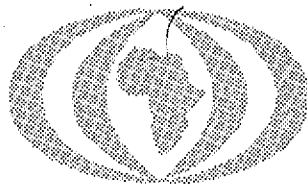


**SOUTH AFRICA'S SEARCH FOR SECURITY
SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

Deon Geldenhuys

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Characteristics

One needs to look briefly at South Africa's search for security¹ before the Second World War, because it shows a number of characteristics which have, over the years, shown remarkable consistency.

The *first* and most important characteristic is the link between South Africa's defence and racial policies. To cite a number of examples:

- (1) At the end of the First World War, General Smuts pointed to the danger South Africa and the world at large would face from any militarisation of the indigenous people of Africa. He accordingly appealed to the colonial powers to prohibit the arming of their colonial subjects.²
- (2) Italy's invasion of Abyssinia raised fears in the Union that an Italian defeat by the Abyssinians would damage white prestige in the blacks' eyes whereas an Italian victory would cause black resentment.³ South Africa was later even prepared to lift sanctions against Italy and agree to an Italian mandate over Abyssinia provided that the Italians agreed not to arm "natives".⁴
- (3) Oswald Pirow, General Hertzog's Minister of Defence, envisaged two or three federations between South Africa and Sudan, linked to the Union "by a common Native policy" and "directly flowing" from that, "a common defence policy".⁵ South Africa's defence policy was clearly defined, in the first instance, in terms of defending "the white man in Africa", which in effect meant white supremacy.
- (4) South Africa was gravely concerned about the threat South West Africa, under a hostile Germany, posed to South Africa's, and also the British Empire's, security. What made matters even worse for South Africa was that the Germans gave native levies military training in their African colonies.⁶

The *second* characteristic is related to Pirow's federation idea just referred to, viz. South Africa's search for security through military co-operation or even defence pacts with other states. Smuts reacted to Italy's annexation of Abyssinia by proposing an African defence arrangement on the lines of the Monroe doctrine. He later also propounded the idea of a kind of African league of nations supported by the colonial powers.⁷ Nothing, however, came of these proposals.

The *third* characteristic is South Africa's very close military ties with the United Kingdom. This speaks for itself, South Africa being a member of the Empire. What is important is that Britain was the cornerstone of South Africa's defence and would defend the Union (as well as the other overseas dominions) if militarily threatened. In South Africa's case there was also a specific defence arrangement in the Simonstown Agreement of 1921.⁸

Fourth, South Africa's defence line extended well beyond its own borders. At the time of the liberation of Abyssinia, Smuts said: "If you want to defend this country, you will have to proceed a great distance beyond it...".⁹ An enemy would therefore have to be met as far as possible from South Africa's frontiers.

Finally, defence was a major party political issue, particularly in the 1930s. The Nationalists' and also Hertzog's views on the question of neutrality were clearly an extension into the realm of defence of their stances on South Africa's status and relations with Britain. An interesting and

Democracy as government by the people for the people does not fit in with Islamic concepts. For Islam the rights of man are subject to and contained in the commands of God. The commands of God, dealing with every single detail of human life; his food, his money, his religion, his behaviour; is called the shariah. Government in accordance with the shariah is, of course, the "will of the people" in as far as the people are committed to Islam. In some Moslem countries the shariah is the law of the country; in others, as in Egypt, committees have been set up to ensure conformation of constitutional law to the shariah. In general practice the shariah safeguards the interest of ordinary people.

A striking example of the power of these religious authorities is in Tunisia where in February 1960, President Bourguiba called out a *djihād*, a holy war, against poverty to prevent loss of work and production during the monthly fast of Ramadan in view of the poverty of his country. The religious leaders refused to endorse this interpretation of Islamic law and the autocratic Socialist leader had to abide by their decision.

The second essential point of Islam is that it is not only universal, but also central. It constitutes the essential basis and focus of identity and loyalty of the believers. Islam distinguishes those who are Moslems from those outside. Moslems share the same memories of a common and sacred past, the same awareness of corporate identity, the same sense of common predicament and destiny, whatever their country, language or colour. Therefore the only really vital responses to colonial advance in Africa and elsewhere were widespread religious reform movements, Pan-Islamic movements and Brotherhoods like the *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* founded at the beginning of the 20th century by a religious teacher, Hassan al Banna. Apart from large-scale educational, social, charitable and religious work, they organized the counter-colonial activities and played a large role in putting the Free Officers in power in Egypt in 1952.

Islam as an African religion

The establishment of an intimate relationship between Islam and Africa dates back to the Prophet Mohammed himself. As the result of persecution, Mohammed sent a substantial number of the first Moslems, amongst whom was Uthmān ibn Affān, his son-in-law and future successor as third caliph, to Abyssinia seven years before the beginning of the Moslem era. Here they found asylum in the domain of the Christian Negus who refused to deliver them into the hands of their oppressors. In Medina, Bilāl, a black man of African descent and one of the very first converts to Islam, became the first *Mu'edhhi* calling the faithful to prayer from the rooftop of the mosque. Today Islam is evidently an African reality, because it is promoted by Africans.

Within one century after the death of Mohammed, Moslem rule extended over the whole of North Africa where the inhabitants welcomed the Arab warriors as their liberators from Byzantine oppression. Since then, North Africa has become almost completely Moslem, while Islam also spread to the rest of Africa. Islam entrenched itself in Africa and established centres of learning from which their influence could be diffused. It is worthy of mention that the three oldest existing universities in the world are in Africa, and all three were founded by Moslems: the Al-Azhar in Cairo and Fez (732 AD) and Al-Qarawuyan (732 AD) in Morocco.

Islam spread into Africa south of the Sahara in general as a result of

South Africa's forces remaining a mere "appendage of the British army".¹⁵
A review of the 1921 Simonstown Agreement was also demanded.¹⁶

The Nationalists soon abandoned their advocacy of neutrality and in the 1948 general election they favoured a South African commitment to support the West in the event of a major East-West war. This about-face is particularly significant because it introduced a factor which has since dominated South Africa's search for security, viz., the communist threat. For the Nationalists, communism posed both an internal and external threat. To counter the former - which they often linked to the so-called Black Peril - the Nationalists demanded tough government action. The external communist threat was so serious that that it merited dropping neutrality and joining forces with the West.¹⁷ The Cold War and events in Eastern Europe at the time of course lent considerable weight to the Nationalist view of communism. This perception of international politics as essentially a communist-anti-communist struggle would remain fundamental to South African thinking.

