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**WHAT DO  
WE THINK?**

*A survey of white opinion  
on foreign policy issues*

No. 6

Analysed by  
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The first five surveys of white opinion on foreign policy issues, also entitled *What Do We Think?* were published by the SAIIA in 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990. The present Paper is the sixth and last in a biennial series of similar surveys.

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

**WHAT DO WE THINK?**

**A SURVEY OF WHITE OPINION ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES**

**NUMBER 6**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This survey of white opinion on foreign policy issues is the last in a series of biennial surveys that spans a decade, beginning in 1982. Conducted every second year for SAILA by Market and Opinion Surveys (M & S), it was the only series of its kind in South Africa that measured the opinion of white South Africans principally on foreign policy issues. The considerations for restricting the 1992 survey to whites only are the same applied to previous surveys, namely, financial constraints, the central role played by whites in making foreign policy, and the difficulty in obtaining a nationally representative black sample.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to make the 1992 opinion survey the last of the series, was taken in the context of far-reaching political and socio-economic changes in South Africa and world society. It is by now clear that political developments since February 1990 have already irrevocably changed the nature of the South African political landscape. It has also become clear that irrespective of the precise outcome of the current negotiation process between the government and its opponents, white domination of the political decision-making structures, too, will end. The long-delayed achievement of representative democratic structures in South Africa will therefore also be reflected in the composition of those who will formulate South Africa's foreign policy. It would not make much sense, under these new conditions, to commission yet another whites-only survey on foreign policy questions.

Since the 1990 survey, socio-political developments in South Africa, but also globally, were of a truly momentous nature. Not all developments spelled progress, however. Globally, the beginning of the disintegration of the Soviet empire, symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall in August 1989, reached a climax with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The longer-term effects of Soviet disintegration, however, are a cause of concern to many inside and outside that region. Waves of rising nationalisms, ethnic strife and religious intolerance are some of the factors that bring instability and disorder to global politics, with the result that the "new world order" has already become a contested concept.

The ramifications of Soviet disintegration coupled to a continuing global economic recession and changing patterns of global economic relations, have been felt in our region of Africa too. Southern Africa is characterised by ongoing quests for the resolution of intra-state conflicts, demands for democratic state reforms, and economic restructuring. Despite these promising developments, however, Africa's economy remains a cause of concern to its long-suffering inhabitants. In the opinion of many commentators, the rapidly

evolving global economy (the trend towards the formation of competing trading blocs) and the accompanying new global division of labour, will have the effect of an even more marginalised African continent - unable to pull itself out of the morass of debt and underdevelopment, and unable to compete successfully on international markets. Yet others see in these new developments potential for opportunities to be grasped and realised.

In South Africa, too, change between 1990 and 1992 were many and varied.

Major domestic political and socio-economic developments in South Africa during 1990 and 1991 included:

- \* June 1991 saw the repeal of a battery of major apartheid laws, including the Group Areas Act of 1966, the Black Land Act of 1913 and the Development Trust and Land Act of 1936, and the Population Registration Act of 1950.
- \* The beginning of formal constitutional negotiations in December 1991 when 19 political formations attended the first session of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA).
- \* The parlous state of the national economy, which during 1991 showed virtually no growth. Expectations of stabilising and signs of recovery in early 1992 were also frustrated. Economic conditions deteriorated despite the lifting of some, but not all, economic sanctions against South Africa. The continuing recession seems to be influenced by political uncertainty, a sluggish world economy, a poor gold price, an uncompromising anti-inflationary policy stance by the authorities, and a severe drought.<sup>2</sup> Unemployment increased yet again.<sup>3</sup>
- \* Escalation of political violence. An estimated 6000 people were killed in political violence since Mr. Mandela's release in February 1990. In 1991 an average of 215 people were killed every month, whereas in the first six months of 1992 the monthly average was 286.<sup>4</sup> This pattern was established despite the signing by the ANC, IFP and government in September 1991 of the National Peace Accord.
- \* The country's rapid re-entry into the international community. Particularly striking was the swift establishment of links with central and eastern European countries, and president de Klerk's diplomatic crusade into Africa.

Finally, the region was characterised by important changes, including:

- \* Namibia's accession to independence in March 1990.
- \* An end to the internecine war in Angola.
- \* An increase in diplomatic and economic links between South Africa and the region.

It was against this background that our final opinion survey was commissioned. Our analysis of the data shows interesting trends and correlations with previous surveys, and in certain, but not all instances, the opinions reflect the consciousness of the white respondents of major political developments as outlined above.

## **2. SURVEY METHOD**

This survey was conducted by means of a self-completion mail-back questionnaire (appended to the back of this publication). Market and Opinion Surveys' representative national white consumer panel comprised the sample. Table One on p.4 shows the composition of the sample for the present survey as well as the previous two surveys carried out in 1988 and 1990. The sample size this year was weighted to reflect the adult population. The percentages are, however, directly comparable to previous years.

The primary objective of the survey was to establish shifts in political views since the last survey, which was carried out two years ago in 1990.

The questionnaire consists of thirty questions and statements. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. A four point scale ranging from "definitely agree" to "definitely disagree" with no mid-point was used.

Concerning the questions, thirteen questions were carried over from the previous survey, nine new questions were introduced and six questions were rephrased to reflect recent political developments in South Africa and elsewhere.

In line with previous practice, this survey included a number of statements on contentious domestic political issues. The objective is to find statistically meaningful correlations between opinions on domestic and foreign policy issues.

**SAMPLE:** The table below shows the composition of the sample for the present survey as well as the previous two surveys carried out in 1988 and 1990, respectively.

		1988 N=1725 %	1990 N=1602 %	1992 N=1009 %
<b>Sex:</b>	Male	50	49	50
	Female	50	51	50
<b>Age:</b>	16-24	22	19	21
	25-34	22	23	22
	35-49	26	29	28
	50+	30	29	29
<b>Income:</b>	A	18	27	12
	B	28	42	20
	C	34	31	50
	D	20	*	18
<b>Home Language:</b>	Afrikaans	59	60	63
	English	41	40	37
<b>Province:</b>	Cape	28	27	27
	Transvaal	54	53	52
	OFS	6	8	9
	Natal	12	12	12
<b>Political Affiliation**</b>				
National Party (NP)		43	N/A	49
Democratic Party (DP)		19***	N/A	11
Conservative Party (CP)		18	N/A	31

\* Note that for 1990 income groups C and D were combined.

\*\* Registered voters. The "would not vote" category is not included in this table.

\*\*\* Combination of Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and Independents.

Since this survey is the last of a series, particular attention was given to comparing previous survey results (especially in the case of six questions which were asked consistently since 1982). Where possible, comparisons over time are presented in graph form, to enhance analysis.

The addition of many new questions and deletion of some previous ones necessitated a regrouping of clusters of questions. These appear in the text under the following headings:

- (a) Perceptions of domestic conflict and security.
- (b) Perceptions of domestic politics.
- (c) Perceptions of threat: the regional dimension.
- (d) South Africa and the International Community.

To make interpretation of data clearer, a few explanatory notes are in order. Figures in the tables reflect percentages. The percentages under the "Yes" heading have been calculated by adding responses to "Definitely agree" with responses to "Inclined to Agree". Similarly, the percentages under the "No" heading are a combination of responses to "Definitely disagree" and "Inclined to Disagree".

The breakdown of income groups is as follows:

A: R10000+; B: R7000-R9999; C: R4000-R6999; D: Less than R3000.

Responses from supporters of the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) were ignored because of their statistical insignificance (1.2% of all respondents indicated support for the HNP).

### **3. ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS**

#### **3.1 SECTION A: PERCEPTIONS OF DOMESTIC CONFLICT AND SECURITY**

Sections A and B have as their focus the "domestic base" of South Africa's foreign policy. Instead of providing a comprehensive background to the domestic setting in which South Africa's foreign policy is formulated,<sup>5</sup> the questions in Sections A and B highlight a variety of issues which became prominent in the Eighties - which despite the remarkable changes on the international plain, continues to occupy the minds of white South Africans.

