those in the 50-plus category were least convinced of a terrorist war, with only 53% agreeing with the statement. In the earlier survey, they also returned the lowest measure of agreement of the age groups (68,0%). In both surveys, the 25 - 34 year olds were most convinced of such a war: 83,6% agreed in 1982 and 60,0% in 1984.

Businessmen and Coloureds and Indians were, again, the only two of the seven elite groups with opinions approximately matching those of white South Africans. Just over 57% of these two groups agreed that a terrorist war will in time develop in South Africa. The measure of agreement was much higher among academics (72,9%) and the media elite (75,3%) and highest among Blacks (81,0%). Roughly one out of every two bureaucrats agreed with the statement, but only 39,7% of the political elite. Doubts about a terrorist war - or, conversely, confidence in avoiding one - are therefore much greater among the political elite (all NP members) and ordinary NP supporters: a difference of nearly 20%.

3.3.2 "We have the happiest Africans in the world"... but we cannot trust them

If South Africa were to face a full-scale guerrilla war, the attitude of the black majority will ultimately determine the outcome. How Blacks will react in the situation is a matter of dispute in South African politics. The majority of white South Africans however seem to have little doubt about the answer.

In our surveys we included the following assertion: "South Africa's Blacks have good reason to take up arms against the government". (Blacks in this context refers to black Africans only.) In both surveys, over 70% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The extent of disagreement in fact increased, from 71,4% in 1982 to 77,4% in 1984. The majority of those who disagreed in each survey, "definitely" disagreed. By contrast, a minority of those who supported the statement "definitely" agreed : 6,0% of the 26,9% in 1982 and 5,8% of the 21,3% in 1984.

There were wide differences of opinion between the language and political sub-groups. Consider the following percentage agreement with the statement in 1984 and 1982 :

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	21,3	26,9
Afrikaans-speakers	11,3	13,9
English-speakers	34,8	44,9
NP supporters	11,9	9,8
PFP supporters	59,6	69,5
CP supporters	6,5	(NCP) 2,9
NRP supporters	11,9	28,8
HNP supporters	6,3	5,4

Against the overall trend of fewer Whites believing Blacks have cause for an armed uprising, the number of NP supporters taking this view has increased over the past two years. It is however a marginal increase which in no way detracts from the explanation offered in our previous survey : the overwhelming NP rejection of the statement is a manifestation of these respondents' faith in the correctness of the government's policies towards Blacks. The strength of this conviction

is borne out in the intensity of NP disagreement : 54,9% of the 87,6% disagreeing in 1984, "definitely" disagreed; the corresponding figures for 1982 were 56,0% and 89,9%.

Although the number of PFP supporters agreeing with the statement dropped by 10% between 1982 and 1984, six out of every ten of them still believe that Blacks have reason to resort to arms. This opinion could largely be attributed to PFP followers' serious reservations about the government's racial policies. The biggest shift in opinion among party followers occurred in NRP ranks, with nearly 17% fewer supporters subscribing to the statement in 1984. In our second survey, the figures for NP and NRP followers were identical, thus confirming a close similarity of opinion between them on several of the earlier issues. The NRP today stands much closer than any other party to the NP on key political issues.

HNP and CP supporters were even stronger in their disagreement with the statement than the Nationalists, but this certainly does not imply an endorsement of the government's policy towards Blacks. Given their parties' commitment to old-style apartheid, the right-wingers might hold the crude view that Blacks have no right to object to whatever a white government decrees for them. If anything, HNP and CP followers would fault the government for doing too much for Blacks (not to mention Coloureds and Indians) at the expense of Whites.

The finding that three times as many English-speakers as Afrikaans-speakers agreed that Blacks have cause to take up arms, can to some degree be related to the different responses of NP and PFP followers. What nonetheless emerges is that English-speakers on the whole tend to be a good deal less "progressive" than PFP supporters.

It is interesting to recollect that nearly 60% of the Nationalist respondents had earlier agreed that a Namibia-style guerrilla war would develop in South Africa. Given the subsequent decisive rejection by NP supporters of the contention that Blacks have reason to resort to violence, the obvious conclusion is that Nationalists believe a terrorist war will originate not in legitimate black grievances, but will rather be instigated by hostile extraneous forces (read communists).