Anti-communism being a major plank in its election platform, it was only to be expected that the new Nationalist Government under Malan would be greatly pre-occupied with this matter. Malan considered the Union's non-White population "a very fertile field for communist propaganda and agitation"¹⁸ and one of his first counter-measures was the *Suppression of Communism Act*, 1950. This perception also helps to explain the great emphasis placed on the maintenance of internal security as the Defence Force's first aim.

Another implication of this Nationalist view of the communist menace was that it became a major objective of South African foreign and defence policies to enter into formal defence arrangements with the Western powers. South Africa saw its domestic fight against communism as part and parcel of a wider Western struggle against a common international threat. Against this background it becomes understandable that Malan could make what seems a rather presumptuous statement, viz., that South Africa was "waiting for an invitation" to join NATO.¹⁹ The Nationalist Government lost no opportunity to affirm its commitment to the West against communism and gave ample tangible proof through South Africa's participation in the Berlin airlift and the Korean war. An important motive behind South Africa's close identification with the West was the hope of receiving the same in return. This would then involve the West in the defence of South Africa and, by implication, the defence of white supremacy. Put in another way, it meant that South Africa, by taking its stand on anti-communism, hoped to create common ground with the West and pave the way for a military alliance and ultimately for Western involvement in the defence of the Union itself.²⁰ It is in the same context that one can see the tendency to cast the domestic racial conflict in universal, specifically Cold War, terms, viz. a clash between communism and anti-communism.

South Africa regarded the communist threat as particularly real in Africa. Mr. F.C. Erasmus, Minister of Defence, for example, in 1948 referred to a "possible invasion" of Africa by the communists, who advocated a policy of "Africa for the Africans".²¹ Such a policy would clearly result in the liquidation of Western colonialism in Africa and would have far-reaching consequences for South Africa. It would mean the emergence of a radical new context in Africa which would in turn be unfavourable for the perpetuation of South Africa's politico-racial dispensation.

The realisation of the impact of events in Africa on South Africa's domestic situation encouraged the Union government to establish close

political and also military ties with the colonial powers in an effort to maintain the *status quo* as far as possible. This found clear expression in Malan's Africa Charter which aimed at preserving the continent for West European Christian civilization. To this end he proposed that communists (and Asiatics) be kept out of Africa and that the arming and use of Blacks in white wars be prohibited.²² The Charter of course displays several of the characteristics of South Africa's defence policy outlined earlier.

Malan's anachronistic Charter, not surprisingly, failed to impress the colonial powers and South Africa's search for security had to proceed along a different course. This took the form of a series of discussions in the early 1950s on the defence of Africa and the Middle East and involved the Union, the colonial powers, the Commonwealth and the U.S.A. South Africa considered the Middle East the "gateway to Africa" - a notion which fits in with the established strategic doctrine of meeting a potential aggressor as far as possible from South Africa's frontiers. These talks, in London, Nairobi and Dakar, produced no formal defence pact although South Africa evidently hoped it would.²³

One of the reasons that has been advanced for this failure to form alliances in Africa, was the Union Government's refusal to countenance any scheme involving the arming of Africans.²⁴ The Malan Government was quick to disband the Native Military Corps that had served in the war and limited Africans and Coloureds to auxiliary services while only Coloureds would be allowed to serve beyond the borders.²⁵ Evidence suggests that the Union Government was prepared to go to some length to get these views adopted by the colonial powers, particularly Britain.²⁶ It is of course difficult to conceive an African defence pact without the involvement of black troops; support from the colonial powers for a "whites only" alliance was highly unlikely. Another complicating factor could have been that South Africa's potential contribution to an African alliance, already limited because of the whites only policy, might be even further curtailed by committing a substantial number of white troops to internal security duties. (The scenario is thus that South African participation in a war could coincide with - or trigger off - a domestic black revolt.) This would be greatly embarrassing to any potential Western ally, the more so if it implicated the ally in the defence of the Union's already internationally unpopular domestic political system.

South Africa's biggest reward for all its alliance hopes and endeavours was the Simonstown Agreement concluded with Britain in 1955.²⁷ A detailed analysis is unnecessary; the Agreement will only be evaluated in terms of South African defence policy. *First*, the Agreement by no means constituted an alliance. It created no political commitment or guarantee in terms of a defence alliance. *Second*, internal security was specifically mentioned as a matter for the individual countries concerned. Britain was thus exempted from any obligation to come to South Africa's aid in the event of an internal uprising. Britain was patently anxious to avoid too close an identification with apartheid and a corresponding obligation to defend it. Here is thus another instance of South Africa's racial policy affecting its search for security. *Third*, the Union interpreted the provision for a conference to further the planning of the 1951 Nairobi conference as a prelude to a wider agreement with other powers with African interests. Britain, however, made it plain that it was not committed to the establishment of any alliance.²⁸ Probably the best-known provision of the Agreement was for the transfer of the Simonstown base to South Africa. Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom

countries on the African continent, e.g. Libya and Egypt; Algeria and Morocco. It is very true that Islam is faced with a crisis not only on this continent but in the world, as is the case with Christianity and Judaism. In particular, conservative Islam will have to come to a searching encounter with the modern world especially if it wants to preserve the loyalty and capture the imagination of the younger generation. But then the history of Islam has shown that it has extraordinary powers of adaptation. It has succeeded in absorbing apparently incompatible philosophies and there are indications that the widespread Islamic stagnation has come to an end with the approach of the seventies.

Christians and Moslems in conflict

In almost every country where Moslems and Christians meet, there is, or has recently been, killing along religious lines. The Nigerian war pitted a Christian south against a Moslem north and similarly in Sudan; in Ethiopia where Somali Imams of the Ogaden desert declared a djihād, holy war, against the ancient Christian empire, in which Eritrean secessionists joined. To this can be added Chad whereas in Uganda forceful mass conversions to Islam have been reported. Outside Africa, Moslems and Christians clash in the Lebanon and in Cyprus.

