

South Africa's Destabilization of the Southern African Region.

By REV. FRANK CHIKANE

THE racist white-minority regime of South Africa is waging a bitter war against the black majority in the country, in defence of the apartheid system. This is a war that is waged in defence of the last bastion of white rule in Africa.

Because of this war thousands of our people have been killed, detained and tortured, many have been thrown into prisons and many other thousands have been forced into exile. Millions of our people have been forcefully removed and relocated or dumped in the so-called homelands as prescribed by the apartheid system, in an effort to make 87% of South Africa white. Millions of our people have been deprived of their citizenship making all of us refugees in the land of our birth over and above all the South African refugees who are scattered around the world.

As the war intensified during the eighties we have seen how the system has used the tribal homelands to wage war against the people. We have seen the emergence of vigilante groups, (backed by agents of the system) attack and kill the democratic and legitimate leaders of the black people. We have seen the emergence of assassination or death squads which are systematically eliminating leading opponents of the apartheid regime.

The present state of emergency and the control of the media has created just the right climate for this brutal acts to be committed without being exposed. For this reason many people have been displaced, most of whom are school children. This should give you a picture of the degree of destabilization within the country.

But what concern us in this paper is South Africa's destabilization of its neighbours, which is inter-related to this internal form of destabilization. The war inside South Africa has engulfed the whole Southern Africa region. Since the eighties, for instance, South Africa has: —

- * invaded and attacked the capitals of Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia;
- * invaded and attacked Angola and Swaziland;
- * backed dissident groups that have brought chaos in Angola and Mozambique and less serious disorders in Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Zambia;
- * obstructed the oil supplies of six countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe).
- * Attacked the railways, providing the normal import and export routes of seven countries (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe).
- * Blockaded Lesotho in 1986, which blockade, amongst other factors, created the necessary condition for a coup on January 1986.

Since the eighties, an estimated 0,5 million have died in this region and more than half of these were children under the age of five (1). Most of them were starved to death because of the South African-backed Mozambique's National

Resistance Movement (MNR), which prevented drought relief to reach the people. Famine here was used as a weapon of war. More than one million have been displaced within their country or as refugees elsewhere.

Over the period 1980 to 1984 South Africa's destabilization cost this region US\$ 10 000 million which is more than all the foreign aid these states received in the same period (2). This has seriously affected development projects and has also reduced the very low living standard of most people in this region.

To understand this South African destabilization strategy of the Southern African region I propose that we deal with the background leading to this strategic position, the concept of destabilization, the three phases of destabilization between 1981 up to date, and, then briefly look at the uniqueness of the Namibian situation

In conclusion, we shall raise an issue about the legitimacy of the South African regime in the light of its policy of destabilization, and then end by proposing a way of stabilizing this region. Recommendations to the AACC's fifth Assembly are presented separately as an annexure to this paper.

BACKGROUND TO SOUTH AFRICA'S DESTABILIZATION STRATEGY

The independence of Mozambique and Angola in 1975 altered the balance of forces in the Southern African region. It broke the so-called "cordon sanitaire" of white ruled colonies which gave the apartheid

regime a feeling of security and confidence to suppress indefinitely the political aspirations of the black majority in the country.

The fall of the Portuguese colonies brought the battle front against colonial rule closer to heartland of white oppression and exploitation (3) This created security problems for South Africa. The 1976 Soweto uprising followed by the November 1977 U.N. Secu-

1977 Defence White Paper which laid the basis for P.W. Botha's concept of a "total onslaught" from beyond S. Africa's borders. The total onslaught" needed a "total national strategy". The "total onslaught" which South Africa was facing was articulated as a communist plot. Joseph Hanlon presents this view of South Africa as follows:

"The concept of total on-

the protector of Western Christian values. It created a helpful contradiction for the West so that when they attack apartheid they should feel that they are in fact helping the Soviet Union.