The various elite opinions on a black uprising differed greatly from those of the white public. Strongest support for the statement came not surprisingly from the black elite (72,9%) followed by just over 50% from each of the business and academic elites. The majority of the remaining elite groups disagreed : 52,1% of the media elite, 67,5% of the Coloured and Indian elite, 88,5% of the bureaucrats and a full 92,7% of the political elite. Again, the Coloured and Indian elite has adopted a notably conservative opinion, compared with some of the other elite groups.

Even though most Whites thought Blacks had no reason to take up arms, an earlier response showed that Whites widely believed a guerrilla war in South Africa was inevitable. To find out how Whites thought Blacks would behave in the event of war, our surveys presented respondents with this statement : "White South Africans cannot depend on black South Africans in the case of war against South Africa". (Again, the reference was to black Africans.) The overall response in our two surveys was as follows :



	<u>1984</u>		<u>1982</u>
Definitely agree	18,1% )	59,2%	19,6% )
Inclined to agree	41,1% )		42,0% )
			61,6%
Definitely disagree	7,7% )	39,1%	6,6% )
Inclined to disagree	31,4% )		30,2% )
			36,8%

The findings show virtually no change in the extent and intensity of either agreement or disagreement with the statement. Although a sizeable majority agreed with the contention, this opinion was not strongly held; as many as two-thirds of these respondents in 1982 and 1984 "inclined" to agree.

The differences in the responses of the various language and party political sub-groups were considerably narrower than in the case of the previous question. This applies to both surveys. In the later survey, for example, 57,0% of the Afrikaans-speakers and 62,3% of the English-speakers expressed agreement. Among party supporters, the widest margin of difference was between NP and PFP supporters : 52,1% of the former and 75,6% of the latter agreed with the statement in 1984; the figures were almost identical in 1982. The relatively low figure on the NP side could mean that nearly half the Nationalists believed that Blacks shared their perceptions of threat and were willing to defend the status quo - thus assuming that Blacks were reasonably content with it. A higher measure of NP agreement with the statement would have amounted to a serious lack of confidence in the "success" of government policy towards Blacks. The number of NRP followers agreeing declined from 72,1% in 1982 to 54,8% in 1984 - a figure which again neatly corresponds with that of the Nationalists.

PFP supporters' serious doubts about Blacks' loyalties again reflect their misgivings about the government's racial policies. HNP followers had even stronger doubts on this score, with 87,5% (1984) agreeing that Whites could not rely on Blacks in time of war. Surprisingly fewer CP supporters - 67,2% - expressed agreement in 1984.

Elite responses show a greater correlation with white public opinion on this issue than on most of the previous ones. The extent of agreement with the statement among the academic, business, media and Indian and Coloured elites was between 0,1% and 6% higher than for the white public as a whole (1984). In view of their responses to earlier statements, it was to be expected that over 70% of the black elite would agree that Whites could not rely on Blacks in a war. The bureaucratic and political elites took a profoundly different view. Just over half the bureaucrats disputed the contention, whereas nearly 80% of the politicians disagreed. Clearly, the political elite takes the view that Nationalist policies have produced a "loyal" black community ready to defend the country and its institutions.

### 3.3.3 We're armed to the teeth

In our earlier survey we noted with some surprise that a majority of white South Africans saw no need to increase defence expenditure

despite their deep sense of threat. In reaction to the statement, "The government does not yet spend enough on defence," 41,6% of the respondents agreed and 56,0% disagreed. A feature of the response distribution was the relatively low percentages at both ends of the scale : only 12,2% said they "definitely" agreed and a mere 8,6% fell in the "definitely" disagree category.

Given the evidence of a lessening of threat consciousness in 1984, one could today expect more Whites to disagree with the statement than in 1982. If the threat against South Africa has in other words diminished, there would be less need to increase defence expenditure. The findings of the 1984 survey to some degree bear out these assumptions. Of the 1839 respondents, 59,2% expressed disagreement and 38,4% agreed. It is therefore only a marginal increase in the number of people disagreeing with the statement. When South Africa's current economic difficulties are added to the considerations mentioned, it is somewhat surprising that more people did not take issue with the statement on defence expenditure. White South Africans appear to place a high premium on defence and realise that it places a heavy financial burden on the country. The fact that the intensity of disagreement with the statement was again remarkably low in 1984 - 10,7% - could suggest that opinion might quite easily shift in support of an increase in defence expenditure.