Various reasons have been given for the hostilities; the local combatants attributing them to atrocities committed by the other side. The fighting is often dismissed as simply political and economic, with the Christians characterised generally as right wing and rich and the Moslems as left wing and poor (the opposite is the case in the Sudan). Whatever the reason is, it does not seem deliberately planned by either side. Another explanation offered is the renaissance of Islam, in part caused by the wealth and influence of the devout Saudis. In view of the universality of Islam, religious revival leads to confrontation.

In fact, the 1970s have witnessed a miraculous return of Mohammed's people right to the very centre of world attention. For the second time in the history of mankind, God has given to his people out of the nothingness of the desert sands influence, yes, power, over the future of mankind. They possess oil, money and influence. The robed desert kings are visited by an incessant train of dignitaries from East and West for consultation. Where it was stated twelve years ago that common allegiance to Islam plays little part in political relationships of Africans with the Arab world, and that they did not show special sympathy with Arab issues, the Afro-Arab relations are today probably better than ever before. Afro-Arab solidarity was exemplified in their concerted action against Israel. Saudi Arabia is now the second biggest aid donor in the world after the United States, with the focus on Islamic countries, but including on the continent of Africa the Congo and Kenya amongst the non-Islamic recipients of Saudi aid. There are widespread signs of revival in the Islamic world. Such revival is often in reaction to severe pressure, e.g. the Communist challenge.

Arab frustration of Communist objectives

The anti-colonial struggle for freedom from the imperialist rule of the Western powers presented Russian Communism with unique opportunities in Arab and African countries. The first major breakthrough was an arms deal between Egypt and the Soviet Union in September 1955, not long after the United Kingdom agreed to withdraw all her military from Egypt. Since then Soviet investments, influence and involvement in the Middle East have increased and broadened, despite friction and setbacks.

Egypt was to become the showcase of the Soviet Union's achievements in the Third World. Spectacular long-term projects like the building of the Aswan Dam were undertaken. Foreign trade was linked as closely as possible to the Soviet Union and Comecon countries. At the end of 1971 there were an estimated twenty thousand Soviet military personnel in Egypt. There were operational units of the Soviet army, Soviet airfields, and a naval base near Alexandria. Egypt became a major operational base for Soviet air and naval units as well as a stepping stone for operations in other regions. At the beginning of the seventies, the Communist future in the Middle East and in Africa seemed to be better than ever before.

Then suddenly and unexpectedly the works of the Communists went astray. In July 1972, after almost seventeen years of strenuous exertion and huge investments, the Soviet Union suffered a massive expulsion of its personnel and advisers from Egypt. The Soviet Union lost its naval base, its airfields, its exit through the Suez Canal, in spite of the fact that Egypt was almost totally dependent on Soviet military supplies and political backing. This was the beginning of a dramatic curtailment of Russian expansion of power in Africa on a scale unequalled in modern history; not through the influence of America or Western Europe, but by a new source of world power: the Arabic countries. With the wholehearted support of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the Arab-Israeli conflict was desensitized from a potential collision between the superpowers into a local affair.

After an attempted coup in 1971 Sudanese Communists were suppressed. The Sudanese Government expelled all Soviet military advisers and both sides withdrew their ambassadors. President Numeiri charged the Soviet Union and Cuba with embarking on a "new form of colonialism" in Africa. In November 1977 Moslem Somalia expelled the Russians and broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba. Russia suffered the painful loss of its primary naval base in the Indian Ocean, the Somali port of Berbera.

In Eritrea the Moslem guerilla movements co-ordinated their struggle against Marxist Ethiopia. In Morocco, situated at the strategic entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, Russia recently made one of its largest single investments ever for the development of an enormous phosphate mine at Southern Meskala. Nevertheless, King Hassan II is an outspoken opponent of Communist expansion in Africa; to such an extent that he sent fifteen hundred troops to help Mobutu of Zaire to overcome the Communist-inspired Shaba invasion in March 1977. Egypt sent pilots, while Sudan and Saudi Arabia pledged support. Zaire is neither an Arab nor a Muslim country, but served to demonstrate to what lengths Arab countries will go to stem Communist advance in Africa. Moreover, this investment may be used by Morocco as a countermeasure against the Soviet Union for its support of Algeria and in particular the anti-Western Polissario front rebels harboured by Algeria.

This anti-Russian trend is certainly not due to lack of military support. Egypt received massive arms supplies, instructors, technicians, advisers and even Soviet crews, for most sophisticated weapons. Sudan had to rely on Moscow for military and economic aid. The Soviets helped Somalia to become one of the best-armed nations in Africa. Economic considerations do not account for the expulsion of the Soviets. In view of its extensive economic interaction with the USSR, the already strained economy of Egypt could only suffer.

There are clear indications that the real failure of Soviet influence is

ideological. In this connection the position of Communist parties in Arab countries is enlightening. Communist party membership as a percentage of the population was in 1976 practically non-existent. The Communist parties were *not* able to penetrate the society and to muster a national following. The Soviet Government realised this when it chose to continue support for anti-imperialist governments even when these governments suppressed Communists. In Syria and Iraq the Communist parties under Soviet pressure had to join rather than oppose the Government so as not to jeopardize Russian aims. In Egypt, Moscow rebuked the Communist party for its behaviour against Nasser's policies. Communism could never grasp the imagination of the man in the street; it is reported that the local population was overjoyed to see the Russians depart from Mogadishu. Arabic Socialism as preached by al-Afghani, al-Qadhdhafi, and practised in Algeria and elsewhere, became viable only through its connection with Islamic thought. On the whole, therefore, the Soviet Union has been rather unsuccessful in the exchange of cultural material, too. Russian films and books are unpopular; the study and usage of the Russian language could in no way even begin to compete with English and French. There is a marked disinterest in Soviet culture because it is completely foreign to the culture of the Arab.