The "total strategy" to counter this "total onslaught" consisted amongst other elements of the following:—

- * The need to forge some kind of national unity government to defend white



Another village in danger. SADF conscripts enter a Namibian village.

urity Council resolution on mandatory arms embargo against South Africa; the guerilla actions of the ANC which were fueled by the Soweto uprising; the economic decline from 1974 up to 1978; the substantial outflow of foreign capital; all contributed in deepening the crisis of the regime. White hegemony was clearly under slave.

In response to this crisis the apartheid regime produced the

slaughter equates the 'red peril' with, and defence of apartheid with defence of Western Christian values(3).

He says that his formulation has two advantages for white South Africa. Firstly, it makes all criticism of apartheid to be dismissed as communist. Secondly it creates a condition which makes both white South Africans and the West to see South Africa as the last bastion against communism,

rule. The present tri-cameral parliament developed from this need. This racist tri-cameral system and the so-called black local authorities were meant to co-opt the so-called Indian and Coloured populations in South Africa and some middle class black Africans into a junior partnership with the white minority against the black majority.

- * Repression of all anti-apart-

heid activists and those who resist this system.

The imposition of South African hegemony over the whole Southern African region to silence those opposed to apartheid and to neutralize mainly the African National Congress (ANC) guerilla warfare against South Africa. This would consist of a combination of diplomatic/political economic and military strategies. The 1977 Defence White Paper identified the need to maintain a balance relative to all Southern African states and also called for economic action to promote "political and economic collaboration amongst the states in Southern Africa. This proposed collaboration was later called the constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS).

The total strategy therefore was aimed, in this sense, at establishing South Africa's position as a "regional power" and establishing a "constellation of states" under its tutelage. This would develop a "common approach" on both the security and economic fronts against what was called expanding communist influence of the region.

It is the third element of the "total strategy" of South Africa which laid the basis for the development of the destabilization strategy against the Southern African states.

THE CONCEPTS OF DESTABILIZATION

Arne Tostensen defines the destabilization policy of South Africa as:

"A deliberate and systematic policy on the part of the South African apartheid regime to engage in insurgency actions

against neighbouring states with the aim of undermining the credibility and legitimacy of their lawful governments by rendering development efforts and national reconstruction virtually impossible(4).

Arne Tostensen continues to say that:—

"to this end a wide range of means are employed, including veritable military invasions; sabotage of economic and



Mozambican woman beaten by MNR thugs

social infra-structure; terror against the civilian population; support for surrogate organizations (i.e. UNITA, MNR, and LLA); sophisticated and covert forms of economic sabotage; propaganda, and disinformation; as well as selective use of 'carrot-and-stick' tactics to drive a wedge between cooperating partners within the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC).

South Africa obviously does not articulate this policy the way Tostensen defines it. For them the aim is to stop the harbouring of ANC and Swapo 'terrorists' and thereby curb

the advance of communism.

But Deon Geldenhuys, the major South African theoretician of the concept of destabilization comes more openly on this strategy of South Africa, actually sets out to establish South Africa's right to destabilize its neighbours and elaborates on the methods and tactics to be used. In setting out the objectives of a destabiliser he says that:

"The destabiliser's primary objective is an avowedly political one. Essentially, he wishes to produce (force) profound political changes in the target state. They may not involve structural changes in effect toppling the regime in power — but certainly would involve major changes in the target's behaviour. At the very least the destabiliser demands a fundamental shift as reorientation in the target state policy vis-a-vis the destabiliser (5).

In my study of South Africa's total strategy of which destabilization is part I see a direct relationship between this strategy and the Reagan Doctrine. Maybe it is for this reason that some political scientist call this strategy Botha's Doctrine. All of them go beyond just supporting those governments which are fighting revolutionary forces, (perceived as extension of Moscow) but they destabilise established governments which are seen to be revolutionary, and those which gained their independence through revolutionary means. Infact the Reagan Doctrine goes as far as trying to roll back established governments.

(The U.S.A., for instance, supports the Contras in Nicaragua whilst South Africa supports Renamo (MNR) in Mozambique. Both support UNITA in Angola. This simi-

larity in the strategies of these two countries will show itself in the dilemma the U.S.A. finds itself in when considering support for the Southern African states' SADCC programmes

THE THREE PHASES OF SOUTH AFRICA'S DESTABILIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

Eduardo Da Silva divides South Africa's application of the total strategy policy into four distinct phases. The first phase consists of the effort to launch a Constellation of Southern African states (CONSAS). This occurred at the same time as the development of the reform strategies internally.