An analysis of the results by language group and party political orientation revealed considerable differences of opinion in both surveys. The following shows the number of people (percentage) disagreeing with the statement - that is, respondents who by implication say that the government is already spending enough (even too much) on defence.

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	59,2	56,0
Afrikaans-speakers	54,9	45,8
English-speakers	64,8	70,0
NP supporters	52,1	48,2
PFM supporters	80,4	79,0
CP supporters	44,0	(NCP) 30,3
NRP supporters	36,9	61,5
HNP supporters	42,9	38,4

The gap between Afrikaans and English-speakers has narrowed over the past two years, with both groups shifting their opinion. The difference in opinion between NP and PFM supporters remains nearly as wide as in 1982. Just under half the NP followers still believe that the government is not yet spending enough on defence. By contrast, eight out of every ten PFM supporters maintain that enough or too much is being spent on defence.

NRP supporters have shown an amazing shift in opinion. Whereas six out of every ten of them in 1982 shared the view that the government was spending enough on defence, six out of every ten NRP supporters today take the exact opposite view. On this issue, NRP followers are a good deal

more "hawkish" than the Nationalists, placing them closer to the two right-wing parties than the NP.

Except for the politicians, all elite groups inclined to a "doveish" opinion on the issue of defence expenditure. The political elite was fairly evenly divided between those agreeing and disagreeing with the statement. Among the remaining six elite groups, those disagreeing with the statement - thus saying enough or too much is spent on defence - were in the majority. The percentage agreement ranged from the low of 63,2% among bureaucrats to the high of 87,6% among academics. Blacks, with 73,0% agreeing, followed not only behind the (white) academics, but also the media and business elites in the degree of doveishness. On the face of it, the extent of black disagreement does not quite correspond with this elite's opinion on previous issues; one would have expected a much higher measure of disagreement with the statement on defence expenditure.

### 3.4 The Hawk-Verkramp And Dove-Verlig Syndromes : Some Correlations Between Perceptions Of Foreign And Domestic Issues

The responses to many of the previous statements suggest some correlation between the white public's perceptions of foreign policy issues and their party political loyalties. On the basis of party loyalties, it was also possible to draw inferences about respondents' views on domestic political issues. In this section, we explore further the correlation between opinion on domestic and foreign policy issues. This is done by measuring the white public's opinions on a number of topical local political issues and then cross-tabulating them with the known opinions on external issues. The domestic issues fall squarely within the so-called verlig-verkramp controversy, and the foreign policy issues are those that reveal respondents' hawkishness or doveishness.

In our two surveys, respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with three statements on contentious domestic political issues. In the earlier survey, the first statement read : "The time has arrived for Coloureds and Indians to sit with Whites in the same Parliament." In view of the fact that Coloureds and Indians are about to enter Parliament, we had to rephrase this statement in our 1984 survey : "it is to be welcomed that Coloureds and Indians will serve with Whites in the same Parliament". The following table compares the extent of agreement (in percentages) with the two statements.

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	74,9	61,0
Afrikaans-speakers	63,6	41,4
English-speakers	90,1	87,8
NP supporters	85,2	41,4
PFP supporters	95,6	98,3
CP supporters	11,9	(NCP) 13,5
NRP supporters	92,9	76,9
HNP supporters	6,3	9,8

For the purposes of the later cross-tabulations, it should be noted that 37% (740) of the respondents in 1982 disagreed with the statement, and 23,3% (429) in 1984. These respondents adopted what can conveniently be depicted as a verkrampte point of view. (We are thus not following conventional use by restricting the terms verlig(te) and verkramp(te) to Afrikaners only, but we include all Whites holding either "conservative" or "progressive" political views.) The number of respondents displaying verligte opinions were 1220 in 1982 and 1377 in 1984.

The second statement, identical in the two surveys, was as follows : "White children should not participate in sports meetings with children of other population groups". The following percentages of respondents disagreed with the contention :

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	76,9	75,1
Afrikaans-speakers	66,4	61,8
English-speakers	91,2	93,2
NP supporters	83,4	69,4
PFP supporters	96,4	99,0
CP supporters	28,4	(NCP) 21,1
NRP supporters	85,7	87,5
HNP supporters	28,1	34,4

In the 1982 survey 23,5% (470) respondents took the verkrampte view by agreeing that white pupils should not participate in racially mixed school sports; the 1984 figure was 21,9% (403). The number of verligtes were 1 502 in 1982 and 1 416 in 1984.