The focus of Section A is on domestic security issues. This is not surprising, given that South Africa's domestic as well as its regional and foreign policies have shown a perennial concern with security.<sup>6</sup> This almost primordial concern is a result of the state's attempts to deal with the force of social contradictions which the policy of separate development has created. The period which the opinion survey covered - 1982 to 1992 - was therefore characterised by the changing shape of apartheid, resistance to it, and the resultant "total strategy"

doctrine of the state. The 1992 survey is the first to gauge white opinion on domestic security issues after the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations, and should therefore make for interesting comparisons with previous surveys.<sup>7</sup>

**QUESTION 1: The Communist threat against South Africa is exaggerated by the Government (all surveys except 1992).**

**TOTAL:**

1982 YES NO	1984 YES NO	1986 YES NO	1988 YES NO	1990 YES NO
18 -	19 -	18 -	21 -	26 -

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

NP	6	9	7	10	N/A
(PFP)/ DP	44	52	41	62	N/A
CP	-	12	17	9	N/A

As the table above indicates, a clear pattern emerged over time: most respondents consistently felt that the "communist threat" against South Africa was real and not exaggerated by government. Respondents who disagreed with the government's portrayal of a "communist threat", increased slightly from 18% in 1982 to 26% in 1990, but an analysis of the political affiliation of respondents indicates that only the political "left" (left of the NP) increasingly felt that the government was exaggerating the "communist threat".

**QUESTION 2: The communist threat against South Africa is over (1992 only).**

**TOTAL:**

1992	
YES	NO
30	70

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

	1992
AFR	23
ENG	43

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

	1992
NP	38
DP	64
CP	6

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

	1992
A	42
B	35
C	28
D	21

According to the survey results portrayed above, only a third of respondents actually believe that the "communist threat" is over. When compared with results from all the previous surveys, the 1992 date fits the pattern statistically very well (1990: 26%; 1992: 30%). When interpreting the data, a first impression is that the state's manipulation of this threat perception was done so effectively over the years that the collapse of the Soviet Union (perceived by many whites to be a main repository of "communism") in 1989 notwithstanding, white South Africans still overwhelmingly labour under the impression that South Africa is threatened by communism. Could it be that the icons of the Cold War simply linger on? However, when this data is interpreted in the context of the turbulent domestic political scene in South Africa since the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), another picture emerges. Political opposition to government, and the ANC's negotiation strategy is seen by many white South Africans as planned and driven by the communists within the ANC alliance. The prominent political role played by SACP members such as Mr. Slovo and Mr. Hani, coupled to Mr. Mandela's open and much publicised association with Fidel Castro of Cuba and Yassar Arafat of the

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), serves to reinforce this perception.

Major differences emerge when subgroups are compared. Only 23% of Afrikaans-speaking respondents agree that the communist threat is over, as against 43% of English-speaking respondents. When respondents' political affiliation are taken into account, an interesting picture emerges: supporters of the Conservative Party (CP) overwhelmingly rejects the above statement, while approximately one-third of NP supporters and almost two-thirds of DP-supporters agrees that the communist threat is over. Interestingly, Afrikaans-speaking members of the DP are less convinced than English-speaking members that the threat is actually over - 52% against 65% respectively agreed with the statement. It also seems that higher-income groups are less threatened by the "communists" than lower-income groups.

**QUESTION 3: The SAP and SADF are strong enough to control internal violence and unrest indefinitely (since 1986).**

**TOTAL:**

1986		1988		1990		1992	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
68	31	73	26	77	23	64	35

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

AFR	80	85	86	72
ENG	52	57	62	50

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

NP	78	86	N/A	70
(PFP)/ DP	(37)	(46)	N/A	46
CP	86	86	N/A	65

Results from the three previous surveys - 1986, 1988 and 1990 - indicate that respondents increasingly believed in the capacity of the security forces to control internal violence and unrest, with the "Yes" response peaking in 1990 with 77%. These responses must be seen in the light of the nature of domestic politics in the mid-eighties. In July 1985 in response to the crisis of apartheid, a state of emergency was declared in an attempt to re-establish law and order. Around 30000 people were detained, 34 organisations banned, assassinations and vigilantism increased, and attempts were made to silence opposition leaders and alternative newspapers.<sup>8</sup> State reform strategies were carried out in tandem with "counter-revolutionary measures", with the security establishment playing a major role in government decision-making. This situation continued until June 1990, when, after the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations, Mr. de Klerk's government decided to lift the four-year-old state of emergency everywhere outside Natal.<sup>9</sup> This was done in preparation of constitutional talks and negotiations. Unfortunately, statistics indicate that violence and unrest did not subside, but actually increased: in 1989, 1403 people died in political violence; in 1990, 3699 people.<sup>10</sup> Since the release of Mr. Mandela in February 1990 until June 1992, an estimated 6000 people were killed in political violence.<sup>11</sup>

In 1992, a significant break in the response pattern thus occurred, where only 64% of respondents agreed with the statement - the lowest figure yet recorded. A breakdown of the data into the subgroups "language" and "political affiliation" confirms this trend. In the case of Afrikaans-speaking respondents, agreement fell from 80% in 1986 to 72% in 1992, and amongst supporters of the CP, agreement fell from 86% in 1986 to 65% in 1992. The only exception to this pattern is amongst supporters of the PFP/DP: agreement actually rose from 37% in 1986 to 46% in 1992. Also, English-speaking members of the DP are less convinced than their Afrikaans-speaking colleagues that the SAP and SADF can contain violence - 45% compared to 64% respectively.

Even more striking is the difference of opinion between members of the two language groups in the NP. A full 80% of Afrikaans-speaking members of the NP believe in the capacity of the security forces to contain violence indefinitely, compared to 52% of English-speaking members. This represents a large 28% difference of opinion within the party.

Clearly, fewer white South Africans are now of the opinion that the security forces can contain violence and unrest indefinitely, than before.

**QUESTION 4: The government does not yet spend enough on defence (all surveys).**

**TOTAL:**

1982		1984		1986		1988		1990		1992	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
42	56	38	59	33	63	28	71	21	78	34	65

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

AFR	52	45	46	36	29	42
ENG	27	35	25	19	12	22

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

NP	52	48	53	32	N/A	23
(PFP)/ DP	(20)	(20)	(15)	( 7)	N/A	6
CP	-	56	65	50	N/A	59

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

A	36	33	70	73	10	22
B	42	39	71	74	23	29
C	47	43	56	63	28	36
D	39	36	54	78	*	45

\* In 1990 Income Groups C & D were combined

The break in the response pattern as described under question three, is reflected here as well. Since 1982, increasing numbers of respondents were of the opinion that the government was spending enough on defence (from 56% disagreement in 1982 to 78% disagreement in 1990). Clearly, by 1990, the

majority of respondents believed that government spending on defence was enough to ward off the perceived foreign and domestic threat to the state. Developments since 1990 - described above - changed this perception. The massive increase in incidents of political violence and violent crime brought a reassessment, as reflected in the 1992 response: 34% of respondents now believe that the government does not yet spend enough on defence (compared with 21% in 1990). This reassessment is also reflected by the subgroups. For example, in 1990, 29% of Afrikaans-speaking respondents agreed with the statement. By 1992, this percentage shot up to 42. This means that many more Afrikaans-speaking respondents now believe that government spending on defence is not enough, and needs to be increased. The same pattern is reflected by the various income groups. The biggest change occurred in income groups C and D. In 1990, only 28% of these respondents believed that government defence spending was not enough. By 1992, this percentage had increased to 41 (average of C and D).

**QUESTION 5: The SADF should not be deployed in the townships in an attempt to curb unrest and violence (1992 only).**

**TOTAL:**

1992	
YES	NO
35	63

**% AGREEMENT:  
LANGUAGE**

	1992
AFR	40
ENG	28

**% AGREEMENT:  
POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

	1992
NP	26
DP	33
CP	51

The response to this question indicates that almost two thirds of white South Africans want the SADF to be used in curbing township violence and unrest. When the responses are analysed in terms of political affiliation, significant differences of opinion emerge. Members of the CP appear to be in two minds about the role of the SADF in townships: half of them agree that the SADF should not be deployed in townships. However, the majority of English-speaking Conservatives believe that the SADF should be sent out to the townships, as against approximately half of Afrikaans-speaking Conservatives (33% of English-speaking CP supporters agreed with the statement, against 53% of Afrikaans-speaking CP supporters - a difference of 20%).

Members of the DP and NP clearly see a role for the SADF in curbing township violence (only 33% and 26% respectively agreed with the statement).

Afrikaans-speaking respondents generally are less enthusiastic than their English-speaking counterparts about sending the SADF into the townships - up to 40% of Afrikaans respondents agreed with the statement, compared to only 28% of English speakers.

**QUESTION 6: Black South Africans have good reason to take up arms against the government (all surveys).**

**TOTAL:**

1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992
YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
27 71	21 77	29 70	27 72	29 70	29 70

Since 1982, responses to this question remained remarkably consistent. Clearly throughout the Eighties, white South Africans firmly believed that blacks had no reason to employ violence against the state. The level of agreement never once exceeded 30%, and since 1986 hovered around 28%. It seems that the majority of white South Africans were never quite convinced that the ANC's justification for the armed struggle was a legitimate one.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the separate worlds created by apartheid social engineering deliberately cultivated abysmal ignorance on the part of most whites about the existential experiences of their fellow black South Africans.

