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**THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA  
IN THE PRE- AND IMMEDIATE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

by

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Dedicated to my Grandparents, Tony, and Connie.

Rest in Peace - you are not forgotten.

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## INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study is to discuss the strategic significance of the Republic of South Africa over a specific period of time. *Strategic significance* and *strategy* have undergone an evolution in modern times to include aspects other than pure military power and three criteria have been identified as vital components of strategic significance. National capability, in both its physical and non-physical aspects, needs to be taken into account; as does a nation's ego perceptions of strategic significance. The third important element involves perceptions of the external environment as regards a particular nation's importance. Although these three elements are studied in isolation, the concept of strategic significance is a total one and these aspects thus interact with each other in a dynamic environment. The focus of the study takes the form of a comparative analysis, identifying two periods, the first from approximately the Second World War until 1989 and the second, from 1990 until 1993; while ultimately attempting to verify any changes in South Africa's strategic significance after 1989.

Chapter One undertakes a theoretical study of the word strategy, as well as the concept of strategic significance. The framework in this regard is predominantly derived from the publications of some of the pre-eminent theorists of our time, for example, Beaufré, A, *An Introduction to Strategy* and *Strategy of Action*; Lider, J, *Military Theory*; Holsti, K J, *International Politics* and; Morgenthau, H J, *Politics among Nations*. Factual and other data relating to South Africa, has been provided by various official sources, including the Central Statistical Service of South Africa and Debates of Parliament.

Chapters Two and Three of the dissertation present statistical and other evidence of South Africa's national capability in the two periods under discussion. Both the tangible and non-tangible aspects of capability are discussed in an attempt to discover any differences in this regard, hence the utilisation of a comparative analysis. Chapter Four commences with a brief description of South Africa's historical background in the period during and immediately after the Second World War, in order to ascertain any factors which could have had an influence on South Africa's strategic significance. Ego perceptions of strategic significance in the pre-1990 period are also discussed in this chapter. Role perceptions, as based on elements of national capability, are considered particularly important in this regard in that a nation's significance and ability to fulfill policy goals is dependent on the correct utilisation and manipulation of national capability. This is followed by Chapter Five, which discusses alter perceptions relating to South Africa's strategic significance during the same period; while Chapter Six covers the second period under discussion in this study, namely, from 1990 to 1993 and the relevant aspects of ego and alter perceptions.

It can be noted that the external environment has an important impact on strategic significance in that constant interactions in the international system are unavoidable. It has, however, proved difficult to obtain information relating to alter perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance, particularly as regards

certain nations, such as the former USSR/Russia, and particularly in the post-Cold War period. Whether this is because South Africa was not considered a valuable player in global politics can be contested on the grounds of the various relationships established between the RSA and the international community, albeit secretly in many cases. This study will present indications of strategic significance as deduced from these very relationships. Primary sources have, however, been used where possible, as have yearbooks, magazines and newspapers, in an attempt to execute a detailed study. The lack of information in the 1990-1993 period can also be attributed, in part, to the end of the Cold War when nations became increasingly introspective as they attempted to strengthen their economies and attend to other national concerns. Chapter Six is followed by a comparative analysis, where South Africa's strategic significance during both periods will be discussed. In this section, various evidence and deductions will be presented in an attempt to verify the importance of South Africa, both perceived and actual, to the international community in general. This will include a classification, in tabulated form, of the primary elements of South Africa's national capability, as well as ego and alter perceptions of strategic significance, in order to assess any differences and similarities between the two periods under discussion.

It is thus possible to execute a comparative analysis at a narrower level than total polity and the narrower focus gradually became more fashionable within the political science profession. Comparison makes it possible to construct rankings and classifications, and also provides an indication of differences. Factors which can be included in a comparative analysis are agricultural production; population; size; Gross National Product; political leadership and; newspaper circulation. Of these, there are naturally certain characteristics which are difficult to precisely measure, for example, leadership charisma.<sup>1)</sup> Comparative analysis also poses certain methodological problems. The first of these is selecting the units of comparison; while another problem is that of the construction of indices for the comparison of variables. The third problem is that of comparability. While the question has been raised as to the value of comparative studies, it would appear that such an analysis can indeed provide a partial explanation of certain aspects and phenomena in the political environment.<sup>2)</sup> Comparison is not, however, the only approach utilised in this study and there is also a certain amount of descriptive analysis.

Comparative study has been defined as: "The study of numerous cases along the same lines, with a view to reporting and interpreting numerous measures on the same variables of different *individuals*".<sup>3)</sup> Comparative politics has also been described as: "A combination of appropriate method, strategy and theoretical approach by which one seeks generalisations that provide explanations related to particular problems or questions about politics".<sup>4)</sup> A third definition is offered in Marsh and Stoker: "The comparative method involves the presentation of empirical evidence of some kind in an attempt to compare systematically and explicitly political phenomena".<sup>5)</sup> By the late 1990s, this method of study was considered an essential tool for political research.<sup>6)</sup> In broad terms, the concept of comparative study involves the presentation of information, in the form of facts and/or figures, for the purpose of comparison.