The second phase for Da Silva is the period from mid-1980 to the end of 1981. This phase consisted of the application of destabilization tactics in a fairly generalized and indiscriminate manner. The third phase consisted of refined strategies of destabilization. It was selective and related to the particular target state's conditions.

This phase covered the period between 1982 and 1983. The last phase for Eduardo Da Silva covers the period after the Nkomati Accord in 1984.

Eduardo Da Silva's four phases of the total strategy are of course related directly to the Mozambican situation. But I found his four phase distinction of this strategy helpful to understand the related phases of the destabilization policy of the apartheid regime. I would like to identify three phases of the destabilization policy of the apartheid regime. The first phase is the same as Eduardo Da Silva's second phase of the total strategy. This is the period mid-1980 to the end of 1981.

The second phase covers the period of both the third phase and fourth phase as identified by Eduardo da Silva. My third phase covers the period after mid-1985, the period after the Nkomati era.

GENERAL AND INDISCRIMINATE DESTABILIZATION PHASE

Before we deal with the first phase of the destabilization policy of the apartheid regime, let us look at the immediate events which led to the application of this policy.

There are two major events which led S.A. to apply its destabilization strategy by mid-1980. The first one was the defeat of the Muzorewa forces in the Zimbabwe independence election in 1980. Eduardo Da Silva says that the Constellation of states proposal, in its original form, was "predicated on Zimbabwe achieving independence under a collaborationist Muzorewa government". Under this CONSAS they would have had what was then called Zimbabwe-Rhodesia under Muzorewa; Namibia under the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance; the three members of the customs union (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) along with Malawi whom they assumed would all join; and the bantustans (the so-called independent homelands). They also saw Zaire and Zambia as other possible members. This grand vision of P.W. Botha was dashed by the defeat of Muzorewa as we have already said.

The second event which led to the application of the policy of destabilization occurred two months later. On the 17th April 1980 the majority ruled states of Southern Africa established the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference

(SADCC) which defined its primary objective as the reduction of economic dependence on South Africa. This involved the following countries:

Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This came as a major reversal to South Africa's strategy for the region. It dashed the hopes of forming the constellation of Southern African states (CONSAS).

These two events did not only affect Botha's total strategy but they also caused difficulties for the U.S.A. and other Western governments. Firstly, it dashed the belief that S.A., irrespective of its apartheid ideology, would be an anchor of the stability of the Southern African region. Secondly, the development of the two regional systems (S.A.'s proposed Constellation of states, and the SADCC) created difficulties for them. They were forced to review their policies in relation to this region.

It is because of these two events, coupled with internal pressures and the intensification of the armed struggle by the African National Congress which made South Africa resort to a generalized, random and indiscriminate attacks on its neighbours. They invaded Angola in January 1981, attacked Matola in Mozambique and supported surrogate forces like the MNR and UNITA. They flexed their economic muscle by applying coercive economic techniques. This was the first phase of the destabilization strategy.

THE 'STICK' AND 'CARROT' APPROACH (1982 - MID-1985)

The second phase which

started in 1982 consisted of more refined and sophisticated strategies of destabilization. The regime became more selective depending on the specific conditions in the particular country in question. This refined strategy, maybe, was a result of the one and a half years of experience the regime acquired. As we have seen from the section on "The concept of destabilization" expert theologians like Deon Geldenheys began to emerge by 1982.

The objectives of a destabilization policy were now clearly defined. Firstly, it was to force neighbouring states to flash out the African National Congress (ANC), in particular, and the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO). The 1984 Defence White Paper saw South Africa's threatening military capacity as essential to advance the peace process. They called this the 'policy of deterrence'.

Secondly, it was to force the Southern African states to sign non-aggression pacts to maintain South Africa's political and economic hegemony. They wanted to reduce the degree of criticism by these states of the apartheid system and to stifle the efforts of the South African states to reduce dependency on South Africa through the SADCC.