The culture of the Arab is inseparably interwoven with Islam. The late President Nasser already saw Islam as being one of the basic differences between his brand of Socialism and Communism. Islam is central even in Arab countries with whom Russia maintains friendly relations; in Algeria, Syria and Iraq. The Constitutional Declaration of Libya commences with the explicit statement that Islam is the religion of the State. Colonel Qadhdhafi is a fanatic Moslem and the atheism of the Soviet Union is a horror to him. To him the Soviet is merely a means to an end and that end is to re-establish the great Arab empire from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf, and essentially to revolutionize the whole world. Even radical South Yemen, with close links to Communist countries, speaks, be it only in Article 31 of its Constitution, of the preservation of its Islamic cultural inheritance and Article 46 declares Islam as the religion of the State.

Because of the strength of Islam, Russia can never be sure of any Arab or Moslem country; not of Algeria, not of Libya, not of South Yemen, not of Afghanistan - not even of non-Moslem countries in Africa.

Of all known groups, it is most difficult to influence Moslems or change their basic loyalties. They have been called by Christian missionaries *le bloc inconvertible*. From the vantage point of South Africa it seems as yet insufficiently realised and rarely appreciated that Islam is a potential ally in forestalling Communism in Africa. King Hassan II of Morocco, in fact, referred to the necessity of an unbroken front of anti-Communist states from the Nile Delta to the Cape of Good Hope. One can imagine the grave consequences for the Republic of South Africa, were it not for Islam in Africa. At present three of the strategically most important corners of Africa are in the hands of Moslems: the Straits of Gibraltar on the Moroccan coastline, the Suez Canal region and the Horn of Africa. It is certainly no coincidence that the countries in these regions are war-torn, with Russian intermingling always in the background.

Nearer to our borders, the chief resistance to Frelimo is said to stem from the biggest of the ethnic groups in Mozambique, the Macuas. They live mainly in the northern provinces of the country and constitute nearly forty percent of the total population. The Macuas are chiefly Moslem and therefore opposed to Frelimo doctrine. Moslems in Mozambique are today extremely upset

by the indoctrination of their children in the new educational system.

It is clear that we have many common interests with Moslems in Africa. Unfortunately up to now we have had little vision for the importance of Islam in this country. This was lamented almost twenty-two years ago by Mia Brandel Syrier when she said that this lack of interest and knowledge is in no small measure related to the absence of Islamic-Arabic departments at our universities. Since then little has changed except that South Africa has become more isolated from Moslem countries, who suspect her of religious discrimination against Moslems, and isolated from Arab and African countries, not least because of her ties with Israel.

In South Africa, Islam is mainly represented by the Coloured, Malay and Indian people, with a small number of white and black Moslems. Recently, prominent members of the Black Moslem Movement in America were brought to South Africa to establish contacts with local black people. It is interesting that one of them called on the audience at a Chaka day function to accept Islam as the natural religion of the black people, proclaiming further that it is in God's scheme of things that they have been brought to this country to live, and it is their duty to reproduce Moslems on the soil of South Africa. The Koran has been translated into Zulu, together with other measures to introduce Islam to Zulus. There are, moreover, indications that Christian penetration of the Zulu people has become stagnant.

Islam has remained particularly attractive to the black man in his search for an individual identity, and stimulated by the surge of black nationalism in Africa. He admires the elevated ethical code of Islam, which stresses the equality and unity of all Moslems. It makes him the brother of the incomparable champion boxer Mohammed Ali and it connects him with the fabulous wealth and power of the Arab countries. Polygamy, circumcision and an aversion to pork, fit in with his traditional way of life. Islam gives the African a feeling of power and national pride; it makes him part of the big society of the future: independent, rich and self-reliant. Islam gives the Moslem a feeling of moral superiority over the decadent West with its adultery, gambling, abuse of alcohol and its pitiful indecisiveness. Moreover, the demands of Islam are not inaccessible. The basic requirement is the recital of the shahâda-formula: "There is no god except God and Mohammed is his messenger", the rest can come gradually even over more than one generation.

There are not many ideological options in Africa and I consider the chances for Islamic expansion in Africa to be as good as, if not better than, ever before. I have tried to present a brief sketch of the spread of Islam in Africa, its diversity and some of its problems; but also its unity and immense power when put under pressure by an enemy, as most recently by the threat of Communist military and ideological takeover. We in South Africa are irrevocably involved in the future of Africa, therefore Islam concerns every one of us in a most personal way.

Republic's irredeemably embattled situation.⁶⁷ It could conjure up frightening scenarios: the final push in the African liberation struggle had begun and would lead to a protracted war which would sap South Africa's military, economic and moral strength and even foment a domestic revolt. In short, white South Africa faced ultimate and unavoidable defeat. To counter such apocalyptic notions and also to maintain its *cordon sanitaire*, South Africa had to react strongly.

Fighting guerillas was one way of dealing with them; another was to prevent them establishing operational bases on foreign soil. The latter was probably an important consideration in South Africa's offer of a non-aggression pact to African states in 1970. It was however also part and parcel of the outward movement and would hopefully have promoted South Africa's credibility as a peaceful, non-aggressive power.

South Africa's overtures to Africa, which became known as the dialogue policy, enjoyed its hey-day in early 1971 when, according to one calculation, between fourteen and twenty-five out of forty-one Black states favoured dialogue with the Republic.⁶⁸ For several reasons, it thereafter lost momentum. Three years later the rapprochement with Africa was revived as détente. Starting with Mr. Vorster's "Southern Africa at the cross-roads" speech in October 1974⁶⁹, it culminated in the Victoria Falls conference in August 1975.⁷⁰

The success of détente, like dialogue, would have promoted South Africa's security by creating a Southern African community of states committed to peaceful relations, economic co-operation, non-interference and perhaps ultimately some form of alignment (involving also other black states) against external, specifically communist, threats. South Africa would in effect have extended its *cordon sanitaire* beyond the white south, the B.L.S. states and Malawi, to Zambia and even Tanzania and Zaire. The Rhodesian issue was particularly important in South Africa's détente exercise. South Africa had by then calculated that military intervention in support of Mr. Ian Smith would be politically and militarily very costly and in the long run even disastrous. (In August 1975 the S.A. Police were withdrawn from Rhodesia.⁷¹) Instead of bailing him out, South Africa was anxious to promote a settlement between Mr. Smith and moderate black leaders, thus creating a stable and hopefully reasonable black state on its northern border.