**QUESTION 7: White South Africans cannot depend on the loyalty of Black South Africans in the case of war against South Africa (all surveys).**

**TOTAL:**

1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992
YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
62 37	59 39	56 42	56 42	64 34	69 30

**AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992
AFR	41	64	53	44	49	62
ENG	88	90	86	85	85	82

Responses to this statement, which can be seen as a measure of trust (or distrust) between black and white - albeit from a white perspective - make for disturbing reading. Between 1982 and 1988, the response pattern seemed to be one in which respondents strongly distrusted black motives, but slightly less so over time (from 62% agreement in 1982 to 56% agreement in 1988). Since 1988, the pattern changed. Respondents now increasingly distrust black motives - agreement with the above statement increased from 64% in 1990 to 69% in 1992 - the highest recorded "Yes" response yet. Afrikaans-speaking respondents exhibited an even higher level of distrust of black motives than the total average - 72% agreed compared to the total of 69%, and 62% of the English-speaking response. It appears that this extremely high level of distrust reflects the degree of alienation and polarisation in the country - a situation made even more difficult by the rising levels of political violence and violent crime experienced by South Africans particularly since 1990. It is also interesting to note that the 1990 response to this statement are in line with those in the previous statement on black South Africans having good reasons to rise against the government.

**SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS OF DOMESTIC POLITICS**

**QUESTION 8: Blacks should serve with whites, coloureds and Asians in the same parliament (all surveys)\*.**

**TOTAL:**

1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992
YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
61 39	75 25	69 32	61 39	63 37	66 34

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

AFR	41	64	53	44	49	62
ENG	88	90	86	85	85	82

## % AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION

	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992
NP	41	85	71	60	N/A	90
(PFP)/ DP	(98)	(96)	(95)	(96)	N/A	100
CP	-	12	15	18	N/A	18

- \* In the 1982 survey the statement read: "The time has arrived for Coloureds and Indians to sit with Whites in the same parliament". Because Coloureds and Indians were then about to enter Parliament, the statement was rephrased in the 1984 survey: "It is to be welcomed that Coloureds and Indians will serve with Whites in the same Parliament". For the subsequent surveys, the statement was again amended to reflect current political debate: "Blacks should serve with Whites, Coloureds and Indians in the same Parliament". While due allowance should be made for the different albeit related statements used, it is nonetheless instructive to compare the percentage agreement.<sup>13</sup>

Responses to the issue of parliamentary representation of blacks were fairly consistent over time. In 1992, two thirds of all respondents polled agreed with the above statement. The highest levels of agreement were recorded by English-speaking respondents and supporters of the DP (82% and 100% respectively agreed). The CP's policy of separate representation of the races in constitutional structures is clearly reflected by its supporters' disagreement to this statement - only 18% felt comfortable with it. However, up to 39% of English-speaking supporters of the CP agreed with the statement, compared to only 15% of Afrikaans-speaking CP supporters - a difference of 24%. It is perhaps necessary to add that despite the overall high level of agreement over black representation in parliament, it is not without some qualification - see the response to the next five questions.

**QUESTION 9:** The only way in which South Africa can, in the long run, avoid further violence and unrest is by granting equal political rights to all South Africans (1992 only).

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT:**  
**POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD**  
**INCOME**

1992	
YES	NO
65	35

	1992
NP	83
DP	91
CP	29

	1992
A	74
B	67
C	64
D	56

**QUESTION 10:** Once there is agreement on a new non-racial constitution, the violence will end (1992 only).

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

1992	
YES	NO
20	79

	1992
NP	25
DP	42
CP	8

**QUESTION 11: Peace will only come to South Africa through negotiations involving all the significant political formations (1992 only).**

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

1992	
YES	NO
80	20

	1992
NP	93
DP	98
CP	57
HP	55

Questions 9, 10 and 11 are related in the sense that they focus on the link between political rights and violence. Note the seemingly huge discrepancies in responses. Upon closer inspection, it appears that most of the 1992 respondents agree that a negotiated political settlement, acceptable to all South Africans, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the achievement of peace in South Africa. This analysis is supported by the response to question 9, where two thirds (65%) of respondents agreed with the statement. Strongest agreement came from supporters of the DP (91% agreement) and NP (83% agreement), while supporters of the CP registered a low level of agreement - only 29%. This is consistent with the various political parties' policy platforms - both the DP and NP are in favour of granting political rights to all South Africans, while the CP strongly opposes a non-racial political settlement.

Responses to Question 11 seems to reflect a philosophical mode of thinking amongst respondents: peace is an ideal worth striving for, and negotiations among all South Africans is the only way to achieve this ideal state of affairs (83% of respondents agreed with this statement).

Responses to Question 10, however, reflect the unfortunate reality of current conditions in the country: that of wave upon wave of political and criminal violence. Respondents are clearly of the opinion that violence will not simply end once a new non-racial constitution is in place (only 20% of respondents agreed with the statement). Among the sub-groups, one anomaly was noted: English-speaking DP supporters seem to be more hopeful than their Afrikaans-speaking colleagues that a new constitution will bring an end to violence - up to 44% of the former agreed with statement 10, compared to 20%

agreement of the latter. In a more general sense, responses to the above related clusters reflect the anxiety that often accompany transition politics.

**QUESTION 12:** The government should negotiate directly with the ANC to try and find a solution to South Africa's problems (1986; 1988; 1990).

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

1986		1988		1990	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
40	58	36	62	52	47

	1986	1988	1990
AFR	25	19	38
ENG	51	61	74

The 1986, 1988 and 1990 responses to question 12 indicate a gradual softening on the part of whites to engage in negotiations with the ANC. This pattern reflected political developments in the country, where the ruling NP hesitantly and under constant and increasing pressure, began a process of exploratory talks with the ANC. This process was finally taken forward by PW Botha's successor, FW de Klerk, when the ANC was unbanned and Mandela released in 1990. Significantly, Afrikaans-speaking respondents never fully supported this course of action. The 1990 survey - carried out just before de Klerk's February speech - indicates that only 38% of this subgroup agreed with the negotiation option, compared to support from a strong majority of English-speaking respondents (74%).

**QUESTION 13:** The spread of ANC influence among South Africans must be curtailed (1992 only).

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

1992	
YES	NO
72	27

	1992
AFR	82
ENG	68

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL  
AFFILIATION**

	1992
NP	56
DP	36
CP	93

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME**

	1992
A	62
B	67
C	75
D	72

Responses to question 13 indicate that even though whites reluctantly accepted the option of negotiations (as indicated by responses to question 12), they are not keen to allow the political playing field to be levelled. The democratic principle of allowing all political formations, including the ANC and its allies, to exercise freedom of speech and movement, is seemingly not yet part of "white" political culture: an overwhelming 72% of respondents are of the opinion that the spread of ANC influence among South Africans must be curtailed. The only deviation to this response came from the liberal DP supporters, of whom only 36% agreed with this statement. A remarkable difference of opinion within the DP was noted, however. An overwhelming majority of Afrikaans-speaking DP supporters rejected the statement (only 8% agreed with the statement), compared with 38% of English-speaking DP supporters who agreed with the statement.

The overall response to this statement reflects white South Africans' dislike of the ANC - a position which is not surprising, given the NP government's long-standing and incessant portrayal of the ANC as "bloodthirsty terrorists", "lackeys of the communists", and "unrepentent socialists". Furthermore, given the context of decades of authoritarian apartheid rule, the lack of a democratic culture amongst white South Africans is perhaps understandable, but in the new context of negotiations, extremely worrying.

**QUESTION 14:** White school children should not participate in sports meetings with children of other population groups (all surveys, except 1992).

**TOTAL:**

1982		1984		1986		1988		1990	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
24	75	22	77	18	81	19	80	22	78

**% DISAGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

AFR	62	66	72	69	67
ENG	93	91	94	95	94

**QUESTION 15:** White school children should not attend the same school with children of other population groups (1992 only).