Thirdly, if some states were not complying they would then create chaos in those countries by applying economic sanctions, attacking them militarily, use surrogate forces, death squads etc. This is a model used by the old Rhodesia against Mozambique and Zambia, and, that of Israel in Jordan and Lebanon. Joseph Hanlon says that "the goal was simply to create chaos in the neighbouring

states, especially those who could not be forced into line," to prove to white South Africans and the world at large that black majority rule does not work. "It was an attempt", he says, "to replace the old 'cordon sanitaire' with what was sometimes described as a 'cordon of instability'". Eduardo Da Silva says that this 'selective application of destabilization incentives tactical package clearly sought to divide the states of the region.

It is history now that to achieve the first goal of destabilization South Africa has gone on the attack against most of the Southern African states. To achieve the second goal South Africa signed, a 'secret' non-aggression pact in February 1982 with Swaziland. In February 1984 South Africa signed the Lusaka Agreement with Angola, which seemingly was never effected. In March 1984 they signed the Nkomati Accord.

It is clear that by the time they signed the Nkomati Accord South Africa was convinced that she had succeeded on attempts of Southern African states to move from a dependency relation with her. She saw the possibility of going back to the concept of constellation of states. P.W. Botha at Nkomati talked about his vision of a 'veritable constellation of states' in Southern Africa. After Lusaka and Nkomati, South Africa saw itself as the regional power again, and, expressed a lot of self confidence.

BACK TO THE 'OLD' DESTABILIZATION TACTIC

This aura of self confidence of course did not last for a long time. The Gorongosa event in Sofala province on the

28 August 1985 shock the Nkomati Accord to the ground. The crisis of apartheid at home also deepened, and, pressure was building up on the economy of South Africa. The threats of sanctions against South Africa and the participation of the Southern African states in international forums on the question of economic pressure against South Africa angered the apartheid regime even more. This forced the apartheid regime to return to the old destabilization tactics which were indiscriminately applied against all the Southern African states.

Although we cannot give details about this last phase of destabilization policy of the apartheid regime up to date because of space problems, I would like to make a number of observations about this period which can be used as a form of evaluation of how the apartheid regime fared in this regard.

- * Firstly, it is important to note that although military pressure on the Southern African states to flash out the ANC from within their countries was effective and affected the ANC in many ways, this pressure has forced the ANC to operate more from inside the country than from outside. There is ample evidence that many units of the ANC's military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, are based within the country.
- * That instead of the Southern African states submitting themselves to the apartheid regime there has been a move to strengthen the South African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and even countries like Malawi which were viewed as obvious

allies of South Africa were moved more closely to be Southern African states and further away from South Africa. The only place where South Africa could say that their policy worked is in Swaziland and to some extent in Lesotho.

- * That with the sanctions campaign more and more Western states are taking side with the Southern African states in the form of development aid and to some extent military aid. The only country which is still having difficulties as far as its Southern Africa regional policy is concerned is the U.S.A. They are faced, of course, with the contradiction of finding themselves supporting UNITA and in some way South Africa (on the Namibian question) whilst on the other side wanting to plunge in on the side of the Southern African states.
- * That instead of South Africa emerging as a regional superpower, it is more isolated than ever before. Instead of being seen as the 'peacemaker' and a 'stabilizing' factor in this region, it is now seen as the source of instability. Simon Jenkins puts this succinctly when he says that: "Destabilization is not control, South Africa can throw its weight about the subcontinent; it cannot rule it. Its achievements will be anarchy".

This evaluation of their efforts since the second phase of their destabilization policy forced them to resort to the crude form of destabilization.

DESTABILIZATION OF NAMIBIA - ITS UNIQUENESS

Before concluding this

paper I suggest that Namibia be presented as a unique entity (although still part) of the whole Southern African reality of the destabilization policy of the South Africa regime. What is the difference? Namibia, unlike the other states which South Africa tries to destabilize has never achieved political independence at any stage in its modern history.