South Africa's high hopes for détente were disappointed. There were basically two events responsible for the failure of détente, viz. *first*, the Portuguese coup of 25 April 1974 and the subsequent independence of Angola and Mozambique together with South Africa's involvement in the Angolan war, and *second*, the collapse of the Rhodesian peace initiative.

The Portuguese collapse in Angola had important implications for S.W.A. SWAPO was then assured of covert and overt support from the local Government and consequently intensified its guerilla campaign. South Africa was accordingly forced to enlarge its military involvement. On the other hand South Africa also initiated a process of disengagement through the Turnhalle conference which began in August 1975 at the height of détente. By keeping the radical SWAPO at bay and encouraging the Turnhalle, South Africa hoped to pave the way for a moderate and stable Namibia which could leave the *cordon sanitaire* intact. All of this, of course, implies some South African calculation that the political and military costs of maintaining control over S.W.A. could in the

long run prove prohibitive. South Africa's fight against SWAPO, it should be added, was seen in stark communist - anti-communist terms: Mr. Vorster described SWAPO as "conceived and born in communist sin" and he branded Nujoma a "communist".⁷²

South Africa's involvement in the Angolan war is a study in itself. Here it is discussed very briefly in the context of the Republic's political and military thinking.

Small-scale military intervention was officially justified in terms of protecting the Cunene River project, deflecting "the effects of the Angolan civil war from the northern border of S.W.A." and inhibiting SWAPO from exploiting the unstable situation in southern Angola.⁷³ Large-scale military intervention should however be seen in a quite different context.⁷⁴ From a political point of view, South Africa probably hoped to prove itself as a reliable ally of its détente partners, particularly since some of them encouraged the Republic to intervene. More generally, South Africa hoped to demonstrate its commitment to the free world against communist expansionism. Angola seemed the ideal opportunity to do so. There was extensive communist involvement; the spill-over could affect Zambia and Zaire - two key states to the West; and the turmoil resulting from the fighting between rival movements facilitated outside intervention. South African intervention on behalf of the pro-Western UNITA movement might produce a moderate Angolan Government which, in turn, might deny SWAPO bases and retain Angola as part of the *cordon sanitaire* surrounding South Africa. When at least tacit support was moreover forthcoming from the United States, the scene was set for the South African invasion.

The South African Government's perception of the communist strategy is vitally important in examining its role in the Angolan war. According to Mr. Vorster, the U.S.S.R. wanted to create "a string of Marxist states across Africa from Angola to Tanzania". This would place the Cape route and Western interests in jeopardy.⁷⁵ South Africa had for so long been trying to convince the West that the communists had a grand design for world domination and now Angola seemed a well-planned and logical step towards its realisation. If the Soviets were to succeed in Angola, no other African state would be safe. South Africa therefore hoped to persuade the West that, as Lenin reputedly argued, the road to London and Paris went through Africa.⁷⁶

In relying on Western, and specifically American, support in Angola, South Africa miscalculated badly and in the end had no option but to withdraw its forces from Angola. It was a traumatic experience and painfully underlined South Africa's political and military isolation. Its intervention had patently failed to achieve the objectives set out by Mr. Vorster, viz. to prevent an MPLA take-over with Soviet and Cuban aid and to prevent Angola from being used as a springboard for attacks on S.W.A. and perhaps even on Zambia and Zaire.⁷⁷ Not only did the MPLA take over but its communist sponsors have entrenched themselves as an important determinant of Southern Africa's fortunes. Angola, like Mozambique, has deprived South Africa of two vital elements in its *cordon sanitaire*. The psychological impact of black Africa's apparently irresistible southward march was profound, not only on South Africa but also on the West. For elements in the West it lent further credence to the domino theory and led to renewed calls for a fundamental reassessment of Western interests in Southern Africa in view of the seemingly unavoidable defeat in due course of the remnants of white supremacy. In short, the notion that South Africa was a lost cause and expendable received a new impetus in the West in the wake of Angola.

It is against this radically changed background that South Africa's search for security over the last number of years should be viewed. The 1973 Defence White Paper was the first to propound the now common concept of a "total strategy", meaning the mustering of all the country's resources for survival.⁷⁸ South African military planners perceived an "escalating" threat against the country, compelling it "to strive for full military preparedness at an increased rate". A five-year defence expansion programme was approved in 1974, leading to the first drastic increase in defence expenditure since the vast increases in the early 1960s.⁷⁹

There are various other measures which also illustrate the seriousness of the military threat. In 1975 the S.A. Police began patrolling the borders with black states⁸⁰ while the 1977 White Paper on Defence stated that insurgency over the Northern and Eastern Transvaal and Northern Natal borders could be expected. Such a contingency had led to a new subdivision of land forces into a counter-insurgency and a conventional force.⁸¹ Last year (1977) national service was extended to two years⁸² and earlier this year the establishment of a number of new military bases was announced.⁸³

A particularly significant development in recent years has been the increasing involvement of Blacks, Coloureds and Indians in the defence effort. This was a radical departure from the policy which the Government had adhered to until relatively recently. The new policy reflects a realisation that Whites cannot provide both the military and economic manpower for any sustained military effort. The Defence Force also saw an important role for itself in promoting good race relations.⁸⁴ It could perhaps also be argued that the involvement of non-Whites in the S.A. Defence Force may counter the growing radicalisation among non-Whites and create a new reliable - and armed and trained - group within the non-White community. A further possible implication is that South Africa's fight against insurgents could perhaps be redefined in terms other than the stereotype Black versus White conflict.