**TOTAL:**

**% DISAGREEMENT:  
LANGUAGE**

**% DISAGREEMENT:  
POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

1992	
YES	NO
25	75

	1992
AFR	71
ENG	84

	1992
NP	92
DP	95
CP	43

Responses to question 14 indicate that since 1982, whites have had little qualms over mixed school sport. Indeed, it seems that whites registered less concern over minor social issues such as mixed sport than over political and security issues. Once again, this response - and that of the next question - should be seen in the context of the state's reform strategies of the Eighties. In the late 1970s, as South Africa's need for involvement in the international economic and diplomatic system increased and the threat of its isolation intensified, the official racism that had been systematically introduced since 1948 began to look less attractive and far more costly to the leadership of the South African governing

group. Thus, from 1979 Pretoria undertook policies directed at "deracializing" the official aspects of personal, social and public life. It sought to eliminate as much of state-imposed racial separation and discrimination as was consistent with the maintenance of white control.<sup>14</sup> Responses to question 14 indicate that on the level of school sport, "deracializing" came to be accepted.

Question 15 can be seen as a variation of question 14. Here, the issue is mixed schools, compared to mixed sport, and was put in the 1992 survey to reflect the current debate over an appropriate schooling system for this country. In this regard, interesting changes have occurred since the previous (1990) survey. More and more educational institutions desegregated themselves, among them government schools. Statements by the Department of National Education in 1991 indicated that a single non-discriminatory education system was seriously considered by the state. However, in reaction to the racial integration among schoolchildren, conservative groups bombed several racially mixed educational institutions.<sup>15</sup> Response to question 15 reflect these realities. A large group of respondents - 75% - disagreed with the statement that white schoolchildren should not attend racially mixed schools. (This percentage compares well with the previous question, where in 1990, 78% of respondents disagreed with separate sports meetings for different population groups.) Under the subgroup "political affiliation" it appears that the majority of supporters of the CP believe that white schoolchildren should not attend racially mixed schools (43% disagreed with the statement).

**QUESTION 16: The Group Areas Act should be abolished (1988 and 1990).**

**TOTAL:**                      **% AGREEMENT:**                      **% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD**  
    **LANGUAGE**                                      **INCOME**

1988		1990	
YES	NO	YES	NO
39	60	51	48

	1988	1990
AFR	22	35
ENG	63	76

	1988	1990
A	35	67
B	33	48
C	33	43
D	3	*

In 1990 Income Groups C & D are combined.

**QUESTION 17: Black South Africans should be encouraged to buy property in white suburbs (1992 only).**

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

1992	
YES	NO
28	70

	1992
AFR	18
ENG	47

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

	1992
NP	36
DP	67
CP	5

	1992
A	46
B	29
C	25
D	25

How affective was the state's reform policies, and in particular, the process of "deracialization"? Responses to questions 14 and 15 indicate that whites had no real difficulty with adjusting to racially mixed schools and school sport. However, the prospect of allowing blacks to live and acquire property in previously all-white suburbs, still seems daunting. Our 1988 and 1990 surveys show that increasing numbers of whites, but not more than 57% of them, came round to accepting the abolishment of the racially determined Group Areas Act. Among the subgroups, 35% of Afrikaans-speaking respondents and 43% of respondents in the lower-income groups registered strong opposition to the concept of racially integrated suburbs. This finding clearly indicates that in terms of mixed residential areas, language and class matter most. Most surprising, however, is the finding of the 1992 survey. An overwhelming 70% of respondents believe that blacks should not be encouraged to acquire property in "white" suburbs. In fact, none of the various subgroups expressed enthusiasm over this statement. The highest levels of agreement were registered by DP-supporters (67%), English-speaking respondents (47%) and those in the upper-income group (46%). It seems, therefore, that while the respondents reluctantly came to accept the abolishment of the Group Areas Act, far less respondents accept the idea of black property owners in white suburbs. In fact,

some of this anxiety is reflected by the current concern amongst white property owners in especially the more affluent northern suburbs of Johannesburg, about the prospect of sharing borders with informal settlers (referred to as the "squatter problem"). Perhaps the above responses show that the rapid rate of urbanisation and the accompanying growth of informal settlements fuel white anxieties about personal security and a decline in property values.

**QUESTION 18: SABC-TV adequately informs the public on domestic and international political developments (1990 and 1992).**

**TOTAL:**

1990		1992	
YES	NO	YES	NO
45	54	54	45

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

	1990	1992
AFR	55	59
ENG	29	44

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

NP	N/A	69
DP	N/A	31
CP	N/A	41

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

A	37	49
B	45	51
C	52	56
D	*	*

\* In 1990 & 1992 Income Groups C & D are combined.

This statement was included for the first time in the 1990 survey and repeated in the current one. The purpose of this statement, as explained in the previous survey, is to act as a control for one of the hypotheses underlying our analysis, namely that the kind of information to which white South Africans have access, plays an important part in shaping their understanding of domestic as well as of international developments.<sup>16</sup>

Control over information played an important part of any authoritarian government's capacity and ability to maintain rule, and in South Africa, the apartheid government's radio and television monopoly was, and continues to be an important instrument of political control.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore important to realise that the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) exercises a powerful influence on the thinking of millions of South Africans.

The 1992 responses to the above statement, compared to the previous survey, are quite interesting. It shows that the SABC has gained in credibility as far as the adequacy and balance of reporting is concerned. Respondents agreeing with this statement increased from 45% in 1990 to 54% in 1992. The biggest percentage increase occurred amongst English-speaking respondents - from 29% in 1990 to 44% in 1992, a 15% increase, and A-income group respondents - from 37% in 1990 to 49% in 1992 (a 12% increase). Supporters of the DP are clearly not convinced that the SABC-TV adequately informs the public on political developments: only 31% supported this statement; the lowest level of support among all subgroups. A difference of opinion in the NP was noted. A strong majority of Afrikaans-speaking NP supporters (78%) agree with the statement, against 52% of English-speaking NP supporters who agreed.

The increased credibility with which the SABC is currently viewed by the respondents could perhaps be explained by the fact that following FW de Klerk's watershed speech in February 1990, the Corporation decided to change track by adopting a more "open" approach to informing the public of political developments generally. Viewers were able for the first time to see and hear leaders of previously banned organisations putting forward arguments - without being branded as "terrorists", or "part of the total onslaught". However, despite the Corporation's recently improved television image, the government is still in control of the country's near-monopoly broadcasting networks, an issue of vital concern to political groups engaged in the transition process in South Africa.<sup>18</sup>

## **SECTION C: PERCEPTIONS OF THREAT: THE REGIONAL DIMENSION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is perhaps necessary to provide the reader with a brief overview of South Africa's relations with southern Africa in the period under review (1982-1992). Such an overview could serve as a useful background to the interpretation of data in this section.

Southern Africa, for most of the Eighties, was a deeply troubled and unstable region. The dictates of the Cold War gave an excuse to not only the superpowers, but South Africa as well, to intervene in the political processes of the newly independent and otherwise majority-ruled black states of southern Africa. This took place in the context of a region caught up in a structural paradox: growing economic interdependence that has been accompanied by intensifying partisan conflict, frequently involving cross-border violence.<sup>19</sup>

Since the NP took over government in 1948, the overriding foreign policy objective of the South African government has been the protection of white minority rule from external threat. The international threat was perceived by Pretoria to emanate from three sources: "Liberation movements" based in neighbouring states; a conventional military threat from abroad; and international economic pressure.<sup>20</sup>

Under PW Botha, Pretoria's response to perceived external threats has been to fashion a strategy composed of three policy dimensions.<sup>21</sup> The first was the establishment of a regional alliance in which South Africa would play the pivotal role. In this regard, Botha tried to revive the idea of a "Constellation of Southern African States". The second involved the "neutralisation" of neighbouring states, especially those seen to be threatening white rule, attempting to isolate Pretoria, or giving support to liberation movements. This objective was pursued through two policies: destabilisation and economic leverage. The third policy objective was to present the conflict in the region as part of a global struggle. Pretoria therefore stressed the Soviet/Cuban presence in southern Africa, believing that this would be its best guarantee against hostile actions by the West.<sup>22</sup>

As it turned out, Pretoria's regional policy met with limited success. The "Constellation" initiative found no takers in the region. Rather, a "counter-constellation" structure was developed - that of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). Destabilisation produced a number of overt gains. By late 1983, Swaziland had signed a secret Non-Agression Pact with South Africa, and Lesotho had been coerced into denying sanctuary to ANC members. Enormous material and political damage had been inflicted on Angola and Mozambique. However, the costs involved, and a changing international climate resulted in negotiations between the governments of South Africa, Angola and Mozambique, culminating in the Lusaka Agreement between South Africa and Angola and the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique, signed in March 1984. The post-Nkomati period has been used by Pretoria to break out of its international isolation - a strategy helped immeasurably by Namibian independence (March 1990) and peace in Angola.