The final statement, "Cinemas should be open to all population groups", produced the following percentage agreement :

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1982</u>
TOTAL	42,8	43,8
Afrikaans-speakers	27,2	26,7
English-speakers	62,6	67,1
NP supporters	39,5	29,2
PFP supporters	83,6	84,1
CP supporters	4,0	(NCP) 12,6
NRP supporters	50,0	59,6
HNP supporters	0,0	7,9

In contrast with the first two issues, the verkrampte point of view prevailed on the final issue in both 1982 and 1984. In the earlier survey, 54,7% (1094) of the respondents disagreed that cinemas should be open to all races; in the second survey 55,7% (1024) disagreed.

It now remains to cross-tabulate responses to domestic issues with opinions on foreign policy issues.

The table below summarises the responses of the verkramptes to five selected foreign policy issues in 1982.

	Disagree Mixed Parliament (N = 740) %	Agree Segregated Sport (N = 470) %	All Respondents (N = 1 999) %
Disagree that communist threat is exaggerated	89,7	90,2	79,9
Agree on Zimbabwe threat	78,4	80,6	70,5
Agree on attacking terror bases	90,3	89,4	81,1
Agree on ban of food exports	81,9	83,0	72,4
Disagree that SA can't win SWA war	87,8	84,3	72,3

The table shows, for example, that of the 740 respondents (out of a total of 1 999) who opposed the idea that Coloureds and Indians should sit in Parliament, nearly 90% disagreed that the government exaggerated the communist threat. Similarly, 83% of those who agreed that white children should not participate in racially mixed sport, also agreed that South Africa should stop food exports to black states harbouring "terrorists".

It will be noted that the respondents in question were not wholly consistent in either their verkrampte views (on some of the three issues there was a stronger verkrampte reaction than on others) or their hawkish inclinations (the level of hawkishness varied on the five foreign policy issues). These features are not surprising and the variations were, moreover, very limited on the foreign policy issues. More important, however, is the fact that verkrampte respondents consistently displayed a greater degree of hawkishness than the respondents generally (that is, than the 1 999). It can be concluded that although respondents generally took decidedly hawkish views on foreign policy issues, verkrampte respondents were even more inclined to do so. There was, in other words, some correlation between internal verkramtheid and external hawkishness.

The 61% of the respondents - 1 220 - who in 1982 agreed that Coloureds and Indians should enjoy parliamentary representation, can be taken as a good example of a verligte response to a domestic political issue. A cross-tabulation of responses to domestic and foreign policy issues shows that of these 1 220 respondents 67,5% agreed that Zimbabwe threatened South Africa's security; 50,4% agreed that South Africa should negotiate with SWAPO; 34,1% agreed that South Africa cannot win the war against SWAPO; 77,7% agreed that terrorist bases on foreign soil should be attacked, and 68,5% agreed that South Africa should not export food to states hosting "terrorists". Verligtes, therefore, tended to be only marginally less hawkish on foreign policy issues than the white population as a whole.

The next table contains a cross-tabulation of responses to domestic and foreign policy issues in our 1984 survey. This time, we consider the verligtes' opinions on external issues, to determine whether doveishness is the corollary of verligtheid.

	Agree Mixed Parliament (N = 1377) %	Disagree Segregated School Sports (N = 1416) %	All Respondents (N = 1839) %
Disagree that communist threat is exaggerated	73,8	75,8	79,9
Agree on Zimbabwe threat	71,5	74,2	62,6
Agree on attacking terror bases	73,4	75,0	81,6
Agree on ban of food exports	70,8	72,3	68,4
Disagree that SA can't win SWA war	73,9	75,5	74,0

The table reveals, for example, that of the 1 377 respondents (out of a total of 1 839) who welcomed the introduction of a racially mixed Parliament, 73,9% disagreed that South Africa cannot win the war against SWAPO. Also, three out of every four respondents opposing segregated school sports, were in favour of South Africa launching military attacks against terrorist bases in adjacent states.

There is still clearly no strong correlation between domestic verligtheid and external doveishness. The above figures show that verligtes are neither consistently nor significantly less hawkish than the white population as a whole. Verkrampptes, by contrast, tend to be consistently, albeit not dramatically, more hawkish than the white population as a whole.