While all that has just been said points to an intensified programme of military self-reliance, and despite Angola's accentuation of South Africa's political and military isolation, the old ideal of association with the free world lingered on. After the Angolan war one heard official assertions that South Africa's strategic importance to the free world had increased and that the West was in fact recognising it.⁸⁵ In this regard it should be noted that South Africa presently sees Southern Africa as a focal point in the grand communist strategy which is increasingly moving into the Southern Hemisphere.⁸⁶ One also sees renewed attempts to link communist pressure on South Africa with wider communist pressure on the free world.⁸⁷ Then the recent Shaba invasion was seen by South Africa as clear evidence of Marxist expansionism in Africa, and which necessitated urgent Western counter-measures.⁸⁸ Despite the optimistic views, the doubts and duality in relations with the West remained. During the last few years, for example, one frequently heard the West being reminded that South Africa had supported it in two world wars, Berlin and Korea.⁸⁹ In a world bearing little resemblance to those times, such appeals to Western sentiment seem in vain. And then there is the "hate" element of the old love-hate dualism, greatly intensified by the Angolan experience. America's role in Angola caused bitter resentment in South Africa and led to assertions like: South Africa would no longer fight for the West but would henceforth remain neutral.⁹⁰ Mr. Vorster (January 1976) said Angola had confirmed a lesson previously learnt, viz. that when it came to the worst, South Africa stood alone.⁹¹ If the Government had long

been aware of the West's unreliability, should it then not have been more careful, one may ask, in relying on the West in Angola?

As if to add insult to injury, Western powers last year supported a U.N. Security Council mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. France, the main arms supplier, stopped a contract for the supply of naval vessels and even announced its intention of terminating contracts providing for the local manufacture of French arms.⁹² In the meantime (June 1975) South Africa's last formal - albeit tenuous - link with the Western defence system was severed with the termination of the Simonstown Agreement.⁹³

Domestic developments in recent years have further complicated South Africa's search for security. Soweto 1976 underlined a grave dilemma in South African security, viz. are the Blacks (and even the Coloureds and Indians) prepared to defend the country, given its politico-racial structure? Another security implication of Soweto was that the exodus of young Blacks provided guerilla recruits for the ANC and PAC. Soweto, the Biko affair and the October 19, 1977, bannings were of course disastrous for South Africa's foreign relations. One should remember that the Security Council arms embargo followed shortly after the bannings.

Dealing with the racial issue, one has to refer to the security implications of the homelands policy. The Government has long been uneasy about this. Verwoerd preferred hostile elements outside South Africa rather than enemies within.⁹⁴ On the other hand there were confident assertions that economic and military realities would dictate friendly relations and even hints that the control of an independent Transkei's coastline might by treaty be left to South Africa.⁹⁵ In 1975 Mr. P.W. Botha said it was imperative that independent homelands be accommodated within South Africa's military context and not outside.⁹⁶ Transkei has since effectively destroyed such hopes, not only by breaking diplomatic links but also by unilaterally abrogating its non-aggression treaty with South Africa. In Bophuthatswana we have just recently heard of a clash between its police and insurgents *en route* to South Africa. Independent homelands clearly hold potentially serious security risks for South Africa, the extent of which will to a large extent be determined by the state of their relations with the Republic.

Summary and conclusion

To summarize, South Africa's search for security is today rendered more difficult than in the past by a number of factors not encountered previously or at any rate not to the same extent. *First*, the world has become so hostile that the Security Council passed a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. *Second*, South Africa is surrounded by neighbouring states of which some are openly antagonistic and have radical political systems. With the birth of Namibia and Zimbabwe, South Africa will be completely surrounded by (predominantly or even exclusively) black governments. It is not impossible that hostile governments could emerge in Namibia and Zimbabwe. *Third*, and related to the second, South Africa would not only have lost the safety of a white *cordon sanitaire*, but its black neighbours may - and already do - provide sanctuary to terrorists operating against the Republic. *Fourth*, domestic tranquility still seems rather fragile and the possibility of renewed urban black unrest cannot be ruled out. *Finally*, urban terrorism has again emerged on the scene.

To conclude, consideration will be given to the five characteristics of South Africa's pre-war search for security (listed at the outset) to determine whether they are still operative today. In this context reference will be made to South Africa's options. The *first* characteristic was the link between defence and racial policies. Racial policy, it could be argued, today lies at the very heart of a major dilemma in South Africa's search for security. For foreign powers, South Africa's internal and external security appear indivisible. In other words, they would argue that defending South Africa against external attack would implicate them in the maintenance of apartheid. The same consideration essentially applies to a great many non-whites in South Africa. This, then, is the critical weak point in South Africa's security, viz. the loyalty and support of the majority of its people. As long as there is reason to doubt whether the majority of South Africans are in fact willing to defend the country and its institutions, the Republic's security remains far from safeguarded. To strengthen this soft underbelly of South Africa's security requires a political and not a military effort.

The *second* characteristic relates to South Africa's search for security through military co-operation with other powers. Here a significant shift has occurred over the years. Such co-operation was initially sought with the West but its failure turned South Africa's attention to other powers (although the West has still by no means been abandoned). Anti-Marxist African states, it is nowadays hoped, will join with South Africa in opposing Marxist expansionism. The friendly overtures to Latin American states and the idea of a South Atlantic pact have been mentioned. Then there is Israel, which had lately become a particularly valuable partner. Their close links are probably to a large extent the product of their parallel political and military situations. The growing friendship culminated in Mr. Vorster's visit to Israel in April 1976 and the signing of an agreement which *inter alia* provided for economic, industrial and technological co-operation.⁹⁷ Although the agreement did not provide for military co-operation and such co-operation has since been denied, one is still inclined to wonder whether this close relationship is wholly without military implications. South Africa's links with Israel should also be seen in a wider context. When addressing Parliament on his visit to Israel, Mr. Vorster committed himself to promote economic co-operation between a dozen or so middle-sized anti-communist powers.⁹⁸ This raises the fascinating notion of a so-called Fifth World or pariah or outcast nations, forming a new economic, military and perhaps even political power bloc. South Africa's ties with South American countries, Iran and Taiwan could perhaps also be seen in this context.⁹⁹

The *third* characteristic is no longer relevant, viz. South Africa's close military links with Britain.

The *fourth* was the extension of South Africa's defence line to well beyond its own borders. This no longer applies. South Africa will shortly be totally surrounded by black states, some of which are already hostile and, moreover, allowing the enemy access to South Africa's very frontiers. The best that South Africa could hope for would be that neighbouring states do not provide sanctuary to guerillas. In this regard the Republic is, of course, not without some influence.