**QUESTION 19: The Soviet Union is abandoning its active involvement in southern Africa. (1986; 1988; 1990).**

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

1986		1988		1990	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
9	91	10	86	38	60

	1986	1988	1990
AFR	9	11	36
ENG	4	10	41

**QUESTION 20: The Soviet Union (Russia) has abandoned its active involvement in southern Africa (1992 only).**

**TOTAL:**

**%AGREEMENT:  
LANGUAGE**

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME**

1992	
YES	NO
47	52

	1992
AFR	40
ENG	58

	1992
A	64
B	51
C	34
D	39

Results from our previous three surveys indicate that white South Africans increasingly came to believe that the (then) Soviet Union reduced - but not abandoned - its active involvement in this region of Africa.

In 1986, a year during which the South African military, as well as foreign forces were still very much engaged in regional conflicts, white South Africans firmly believed that the Soviet Union was actively involved in the region (91% of respondents disputed the statement under question 19). The basis for this perception seemed to be the NP government's continued use of "Total Onslaught" rhetoric. As far as the government and its propaganda organs were concerned, Cuban and Soviet forces were the aggressors who destabilised the region - not the SADF.

By 1988, despite momentous domestic and foreign policy changes within the Soviet Union, a new approach by the superpowers to solve regional conflicts, and exciting regional developments towards peace,<sup>23</sup> white South African perceptions of the scale of Soviet involvement in the region remained virtually unchanged (86% of respondents disagreed with the statement under question 19).

By 1990, the pattern of response shifted significantly. A relatively smaller number of respondents - 60% - now disputed the statement. However, the actual number of respondents who still believed in the Soviet Union's active involvement in the region remained quite high - ironically so, in the light of the fact that the Soviet Union was now actively contributing towards achieving peace in southern Africa, particularly in Angola and Namibia. Several factors seemed to explain this high distrust of the Soviet Union. Among them were:

- \* A legacy of a long and intensive propaganda campaign by the state, directed at the Soviet Union and its "imperial" allies, notably Cuba;
- \* The legacy of South Africa's own military involvement in Angola and Namibia;
- \* The fact that white South Africans continued to be ill-informed about the Soviet Union and the "new thinking" in its foreign relations.<sup>24</sup>

Developments in the region and in the Soviet Union since 1990 produced a new set of circumstances which fundamentally altered the nature of relations between the two regions.<sup>25</sup> The Soviet Union underwent radical transformation. The collapse of communist regimes - a process first witnessed by the countries of Eastern Europe - culminated in the demise of the Soviet Union and its ruling Communist Party late in 1991, to be replaced by independent states and a different leadership. This effectively meant the end to the Cold War era and the bipolar world order. These changes and the developments since 1986, had a significant impact on the southern African region. The political landscape in southern Africa was transformed with the attainment of Namibian independence in March 1990, the end of the civil war and therefore the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola by middle 1991, the adoption of a new, non-Marxist constitution in Mozambique, and the start of negotiations between the government and the unbanned ANC in South Africa.

Our 1992 survey results on the question of the Soviet Union (Russia's) abandonment of involvement in the region reflects, to a larger extent than in the past, these realities - 47% of the respondents now agreed with the statement, with the highest levels of agreement coming from Afrikaans-speaking supporters of the DP (96%), the English-speaking respondents (58%) and A-income group

respondents (64%). It is worth noting, however, that slightly more than half of all respondents (52%) still dispute this statement, suggesting that years of "Total Onslaught" propaganda, the lack of interest in world and regional affairs, and (mis)information continues to have an impact on white perceptions.

**QUESTION 21: Mozambique can be trusted to carry out the terms of the 1984 Nkomati Non-Agression Treaty with South Africa (all surveys, except 1982).**

**TOTAL:**

1984		1986		1988		1990		1992	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
66	32	31	67	18	79	33	66	34	65

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

AFR	63	26	14	27	29
ENG	69	37	23	43	39

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

NP	74	34	19	N/A	40
(PFP)/ DP	(71)	(41)	(41)	N/A	46
CP	31	10	9	N/A	17

Since independence in 1975, Mozambique's political relations with its powerful neighbour, South Africa, was marked by deep mistrust on both sides. The South African government perceived the new state to be a threat to its own security - a perception fueled by the Mozambican state's initial revolutionary characteristics: a background of military struggle, support for the international socialist cause, and its declared aim of domestic socialism.<sup>26</sup>

South African reconsideration of policy towards Mozambique led to support for RENAMO; Mozambique came to be a military target as well as one susceptible to economic pressures.<sup>27</sup> By March 1984, president Machel was forced to sign

the Nkomati Accord (a non-aggression treaty) with president PW Botha. Even so, South Africa continued to support RENAMO. Worse was to follow. Mozambique experienced a continued drought and intensified RENAMO pressure and the heavy cost of war within a ruined economy severely taxed the FRELIMO government. Then, in October 1986, President Machel died in a plane crash, a few hundred metres inside South Africa. This immediately led to suspicions (and outright accusations) that South Africa was responsible.<sup>28</sup> At this point, relations between the two countries had reached an all-time low. The next few years were characterised by a gradual improvement in working relations - mostly technical co-operation and agreements on matters such as Cahora Bassa, Maputo port, and joint security action.<sup>29</sup> By 1988, regional, domestic and global conditions had changed in ways that brought home to Pretoria the costs and inherent limitations of destabilisation as a regional strategy. "Rampant realism" was replaced by "neo-realism" - an approach that relies more centrally on non-coercive instruments of policy, such as diplomacy and economic co-operation and trade.<sup>30</sup> Although the situation inside Mozambique remained bleak - and actually worsened - relations with South Africa seemed to have stabilised.

Responses to the above statement - asked from 1984 to 1992 - reflect to a large extent the South African government's deep mistrust of independent Mozambique. It shows how white South Africans' level of trust in Mozambique reached an all-time low in 1988 (when only 18% of respondents believed that Mozambique could be trusted to carry out the terms of Nkomati), whereafter it recovered slightly. Both the 1990 and 1992 surveys show that only one-third of respondents trust Mozambique with the Nkomati Accord, reflecting an unrelenting, deep-seated mistrust in Mozambique. The only deviation from this pattern occurred within the DP: up to 80% of Afrikaans-speaking DP supporters believe that Mozambique can be trusted with the Nkomati Accord, compared to 54% of English-speaking DP supporters.

How can this pattern of response behaviour be explained when clearly the Mozambican government sought to uphold its side of the Nkomati Agreement but the South African government not? Part of the explanation must be seen in the regional context. Relations between South Africa and independent Mozambique were almost always strained, and since 1980, Mozambique had been at the receiving end of South Africa's aggressive and coercive regional policies. Another part of the explanation has to do with the relationship between South Africa's domestic and foreign policy. In the 1990 Survey, du Pisani argued that there was a tendency for whites to project their anxiety on to the region.<sup>31</sup> This tendency was encouraged by sheer ignorance of the region, and the role played by state-controlled media, all playing its part in shaping white opinion. As the 1992 response indicates, it seems a long way-off before "white South Africa's" view of the region takes a turn for the better.

**QUESTION 22: The government of President Mugabe in Zimbabwe constitutes a threat to South Africa's safety (all surveys).**

**TOTAL:**

1982		1984		1986		1988		1990		1992	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
71	27	63	35	71	28	74	24	57	42	44	54

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

AFR	77	67	74	80	65	48
ENG	62	56	67	65	45	35

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

NP	79	63	72	78	N/A	34
(FPF)/ DP	(55)	(52)	(59)	(44)	N/A	20
CP	83	83	76	88	N/A	64

**% AGREEMENT: HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

A	66	57	61	66	48	28
B	70	63	69	76	58	42
C	74	67	75	76	65	47
D	69	70	80	77	*	46

\* In 1990, Income Groups C & D were combined.

If responses to question 21 serve to create an impression of deep mistrust concerning relations between South Africa and the region, this question's responses may serve to bring some balance in the pattern of perceptions.

Responses between 1982 and 1988 indicate a consistent and strong belief amongst white respondents that the Zimbabwean government was threatening South Africa's safety (between 1982 and 1988, an average of 70% of respondents agreed with the statement). After 1988, the pattern of responses changed sharply. In 1990, only 57% of respondents agreed with the statement, and in 1992, even fewer respondents - 44% - agreed that the Zimbabwe government constituted a threat to South Africa. Among the 1992 sub-groups, the English-speaking respondents, DP supporters and A-income group respondents registered the lowest level of agreement with the statement (35%, 20% and 28% respectively). The 1990 and 1992 survey results indicate a significant decrease in the earlier high level of threat perception. Why?