Respondents as a whole (not merely verligtes or, for that matter verkrampptes) were not always consistent either in their hawkish (or doveish) views. Consider these examples of inconsistencies in the 1984 survey :

- Of the 937 respondents who agreed that South Africa should negotiate directly with SWAPO, over 80% also agreed that the Republic should militarily attack terrorist bases in neighbouring states;

- Of the 1 206 who agreed that Mozambique can be trusted to honour its non-aggression pact with South Africa, more than 80% also disagreed that the government exaggerated the communist threat, and agreed that South Africa should attack terrorist bases on foreign soil, respectively.

There are of course also examples of consistent hawkish views among all respondents :

- Of the 1 361 respondents disagreeing with the statement that South Africa cannot win the war against SWAPO, over 80% also disagreed that the government exaggerated the communist threat, and agreed that South Africa should launch military strikes against terrorist bases, respectively;

- Of the 1 259 respondents favouring a ban on food exports to hostile black states, more than 80% also disputed the statement that the government exaggerated the communist threat, and supported military attacks against terrorist bases in surrounding states, respectively.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The first major aspect explored in our two surveys was white South Africans' perceptions of threats against the country. In the earlier study we illustrated the extent of threat consciousness by mentioning that over 70% of the respondents (i) denied that the South African government exaggerated the communist threat, (ii) regarded Zimbabwe as a threat to the Republic's security, and (iii) agreed that a Namibia-style terrorist war will develop in South Africa. One of the most significant findings of our 1984 survey was a marked reduction in the measure of threat consciousness. Taking the same three issues, reaction to the first was identical in 1984, but just over 60% concurred with each of the two remaining statements. The recent peace initiatives involving South Africa and its neighbours are probably the main reason for this shift in opinion. Even so, the majority of white South Africans remain deeply conscious of and concerned about perceived threats to the security of the Republic.

The second important area of interest was the white public's views on ways of meeting these threats. Judging by responses to the statements on attacking terrorist bases, banning food exports and pursuing the war against SWAPO, white South Africans were about as militant in 1984 as in 1982. Yet, paradoxically, respondents in 1984 displayed a strong doveish inclination on the contentious issue of direct talks between South Africa and SWAPO; over half the respondents favoured such negotiations. This represents a remarkable shift in opinion, for only 37,6% agreed with the option in 1982. Looking back, it strikes one that the latter figure already constituted a significant minority who favoured "jaw, jaw" as a way of ending "war, war".

The fact that a clear majority of the respondents took a hardline position on most of the issues mentioned, points to the consensus-building qualities of external threats. However, this feature should not mask the divisive force of language and party political loyalty among white South Africans. Both surveys, for example, found consistently greater support from Afrikaans-speakers than from English-speakers and from NP followers than from PFP supporters, for striking terrorist bases in surrounding states and for stopping food exports to black countries harbouring insurgents.

Our two surveys revealed that the differences between these sub-groups were pronounced on the question of South Africa's ability to win the war against SWAPO : in both 1982 and 1984 over 80% of the Afrikaans-speaking

respondents and NP supporters believed that the Republic could prevail; roughly 60% of the English-speakers and under 50% of the PFP followers shared this view. Wide margins of difference between the sub-groups were also evident on the issue of direct talks between South Africa and SWAPO; English-speakers and PFP supporters showed considerably more support for negotiations than Afrikaans-speakers and NP supporters. Although it was still a minority of Afrikaans-speakers and NP followers who in 1984 favoured such talks, their numbers had grown by about 15% since 1982.

English-speaking respondents and supporters of the PFP showed themselves less threat-conscious than Afrikaners and Nationalists; this applied, in both our surveys, to the communist danger and the threat from Zimbabwe.

On many of the issues mentioned, NRP supporters' opinions closely resembled those of NP followers, particularly in 1984. This is not surprising, considering the growing consensus between the NP and NRP on key domestic political issues.

The third and final aspect we examined in our surveys, was the correlation between perceptions of foreign and domestic policy issues. That there is a connection is already evident from the divergent reactions of supporters of different political parties to external issues. To refine the correlation, we sampled respondents' opinions on a number of specific domestic political issues, and then compared them with their opinions on foreign policy issues. Respondents with verkrampte sympathies tended to be consistently more hawkish in their external orientation than the white public generally. The verkramptes' hawkishness should not blind one to the fact that white South Africans generally have decidedly militant views on questions of security. It should immediately be added, however, that white opinions have mellowed significantly since our first survey was done in 1982. This growing moderation on foreign policy issues has been matched by a strengthening of verligte opinion on a key domestic political issue, viz. the introduction of a multi-racial (albeit "non-black") Parliament.