The *final* characteristic was the use of defence as a party political issue. After 1948, but particularly since the establishment of the Republic, defence gradually became elevated above party politics. In the 1974, but

particularly the 1977 general election, security however returned to party politics, but in a different form. The National Party used external threats and pressure as a very potent rallying call.

These characteristics, however, do not encompass all the strategies available to South Africa in its current search for security. One has to add a few more. *First*, there is the nuclear option. Suffice it to say that despite its apparent attractions, this is an option fraught with considerable risks. For South Africa it would be a typical "last ditch" stand - a situation we have hopefully not yet reached.

Second, there is the neutrality option to which I have already referred. The propagation of neutrality seems more of an emotional reaction against Western indifference or downright unreliability than a carefully considered option. It is extremely doubtful whether neutrality would earn South Africa any greater recognition from the West - or even whether the West would regret the loss of this unpopular self-styled ally. On the other hand, it must be seriously questioned whether South Africa could afford to spurn the West when they are so deeply involved in the search for peace in Southern Africa. South Africa needs the West in this dangerous world, but it would first have to prove that it has a defensible society.

Third, there is the old notion of involving other powers in South Africa's defence on account of its vital strategic importance. Perhaps in exasperation, South Africa has tended to over-state the case and to adopt a rather frantic hard-sell approach. If South Africa's strategic importance to the free world is so obvious, is it then necessary to proclaim it so loudly? Moreover, can one country really presume to tell another what its interests ought to be?

Finally, one has to mention the popular use of anti-communism as a means of achieving military co-operation with other powers. This has not succeeded in the past. It is very unlikely that opposition to communism *per se*, however fervent, can today provide sufficient common ground for other states to involve themselves in South Africa's defence. Elements in the U.S. Administration already consider racism a greater threat to the world than communism. In addition, there is the notion that South Africa's racial policy is itself conducive to communist intervention in Africa.

In the final analysis, security, like charity, begins at home, and for South Africa it is essentially a political and not a military matter.

FOOTNOTES

1. This lecture is mainly concerned with security, or defence, against *external* threats and aggression. Threats to a state's security can or course be either external or internal or both. It can, however, be very difficult to distinguish between internal and external security. By the same token it is virtually impossible to discuss defence policy without reference to domestic and foreign policy: they are normally intimately related.
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3. Walker, E.A., *A History of Southern Africa*. (Longmans, London, 1968), p. 683.
4. Nolutshungu, S.C., *South Africa in Africa: A Study in Ideology and Foreign Policy*. (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1975), p. 47.
5. Quoted by Walker, E.A., *op. cit.*, p. 685.
6. Smuts, J.C. (jr.), *Jan Christian Smuts*. (Cassell, London, 1952), pp. 150 and 151.
7. Labuschagne, G.S., *op. cit.*, p. 18.
8. Dugard, C.J.R., "The Simonstown Agreement: South Africa, Britain and the United Nations", *The South African Law Journal*, vol. LXXXV, 1968, p. 143.
9. Quoted by Labuschagne, G.S., *op. cit.*, p. 19.
10. Quoted by Rhodie, D.O., *Suid-Afrika: van Koloniale Onderhorigheid tot soewereine Onafhanklikheid*. (Perskor, Johannesburg, 1974), p. 217.
11. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 58, 19/6/1946, col. 10722 and 10723.
12. See Barber, J., *South Africa's Foreign Policy 1945-1970*. (OUP, London, 1973), p. 18 and Miller, J.D.B., *Britain and the Old Dominions*. (Chatto & Windus, London, 1966), p. 175.
13. Quoted by Nolutshungu, S.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 34 and 37.
14. See *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 56, 4/4/1946, col. 5033 and vol. 58, 19/6/1946, col. 10756.
15. Mr. F.C. Erasmus, in *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 56, 4/4/1946, col. 5034.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Stultz, N.M., *The Nationalists in Opposition, 1934-1948*. Human and Rousseau, Cape Town, 1975), p. 122, and Botha, W.A., *Die Parlementêre Verkiesing van 1948: 'n Ontleding van die faktore wat die verkiesing beïnvloed het*. (M.A., Pretoria, 1967), p. 74.

18. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 75, 17/5/1951, col. 7020 and 7021.
19. South Africa, State Information Office, *Foreign Policy of the Union of South Africa (Statement by Dr. the Honourable D.F. Malan, Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs)*, (undated), p. 12.
20. See Nolutshungu, S.C., *op. cit.*, p. 65.
21. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 92, 22/5/1956, col. 5871.
22. Nolutshungu, S.C., *op. cit.*, p. 46.
23. See Lawrie, G.G., *South African Defence and the Commonwealth*. (SAIIA, Johannesburg, 1961), pp. 3 and 4.
24. Tunstall, W.C.B., *The Commonwealth and Regional Defence*. (Athlone Press, London, 1959), p. 47.
25. Nolutshungu, S.C., *op. cit.*, p. 49 and *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 77, 28/2/1952, col. 1969.
26. See Ballinger, M., *From Union to Apartheid: A Trek to Isolation*. (Juta, Cape Town, 1969), p. 230 and Lewis, W.A. *et al*, *Attitude to Africa*. (Penguin, Middlesex, 1951), pp. 45 and 65.
27. United Kingdom, *Exchange of Letters on Defence Matters between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Union of South Africa, June 1955*. (H.S.O, London, 1955) (Cmd. 9520).
28. See Spence, J.E., *The Strategic Significance of Southern Africa*. (Royal United Service Institution, London, 1970), pp. 13 and 14; Lawrie, G.G., "The Simonstown Agreement: South Africa, Britain and the Commonwealth", *The South African Law Journal*, vol. 85, May 1968, p. 162, and Tunstall, W.C.B., *op. cit.*, p. 51.
29. *Die Transvaler*, 5/7/1955.
30. See *Die Burger*, 17/6/1975, and *Die Transvaler*, 19/6/1975.
31. Spence, J.E., "South Africa and the Defence of the West: Liability or Asset to the Free World?" *The Round Table*, no. 241, Jan. 1971, p. 16.
32. Barber, J., *op. cit.*, p. 87, Scholtz, G.D., *Die Republiek van Suid-Afrika en die Nuwe Wêreld*. (Voortrekkerpers, Johannesburg, 1962), pp. 142 and 145.
33. Quoted by Barber, J., *op. cit.*, p. 86.
34. *Republic of South Africa, White Paper on Defence and Armament Production, April 1969* (Laid before Parliament by the Minister of Defence), p. 2.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