Furthermore, an intriguing question is why this change occurred as far as Zimbabwe was concerned, but not Mozambique? In the latter case, levels of trust remained extremely low. Perhaps, because although South Africa's political relations with independent Zimbabwe have been marked by high levels of trans-Limpopo acrimony and rhetoric, paradoxically trade and economic relations have actually grown between the two countries. Historically Zimbabwe and South Africa have had cultural and political relations which does not apply in the case of Mozambique.

**QUESTION 23:** South Africa should not export food to black states which support or harbour terrorists/guerillas (all surveys, except 1992).

**TOTAL:**

1982		1984		1986		1988		1990	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
72	25	69	30	70	29	67	31	71	28

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

AFR	77	72	73	70	76
ENG	62	64	65	61	64

**QUESTION 24: South Africa should not export food to hostile black-ruled states (1992 only).**

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT:  
LANGUAGE**

**% AGREEMENT:  
POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

1992	
YES	NO
63	37

	1992
AFR	65
ENG	60

	1992
NP	53
DP	39
CP	84

Responses to question 23 are consistent with those on regional security issues analysed above, and confirm - once again - relatively high levels of white anxiety. Responses to question 23 show that, throughout the Eighties, white South Africans were firmly of the opinion that South Africa should withhold food exports from black states which supported or harboured guerillas. As the analysis of the previous survey pointed out, these responses - from 1982 to 1990 - have to be seen in the context of recent policies on the region - notably that of destabilisation and "Total Onslaught".<sup>32</sup>

Question 24 was slightly adapted from question 23, to reflect changing realities. Since 1990, and even before, global and regional realignments of political, military and economic forces produced a set of new circumstances in southern Africa which resulted in new regimes, a reduction of conflict and an increase in peace efforts. Similarly, in South Africa itself, the ANC committed itself to a new, non-violent form of struggle: that of negotiations. In this context, Africa's support for the struggle against apartheid took new forms; the days of harbouring ANC or PAC-cadres were clearly over.

Responses to question 24 indicate that white South Africans still maintain a high level of threat concerning black Africa (almost two-thirds of respondents, 63%, agreed that hostile black-ruled states should be punished with sanctions on food-exports). Note, however, that not one Afrikaans-speaking DP supporter agreed with this statement, compared to 42% of English-speaking DP supporters who agreed with the statement - indicating, perhaps, that this small sub-group have made peace with their "Africanness"? Overall, this high level of threat perception is consistent with that registered under question 23. It is more difficult to explain the 1992 response, however, since the context has changed so dramatically. For example, in April 1992, the South African government

hosted a meeting where formerly hostile southern African countries gathered to draw up an emergency food-distribution strategy to deal with the devastating drought in the region.<sup>33</sup> Also since 1990, South African government spokespersons increasingly emphasize regional co-operation - as opposed to regional conflict.<sup>34</sup> Once again, it seems that the effects of negative propaganda of the past lingers on.

#### SECTION D: SOUTH AFRICA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

This section consists of four questions, three of which relate to the issue of sanctions. In this sense, section D deals with issues that in one way belong to the pre-1990 political era; but in another, it looks at the perceived impact of economic sanctions on South Africa. The final question deals with the popularity (or otherwise) of foreign leaders amongst white South Africans; it makes for interesting comparisons, especially over time.

**QUESTION 25:** The South African economy is strong enough to prevent economic sanctions hurting our country (1986; 1988; 1990).

**TOTAL:**

1986		1988		1990	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
27	71	47	52	29	69

**QUESTION 26: The South African economy has been hurt by sanctions (1992 only).**

**TOTAL:**

**% AGREEMENT:  
LANGUAGE**

**% AGREEMENT:  
POLITICAL AFFILIATION**

1992	
YES	NO
92	7

	1992
AFR	91
ENG	95

	1992
NP	97
DP	98
CP	83

Responses to question 25 indicate that between 1986 and 1990, the majority of white respondents were never really convinced in the South African economy's ability to cope with the effects of international economic sanctions. Responses were, however, not consistent. In 1986 and 1990, 27% and 29% of respondents respectively agreed with the statement; but in 1988, this figure jumped to 47%. This means that in 1988 almost half of the white respondents believed in the South African economy's strength to prevent sanctions from hurting the country. This uneven response needs some elaboration. Price<sup>35</sup> argues that the South African government's response to the sanctions environment (which became a reality in late 1986) was an effort to reduce South Africa's dependence on the international economy and thus to limit its future vulnerability to global pressure. The method for achieving this objective was an economic strategy termed "inward industrialisation". A modest but real turnabout in economic growth rates during 1986 and 1987 indicated that this strategy was working. This perception was reflected in the 1988 survey data, where almost half of all white respondents were of the opinion that the South African economy was strong enough to withstand sanctions. But, as Price continues to argue, by mid-1988 the growth potential of inward industrialisation was revealed as more apparent than real. The long-term economic prognosis from South African business as well as from Pretoria turned decidedly gloomy. Relatedly, there occurred a nearly complete reversal on the subject of the costs of international economic sanctions. An array of influential economic actors, Price points out, for the first time publicly acknowledged that sanctions had extracted a significant price and that a "sanctions-filled future" was one of economic decline. This course of events clearly had a significant impact on white perceptions: the 1990 survey data indicated that optimism in the strength of the South African economy to withstand the effects of sanctions had dwindled (only 29% of respondents now agreed with the statement). This pattern

continued into 1992. Although the question was rephrased, the response is consistent: by 1992, an overwhelming 92% of respondents agreed that the South African economy had been hurt by sanctions.

**QUESTION 27: South Africa should refuse to sell its minerals to states that continue to apply economic sanctions against it (since 1986).**

**TOTAL:**

1986		1988		1990		1992	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
57	40	57	41	58	42	62	36

If sanctions were meant to be a form of international interventionism with the aim of putting pressure on the South African government to abandon apartheid and move towards democracy, then surely the advocates of sanctions can claim a large degree of success.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, though, political developments since 1990 have meant that sanctions had become a policy instrument of a bygone era.

In fact, South Africa's international isolation came to a head in the late Eighties and by 1992, the country is firmly on the road to international reintegration. This state of affairs does not mean that all who have applied economic sanctions have reconsidered yet. A brief survey indicates that at the time of writing, virtually all trade sanctions have been lifted, except in the case of the United States, where despite the repeal of the federal Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA), many local-level (i.e. state and city) sanctions are formally in place, and are likely to take a considerable time to disappear. Financial sanctions still exist in several respects:

- (1) The South African government cannot yet access any of the facilities of the World Bank and IMF (and in a sense the African Development Bank), although all these institutions are now positioning themselves for the anticipated removal of sanctions.
- (2) Because of the conditions in America and Canada, South Africa's access to international capital markets are still inhibited.<sup>37</sup>

It is against this brief background that the responses to question 27 have to be viewed. The trend since 1986 (when economic sanctions became a reality) seems to be a growing belief amongst respondents that South Africa should act

firmly against those who continue to apply economic sanctions against it, by refusing to sell its minerals to them. The 1992 survey data shows the highest level of agreement with the statement (62%) since 1986. It must be noted that once again, Afrikaans-speaking supporters of the DP registered a different opinion: only 12% agreed with the statement, compared to the 48% agreement of their English-speaking colleagues and the 62% agreement of the total.

This trend is interesting because it seems not to reflect the changing situation regarding relations between South Africa and the West. One would have thought that in light of the international community's favourable reaction to, and support of the unfolding negotiation process inside South Africa, white attitudes would have softened somewhat. However, it seems that the "tit-for-tat" approach to the international community, popular under the PW Botha government, still carries some weight. The trouble with this approach, as far as economic relations with the West is concerned, is that "we need them more than they need us" - do the white respondents actually believe that South Africa can shun the World Bank and IMF, or turn its back on international capital markets? Unfortunately, the design of the 1992 survey does not make it possible to further analyse this issue in any depth.

**QUESTION 28:** The following foreign leaders are favourably disposed to South Africa (since 1986).

**% AGREEMENT:**

	1986 YES	1988 YES	1990 YES	1992 YES
Pres. (Reagan) Bush	(86)	(79)	73	86
P.M. (Thatcher) Major	(86)	(92)	(88)	86
Chancellor Kohl	-	58	59	75
Pres. Mitterand	8	19	26	62
P.M. (Hawke) Keating	( 7)	( 6)	( 8)	47
Pres. (Gorbachev) Yeltsin	-	-	(13)	45
President Nujoma	-	-	-	27
President Mugabe	-	-	-	19

**% AGREEMENT: POLITICAL AFFILIATION (1992 only)**

	1992		
	NP	DP	CP
President Bush	93	96	72
P.M. Major	95	95	68
Chancellor Kohl	83	85	61
President Mitterand	71	77	47
P.M. Keating	53	60	30
President Yeltsin	53	71	25
President Nujoma	30	50	17
President Mugabe	22	29	12

Since 1986, respondents were asked to indicate agreement or disagreement with the statement that a number of foreign leaders "are favourably disposed towards South Africa". We repeated this statement in this survey, but had to make some adjustments: Presidents Nujoma and Mugabe were included for the first time, and so were Prime Ministers Major (who replaced Thatcher); Keating (who replaced Hawke); and President Yeltsin (who replaced Gorbachev). Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterand were the only two constant inclusions since 1986. In order of favour, based on the percentage agreement with the statement, the eight leaders were rated as indicated above.