Our 1984 survey has shown convincingly that white South African opinion, whether on domestic or foreign policy issues, is not static or insensitive to changes in the political environment. The shifts in opinion revealed in our second survey are a reflection of the new dynamics of domestic and regional politics.



REFERENCES

- 1) Geldenhuys, D.J. The Diplomacy of Isolation : South African Foreign Policy Making, Macmillan, Johannesburg, 1984, 295 pp.
- 2) Van Wyk, J.J. Elite Opinions on South African Foreign Policy, Research Project on South Africa's Foreign Relations, Occasional Paper No.1, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, 1984, 51 pp.
- 3) Geldenhuys, D.J. op. cit., pp. 199 - 201.

ANNEXURE

QUESTIONNAIRE

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In this section you are asked to answer a few factual questions (Nos. 1 and 2) and to indicate your attitude concerning some matters of public importance. If you know the answers to Questions 1 and 2, write them in the space provided - if not, merely indicate by a dash ( - ). Please don't look up the answers or consult somebody else. We only want to find out what you personally know or think.

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ANSWERS

- 1(a) Who is the Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs? ..... (11)
- (b) Who is the Minister of Defence? ..... (12)
- (c) Who is the President of Botswana? ..... (13)
- (d) Who is the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe? ..... (14)
- (e) Who is the President of Mozambique? ..... (15)
- (f) Who is the President of France? ..... (16)
- (g) Who is the Prime Minister of New Zealand? ..... (17)
- (h) Who is the Prime Minister of Britain? ..... (18)
- 

- 2(a) With what does UN Resolution 435 deal?  
.....  
..... 19, 20)
- (b) What do the following abbreviations stand for?  
ANC: ..... (21)  
SWAPO: ..... (22)
- (c) Does America allow South Africa to buy military weapons from her?  
Yes ..... 23 -1  
No ..... -2
-

3. Please indicate the degree to which you differ or agree with each of the following statements (numbered (a) - (n) by circling the appropriate number on the scale : "definitely agree" ----- "definitely disagree" e.g. (2) :

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Definitely Agree</u>	<u>Inclined to Agree</u>	<u>Inclined to Disagree</u>	<u>Definitely Disagree</u>
(a) A terrorist war like in South West Africa will in time also develop in South Africa .....	24- 1	2	3	4
(b) The Communist threat against South Africa is exaggerated by the Government .....	25- 1	2	3	4
(c) The Government in Zimbabwe constitutes a threat to South Africa's safety .....	26- 1	2	3	4
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(d) South Africa's Blacks have good reason to take up arms against the Government .....	27- 1	2	3	4
(e) White South Africans cannot depend on the loyalty of black South Africans in the case of war against South Africa .....	28- 1	2	3	4
(f) South Africa should negotiate directly with SWAPO to reach a settlement in SWA/Namibia ..	29- 1	2	3	4
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(g) South Africa cannot win the military struggle against SWAPO in the long run .....	30- 1	2	3	4
(h) South Africa should militarily attack terrorist bases in its neighbouring states .....	31- 1	2	3	4
(i) South Africa should <u>not</u> export food to black states which support or harbour terrorists .....	32- 1	2	3	4
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<u>Statement</u>	<u>Definitely Agree</u>	<u>Inclined to Agree</u>	<u>Inclined to Disagree</u>	<u>Definitely Disagree</u>
(j) Mozambique can be trusted to carry out the terms of the recent non-aggression treaty with South Africa .....	33- 1	2	3	4
(k) The Government does not yet spend enough on Defence .....	34- 1	2	3	4
(l) It is to be welcomed that Coloureds and Indians will serve with Whites in the same Parliament .....	35- 1	2	3	4

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(m) White school children should not participate in sports meetings with children of other population groups .....	36- 1	2	3	4
(n) Cinemas should be open to all population groups .....	37- 1	2	3	4

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4. If there were to be a Parliamentary election now and the following parties had candidates in your constituency, would you vote? For which party would you vote?

I am a registered voter but would not vote 38- 1

I am not a registered voter 2

WOULD VOTE FOR

National Party (NP) 3

Progressive Federal Party (PFP) 4

Conservative Party (CP) 5

New Republic Party (NRP) 6

Herstigte National Party (HNP) 7

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