36. Barber, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 190 and 191.
37. See *Die Burger* (editorial), 15/3/1962.
38. Republic of South Africa, *White Paper on Defence: Vote 40: 1964-65*, pp. 2 and 5. Permanent Force manpower increased by 65% between 1960 and 1965: 9 019 - 14 926; military expenditure for 1960/1 was R46 million and exceeded R200 million 5 years later.
39. Barber, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 193 and 194.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 190 and 194.
41. For a discussion of the arms issue in Britain, see the author's article, "The South African National Party and the British Government (1939-1961)", *Politikon*, vol. 5, no. 1, June 1978, p. 60.
42. Mr. Peter Thomas, Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, in *House of Commons Debates*, vol. 654, 26/2/1962, col. 1065.
43. Olivier, G.C., *Suid-Afrika se Buitelandse Beleid*, (Akademica, Pretoria), pp. 69 and 70.
44. Rossouw, C.J., *Wapenverkope aan Suid-Afrika: 'n Beslissingsprobleem in Britse Buitelandse Beleid (1963-1973)*. (M.A., Pretoria, 1975), p. 26.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 26 and 27.
46. Spence, J.E., *Strategic Significance*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
47. See *Ibid.*, p. 18 and *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 19, 2/2/1967, col. 510.
48. Stultz, N.M., "The Politics of Security: South Africa under Verwoerd, 1961-1966", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, April 1969.
49. Hobart Houghton, D., *The South African Economy*. (OUP, Cape Town, 1967), pp. 198-214.
50. Barber, J., *op. cit.*, p. 197.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 196 and 197.
52. See Spence, J.E., *Strategic Significance*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
53. A phrase borrowed from Barber, J., *op. cit.*, p. 62, who applied it to the National Party's relations with the United Kingdom.
54. See *Die Burger*, 18/5/1968 and 9/3/1973; *Rand Daily Mail*, 7/5/1971; *Cape Times*, 26/2/1975; Republic of South Africa, *White Paper on Defence and Armament Production*, 1973 (Laid before Parliament by the Minister of Defence), p. 13 and *White Paper on Defence*, 1969, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

55. *Die Burger*, 9/3/1973.
56. *Die Burger*, 18/5/1968.
57. Mr. Vorster, reported *ibid.*
58. See, for example, Mr. Vorster, in *Die Burger*, 18/5/1968.
59. See Barber, J., *op. cit.*, p. 199.
60. See Spence, J.E., *Strategic Significance*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27 and 28.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 30 and 31 and Nolutshungu, S.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 169 and 170.
62. *Die Vaderland*, 28/8/1975.
63. See below.
64. Spence, J.E., *Strategic Significance*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30.
65. See *ibid.*, p. 27 and Nolutshungu, S.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 181 and 182.
66. Nolutshungu, S.C., *op. cit.*, pp. 173 and 263.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
68. Barratt, C.J.A., "Dialogue in Africa" (Private Paper, SAIIA, Johannesburg, June 1971), pp. 11 and 12.
69. *Die Burger*, 24/10/1974.
70. *The Argus*, 24/10/1974.
71. *Rand Daily Mail*, 15/7/1977. See also *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 56, 21/4/1975, col. 4503.
72. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 60, 31/1/1976, col. 361.
73. Republic of South Africa, *White Paper on Defence 1977* (Tabled in the Senate and the House of Assembly by the Minister of Defence), p. 6.
74. It was "large-scale" involvement in a relative sense: under 3 000 troops were reportedly involved although they penetrated deep into Angola.
75. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 60, 30/1/1976, col. 366.
76. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 60, 5/3/1976, col. 2601-2603.
77. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 60, 31/1/1976, col. 365.
78. *White Paper on Defence, 1973*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

79. *White Paper on Defence, 1977, op. cit.*, p. 11. Defence expenditure for 1974/5 was R700 million; for 1978/9 R1 544 million was budgeted.
80. *Rand Daily Mail*, 15/7/1977.
81. *White Paper on Defence and Armament Production, 1975* (Laid upon the Table in the Senate and the House of Assembly by the Minister of Defence), p. 10.
82. *Cape Times*, 22/4/1977.
83. *Die Burger*, 18/4/1978.
84. See *White Paper on Defence, 1977, op. cit.*, pp. 20 and 21; Mr. P.W. Botha in *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 62, 6/5/1976, col. 6207; Admiral H. Bierman, then head of the SADF, in *Die Burger*, 25/9/1974 and General Magnus Malan, present head of the SADF, in *Cape Times*, 24/1/1978. Training in the (Coloured) Cape Corps Service Battalion commenced in 1973; for black soldiers in 1974 and the Indian Training Battalion in 1975. (*White Papers on Defence, 1973* (p. 11) and 1975 (p. 16), *op. cit.*)
85. Mr. P.W. Botha, in *White Paper on Defence, 1977, op. cit.*, p. 3.
86. See *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 63, 25/6/1976, col. 10633 and 10634.
87. See Mr. Vorster in *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 66, 28/1/1977, col. 364 and 365.
88. See *South African Digest*, 26/5/1978.
89. Mr. P.W. Botha, in *White Paper on Defence, 1977, op. cit.*, p. 3, and in *House of Assembly Debates*, no. 11, 17/4/1978, col. 4857.
90. Mr. P.W. Botha, in *Die Burger*, 6/3/1978.
91. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 60, 30/1/1976, col. 375.
92. *Die Burger*, 18/8/1977.
93. *Die Burger*, 17/6/1975.
94. Barber, J., *op. cit.*, p. 233.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 234 and 235.
96. *Die Burger*, 23/4/1975.
97. *House of Assembly Debates*, vol. 61, 22/4/1976, col. 5200.
98. *Ibid.*, col. 5202.
99. On the "pariah" concept, see Vale, P.C.J., "South Africa as a pariah international state", in *International Affairs Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 121-141.