It was originally colonized by Germany, and in 1920 the League of Nations gave South Africa the mandate to be caretaker of Namibia on its behalf. But in 1946 when the United Nations replaced the League of Nations South Africa refused to be accountable to the UN on administering Namibia. In 1948 the Nationalist Party denounced the mandate given by the U.N. and dealt with Namibia (thus called South West Africa) as a colony of its fifth province.

In fact therefore South Africa is occupying Namibia illegally as declared by the 1971 International Court of Justice. The destabilization of Namibia therefore takes two forms:

"The international and the external. The South African regime destabilizes Namibia the same way as it destabilizes South Africa. It has declared war against the people of Namibia, brutalises them as it does with South Africa, and denies them of their right to self-determination as a people.

The South Africa regime has occupied Namibia as an external force and created an economy of dependence. Because of the combination of these two forms of destabilization, Namibia destabilization takes on a more complex form. And unless

Resolution 435 of the Security Council of the U.N. is implemented there is no way in which the problems of Namibia can be resolved.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I would like to raise three issues. The first one is the question of the de jure legitimacy of the South African regime. Secondly, it is the cultivation of enemy images as an integral part of the destabilization policy of the apartheid regime. And, lastly, a need to find another way of stabilizing this region.

The Lusaka statement (May 1987) was drawn jointly by the Church in South Africa and the world at large, and the liberation movements.

Extensive debates are taking place back at home about the question of the legitimacy of the South African regime. To facilitate this debate the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) organised a seminar jointly with the Centre for Legal Studies of the University of the Witwatersrand on the legitimacy and illegitimacy of this regime during June of this year. The SACC in its last National Conference adopted the following resolution in this regard:

The National Conference takes note of Churches pronouncements on Apartheid as a Heresy which call in question the moral legitimacy of the South African regime as a basis for questioning de jure legitimacy of that regime. Therefore, recommends to the member churches to question their moral obligation to obey unjust laws such as:

- * The Population Registration Act
- * The Group Areas Act
- * The Land Acts
- * The Education Acts

* The Separate Amenities Acts

Further calls upon member churches to support the structure which are recognized by the people as their authentic legitimate authority in the eyes of God.

In the light of the destabilization policy of the South African regime we need to take this argument further into the international arena. The task of a government is usually to ensure stability, justice and peace for its citizens and its neighbours. It needs to protect the rights of all and should be responsible for the good and peaceful relationships with its neighbours.

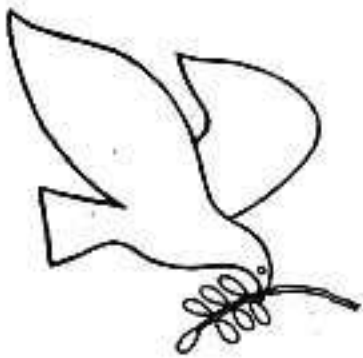
Because South Africa is pursuing the opposite of the very fundamental tasks and function of what constitute a government. We can conclu-

de that it is de-fure an illegitimate government. This is based also on the criterion of the human rights concepts.

Secondly, we need to realize that South Africa uses enemy images to justify their destabilization policy. For instance, they present the liberation movements in South Africa as tools of communism and of Russia aimed at overthrowing the S.A. government and replacing it with an atheistic regime. In this way they try to mobilize the religious sentiments, particularly of white people, in S.A. They also present the neighbouring states as enemy territory by arguing that they are harbouring terrorists. The independence of Southern African states from colonial powers is presented as an advance of communism which is going to sweep the whole of Southern Africa.

Lastly, we need therefore to find another way of addressing the question. Southern Africa at present is a sub-continent of refugees and exiles because of this policy of both internal and regional destabilization. The other way should establish a Southern Africa which is a united homeland for all people. I am convinced that if the economic potential of the regime could be loosened it would not only benefit people in Southern Africa, but the whole African continent. Maybe it is this very potential which threatens western countries to an extent that they are not prepared to commit themselves to the removal of the apartheid regime in the region.

Without removing apartheid there will be no peace in the region, and also for the whole world.



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