The responses indicate that President Bush and Prime Minister Major are regarded by white South Africans as firm favourites (both received 86%) with Chancellor Kohl occupying a close third position (75%). President Mitterand's rating jumped by an astonishing 36% (from 26% in 1990 to 62% in 1992), while Australia's new Prime Minister drew a lukewarm response (47%). Although President Yeltsin of the newly established Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is perceived to be much more "favourably disposed" to South Africa than his predecessor, President Gorbachev of the then Soviet Union, he still occupies a low ranking in the popularity stakes (45%). Presidents Nujoma of independent Namibia - perhaps better remembered by most white South Africans as leader of SWAPO - and Mugabe of Zimbabwe - a country long perceived to be threatening South Africa's safety (see question 22) - are not popular with white South Africans at all: they received a 27% and 19% "favourable" rating respectively. Not surprisingly, Afrikaans-speaking DP supporters have a better opinion of President Nujoma than either their English-speaking DP counterparts or Afrikaans-speaking respondents generally (64% of Afrikaans DP supporters regard Nujoma as "favourably disposed" to South Africa, compared to 49% of English DP supporters and 22% of Afrikaans-speaking respondents).

President Bush occupies an interesting position. His takeover from President Reagan (who, incidentally, was perceived as less "favourably disposed" over the years - perhaps a reflection of the sanctions imposed against South Africa by the USA) was initially greeted with some scepticism (in 1990, he received a 73% "popularity" rating) but he recovered quickly to occupy the first spot, together with Prime Minister Major (86% in 1992).

In terms of sub-groups, supporters of the DP gave President Bush the highest rating of all foreign leaders (96%), while both Afrikaans- and English-speaking respondents rated him high (83% and 90% respectively). It is interesting to note that supporters of the CP - who tend to view outsiders and their policies towards South Africa with some suspicion - also gave President Bush a high rating (72%).

At the other end of the scale, President Mugabe occupies the unenviable position of being perceived by white South Africans to be the least "favourably disposed" to South Africa - a perception that is shared by all sub-groups. In particular, President Mugabe's attitude towards South Africa is disliked intensely by supporters of the CP (12%) and Afrikaans-speaking respondents (16%). It is only supporters of the DP who hold him in slightly higher regard (29%). President Mugabe's position at the bottom of the "popularity ratings" comes as no surprise. For many years, Mugabe was at the forefront of Africa's struggle against apartheid, and in many cases took the lead in co-ordinating action by the Frontline States against the government of South Africa.<sup>38</sup>

**QUESTION 28: The following foreign leaders are favourably disposed to South Africa (since 1986)**

**% AGREEMENT: LANGUAGE**

		1986	1988	1990	1992
President Bush	AFR	-	-	69	83
	ENG	-	-	79	90
P.M. Major	AFR	-	-	-	83
	ENG	-	-	-	92
Chancellor Kohl	AFR	*	58	56	72
	ENG	*	58	63	81
President Mitterand	AFR	9	21	26	61
	ENG	7	17	26	64
P.M. Keating	AFR	-	-	-	43
	ENG	-	-	-	54
President Yeltsin	AFR	-	-	-	37
	ENG	-	-	-	57
President Nujoma	AFR	-	-	-	2
	ENG	-	-	-	38
President Mugabe	AFR	-	-	-	16
	ENG	-	-	-	23

\* Not included

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Between 1982 and 1992, the Institute commissioned six biennial opinion polls amongst white South Africans on mainly foreign policy issues. A number of domestic political issues were included, but with the purpose of finding

statistically meaningful correlations between opinions on domestic and foreign policy issues.

It is not easy to meaningfully interpret or understand the survey results without taking proper cognisance of the "setting" - the social, economic and political context - and the time against which white South Africans were asked to formulate opinions on various issues. Looking back at the period of 1982-1992, some of the main issues which influenced or shaped white opinion, include the following:

- \* insurrectionary violence aimed at the apartheid state;
- \* the NP government's two-pronged response: successive states of emergency and the consequent militarisation of society, coupled to "reform" of apartheid;
- \* the breakaway of the white rightwing;
- \* the wars in Namibia and Angola, which came to an end in the late 1980s and early 1990s;
- \* the increasing international isolation of South Africa, starkly illustrated by the introduction of sanctions and the cultural and sport boycotts;
- \* finally, the realisation that apartheid was unworkable and that negotiations with the ANC and other opposition formations were inevitable.

Language, party affiliation and regionalism have shown remarkable resilience in shaping white opinion on domestic, regional and international questions.

Clearly, throughout the 1980s, the white minority government in South Africa was involved in a desperate struggle for survival. This resulted in extremely high levels of anxiety and threat amongst whites; and a corresponding narrow focus on domestic issues, which meant that international developments were either ignored or often negatively perceived. Black Africa was seen as a "failure", the United Nations as a "threat", the Soviet Union as the "repository" of all evil. These perceptions were reinforced by government propaganda, which never hesitated to point out that domestic opposition and conflict were planned, orchestrated and supported by "hostile" outsiders.

Our opinion survey results reflect these patterns of behaviour. As far as domestic issues are concerned, two trends emerged. On the one hand, whites accepted the state's reform initiatives, but also signalled that there were limits to reform - responses show resistance to the complete abandoning of apartheid

and a corresponding move towards racial integration. On the other hand, white respondents displayed a reluctant acceptance of the state's most recent policy direction: that of negotiations. This is particularly true of Afrikaans-speaking respondents. Responses further show that white South Africans intensely dislike the ANC. As far as regional developments are concerned, it seems that the extremely negative perceptions displayed over the years by the respondents, will take a considerable time to change. For example, over half of all respondents are of the opinion that Russia continues to be actively involved in the region; two-thirds of all respondents still view Mozambique with deep mistrust; and approximately the same number believe that "hostile black-ruled states" should be punished by not exporting food to them. Clearly, such perceptions do not bode well for a healthy relationship between South Africa and the region.

As far as South Africa and the international community is concerned, two trends emerged. Firstly, white respondents came to understand the serious commitment of the international community to pressurising the South African government into abandoning apartheid. Respondents acknowledged that international economic sanctions were hurting South Africa - by 1992, an overwhelming majority agreed that the South African economy has been hurt by sanctions. Secondly, white respondents display an extremely hostile attitude towards states (not specified in the questionnaire) which continue to apply economic sanctions against South Africa. In reality, the number of countries who maintain sanctions against South Africa dwindle by the day. South Africa is currently battling to gain access to international capital markets and financial institutions.

Finally, our survey of popular foreign leaders show - not surprisingly - that Bush, Major and Kohl consistently received high ratings, and conversely, that Yeltsin, Mugabe and Nujoma are at the bottom of the ladder.

We conclude with two remarks. In light of the fundamental transition in South Africa and the enormous societal changes which accompany this process, white South Africans appear to be as confused and anxious about change as any people elsewhere. The survey results indicate that whites have difficulty in accepting the implications of a transition to democracy. The transition dynamics have reinforced old anxieties and created new ones.<sup>39</sup> In fact, most respondents question whether South Africa will become more peaceful, or non-racial. Finally, the survey results indicate that white South Africans have not yet come to terms with the fact that the future of southern Africa lies in more co-operation, not less, and also, that we in South Africa need the world as much as they need us. Hopefully, the demise of apartheid will usher in a new era of understanding between South Africa and world society.

## 5. ENDNOTES

1. Du Pisani, A., *What Do We think? A survey of white opinion on foreign policy issues*, No.5, South African Institute of International Affairs, Braamfontein, 1990, p.1.
2. Standard Bank, *Economic Review*, April 1992, p.1
3. *Race Relations Survey 1991/92*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1992, pp.xlii-xliii.
4. *The Star*, 8/7/1992; 14/7/1992.
5. A variety of publications describe South Africa's foreign policy setting. Among them are: Barber, J. & J. Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy*, 1990, Southern Publishers, Johannesburg; Centre for Policy Studies, *South Africa at the End of the Eighties*, 1981, CPS Publishers, Johannesburg; and Chan, S., *Exporting Apartheid - Foreign Policies in Southern Africa*, 1978-1988, 1990, Macmillan, London. The setting of foreign policy in the Vorster and Botha eras is dealt with by Geldenhuys, D., *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, 1984, Macmillan, Johannesburg.
6. Du Pisani, A., *op.cit.* p.5.
7. The 1990 Survey was undertaken before the 2 February 1990 Opening of Parliament speech by President FW de Klerk.
8. *South Africa at the End of the Eighties*, *op.cit.*, p.49.
9. *Race Relations Survey 1989/1990*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1990, p.xxxv.
10. *Race Relations Survey 1991/1992*, *op.cit.*, pp.485-486.
11. *The Star*, 8/7/1992.

12. In his famous courtroom speech of 1964, Mandela argued that he and the ANC had come to the conclusion that "fifty years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation". By 1961, Mandela believed "all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us". Since the government "had relied exclusively on violence with which to answer our people and their demands", he argued, "only two choices were left: submit or fight". Karis, T. & G. Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge*, Vol.3, 1977, Hoover Press, Stanford, p.647.
13. This qualification is taken from Du Pisani, *op.cit.*, p.25.
14. Price, R., *The Apartheid State in Crisis: Political Transformation in South Africa, 1975-1990*, 1991, Oxford University Press, New York, p.116.
15. *Race Relations Survey 1991/92*, *op.cit.*, p.xxxiii.
16. Du Pisani, A., *op.cit.*, p.30.
17. Thompson, L. & A. Prior, *South African Politics*, 1982, David Philip, Cape Town, p.147; *The Weekly Mail*, 31/7/1992, p.6.
18. See Niddrie, D., "A new tone for His Master's Voice", *Work in Progress*, Vol.66, May 1990, pp.34-35.
19. Vale, P., "Pretoria and southern Africa: A Pathological Report", *International Affairs Bulletin*, Vol.13(3), 1989, p.98.
20. Price, R., "Pretoria's southern African strategy" in Chan, S., *op.cit.*, pp.145-169.
21. *Ibid.*, pp.145-169. See also Davies, R. & D. O'Meara, "Total Strategy in southern Africa - an analysis of South African Regional Policy since 1978" in Chan, S., *op.cit.*, pp.179-217.
22. For a discussion of PW Botha's "realist" world view and the effects on South Africa's foreign policy, see Van Nieuwkerk, A. & J. van Wyk, "The Operational Code of PW Botha: Apartheid, Realism and Misperception" in *International Affairs Bulletin*, Vol.13 (3), 1989, pp.70-88. See also Van Wyk, J.J., "Foreign policy orientations of the PW Botha regime: changing perceptions of state elites in South Africa", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol.10(1), 1991, pp.45-65.
23. Legum, C., *Africa Contemporary Record*, 1988, Africana Publishing Co., London. pp.A3-A4; A267-A271.

24. Du Pisani, A., *op.cit.*, p.16. Concerning the lack of knowledge on the Soviet Union, the South African public and policy decision-makers were not well served by the academic community. In a critical discussion of South African research on Soviet foreign policy, Light and Nel observed that "Far too many (academic writers) assume that Soviet policy towards South Africa simply consists of the output of a monolithic decision-making process in which Soviet leaders try to maximise their presumed goal of world domination. Only very rarely does one find attention being paid to the varied inputs into Soviet decision-making...". Light, M. and P. Nel, "Research note: South African research on Soviet foreign policy", *Politikon*, Vol.17 (1), June 1990, pp.66-72.
25. For an incisive analysis, see Meyns, P., "The New World Order and Southern Africa in the 1990s", in Van Nieuwkerk A. & G. van Staden (eds), *Southern Africa at the Crossroads: Prospects for the Political Economy of the Region*, 1991, SAIIA, Johannesburg, pp.56-80.
26. Chan, S., "Foreign Policies in southern Africa: The History of an Epoch, 1978-1988" in Chan, S., *op.cit.*, pp.47-65.
27. *Ibid.*, p.50.
28. *Ibid.*, pp.52-54.
29. Barber, J. & J. Barratt, *op.cit.*, p.335.
30. Du Pisani, A., "Ventures into the Interior: Continuity and Change in South Africa's Regional Policy (1948-1991)" in Van Nieuwkerk A. & G. van Staden, *op.cit.*, pp.214-215.
31. Du Pisani, A., *op.cit.*, p.13.
32. *Ibid.*, p.17.
33. *The Citizen*, 25/4/1992.
34. Du Pisani, A., in Van Nieuwkerk A. & G. van Staden, *op.cit.*, p.213-220.
35. Price, *op.cit.*, pp.249-281.

36. For discussion, see Orkin, M. (ed), *Sanctions Against Apartheid*, 1989, David Philip, Cape Town; *Banking on Apartheid: The Financial Links Report*, 1989, The Commonwealth Secretariat, London; or Hermele, K. & B. Oden, *Sanctions Dilemmas: Some Implications of Economic Sanctions Against South Africa*, 1988, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala.
37. Interview with Dr. Jesmond Blumenfeld, 21/7/92; *Business Day*, 6/5/1992, p.5; *Sunday Times*, 22/3/1992.
38. See "Robert Mugabe on Aspects of Zimbabwean Foreign and Domestic Policies", Occasional Paper, 1981, SAIHA, Johannesburg, and Evans, M., "The Security Threat from South Africa", in Stoneman, C. (ed), *Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class and State in Southern Africa*, 1988, Macmillan, London.
39. For an admirable analysis of white (Afrikaner) fears and anxieties, see Kate Manzo & Pat McGowan "Afrikaner Fears and the Politics of Despair: Understanding Change in South Africa", *International Studies Quarterly*, 1992, Vol.36 (1), pp.1-24.

## 6. ADDENDUM: QUESTIONNAIRE

### SECTION 1

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

I am a registered voter, but would not vote	1
I am not a registered voter	2
I am a registered voter and would vote for:	
National Party (NP)	3
Conservative Party (CP)	4
Democratic Party (DP)	5
Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP)	6

2. Please indicate the degree to which you differ or agree with each of the following statements [numbered (a) to (u)] by circling the appropriate code number (1-4), eg. (2):

	Definitely Agree	Inclined to Agree	Inclined to Disagree	Definitely disagree
(a) The South African Police and Defence Force are strong enough to control internal violence and unrest indefinitely	1	2	3	4
(b) The communist threat against South Africa is over	1	2	3	4
(c) Mozambique can be trusted to carry out the terms of the 1984 Nkomati Non-Agression Treaty with South Africa	1	2	3	4
(d) The spread of ANC influence among South Africans must be curtailed	1	2	3	4
(e) The government of Pres. Mugabe in Zimbabwe constitutes a threat to South Africa's safety	1	2	3	4
(f) The Soviet Union (Russia) has abandoned its active involvement in Southern Africa	1	2	3	4
(g) The following foreign leaders are favourably disposed towards SA:				
President Bush of America	1	2	3	4
Prime Minister Keating of Australia	1	2	3	4
Prime Minister Major of Britain	1	2	3	4
President Mitterand of France	1	2	3	4
President Mugabe of Zimbabwe	1	2	3	4
President Nujoma of Namibia	1	2	3	4
Chancellor Kohl of Germany	1	2	3	4
President Yeltsen of the Russian Republic	1	2	3	4

	Definitely agree	Inclined to agree	Inclined to disagree	Definitely disagree
(h) The South African Economy has been hurt by sanctions	1	2	3	4
(i) Black South Africans have good reason to take up arms against the government	1	2	3	4
(j) SA should refuse to sell its minerals to states that continue to apply economic sanctions against it	1	2	3	4
(k) White South Africans cannot depend on the loyalty of black South Africans in the case of war against South Africa	1	2	3	4
(l) SA should not export food to hostile black-ruled states	1	2	3	4
(m) The only way in which SA can, in the long run, avoid further violence and unrest is by granting equal political rights to all South Africans	1	2	3	4
(n) The South African Defence Force (SADF) should not be deployed in the townships in an attempt to curb violence and unrest	1	2	3	4
(o) Blacks should serve with whites, coloureds and Asians in the same parliament	1	2	3	4
(p) White school children should not attend the same school with children of other population groups	1	2	3	4
(q) Once there is agreement on a new non-racial constitution, the violence will end	1	2	3	4
(r) The government does not yet spend enough on defence	1	2	3	4
(s) Peace will only come to South Africa through negotiations involving all the significant political formations	1	2	3	4
(t) Black South Africans should be encouraged to buy property in white suburbs	1	2	3	4
(u) SABC-TV adequately informs the public on domestic and international political developments	1	2	3	4