Max Weber characterised modern science as being concerned with the study of empirical reality, in a world which should be dealt with in pieces and not as a whole. He was convinced that modern science provides the true condition of the universe or what he terms the “nature of objective reality” and emphasised that facts were always subject to continual refinement and change. Weber also stated that science was progressive in nature, with modern science, for example, displaying superiority to ancient science.<sup>7)</sup> The comparative method investigates empirical reality, in a piecemeal fashion, as emphasised by Weber. As will be ascertained, the concepts and facts dealt with in this study are also dynamic ones and are thus open to re-evaluation. It is thus interesting to note that no matter how archaic Weber’s observations may seem, they remain salient, particularly as regards comparative study.

Comparative analysis creates an opportunity to discuss specific phenomena and identify uniformities and differences. It is, in fact, an old discipline and as the concept evolved, it shifted to the study of separate countries. Aristotle has been noted as the first student of comparative politics. He defined *constitution* in broad terms and included such aspects as political institutions and the educational levels of citizens.<sup>8)</sup> Comparative analysis can be conducted without a theoretical starting point, although in this study, a broad theoretical framework has been utilised. The concept, however, is not always simple as regards execution. It requires systematically-collected data which, as noted, is not always readily attainable and even when such data is available, it is not always possible to make a suitable comparison.<sup>9)</sup>

The modern state can be defined according to the means available to it or to be more precise, the use of force.<sup>10)</sup> In other words, the variables and capabilities available to a particular state will determine, to a certain extent, the power and hence strategic significance of that state. As the concept of comparative politics has developed, it has become clear that the problem is not that this type of analysis is impossible, but rather that *so much* of it is possible. According to the *Handbook of Political Science*, one of the primary purposes of attempts to rank variables has been to discover where policies are determined by variables within the nation-state or by variables in the external environment. It is thus necessary to consider both sets of variables and examine their interactions, if any, as well as discover what ultimately affects a nation’s foreign policies: its domestic circumstances or the activities of other states. The purpose of a conceptual framework is to identify the variables to be used in the analysis. These variables should, however, be general enough so that they can be located in various systems. The implication is thus that the analysis of, for example, physical, technological and organisational factors, is necessary in the evaluation of a nation’s strategic significance.<sup>11)</sup>

In conclusion, it is vital to emphasise that strategic significance remains a dynamic concept, as evidenced by the changes of the last few decades. Capabilities change, perceptions change, relations change, and the actual concept of strategic significance itself has been altered. In practical terms, no single state can be of value purely to itself. The external environment exerts continual pressure in this regard which cannot be ignored and which has to be taken into account in an analysis of strategic significance.

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## SUMMARY

### THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE PRE- AND IMMEDIATE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

By

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The aim of this dissertation is a comparative study of South Africa's strategic significance in two distinct periods, namely, from approximately the Second World War to 1989 and from 1990 to 1993. The research methodology followed was to firstly identify the theoretical framework to be utilised as regards the concept of strategic significance and then to highlight the relative variables to be compared. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of a new era following the end of the Cold War, which resulted in changes in the external environment and to the concept of strategic significance. In this study, this concept is based on three criteria, namely, a state's national capability; ego perceptions of strategic significance, based in part on the national capability noted above; and alter perceptions or perceptions of the external environment regarding a particular state's strategic significance.

The study presents evidence of South Africa's relatively strong national capability in both periods under discussion, especially when compared to the rest of the African continent. The RSA's strategic significance was particularly strong during the pre-1990 period, primarily as a result of the Cold War conflict and the resultant superpower battle for the extension of influence. South Africa, with a wealth of vital strategic minerals, anti-communist sentiment, relatively strong economy, and having possession of the Cape Sea Route, was thus awarded a certain degree of international importance. This was indicated by continuing international contacts and trade relations during a period when the RSA's domestic apartheid policies were under constant international criticism.

The end of the Cold War, however, resulted in a diminishing of strategic significance as regards the above-mentioned aspects; while the value of South Africa's role on the African continent in general and in the Southern African region in particular, began to take precedence over previous concerns of communist expansionism in the Third World. This role was especially relevant in light of continuing marginalisation of Third World countries. As a result, both the developed North and the underdeveloped South began to perceive South Africa as a potential "saviour" and "engine of development" for the African continent. South Africa's role as an international economic partner and supplier of strategic minerals, however, continued.

A comparative analysis is presented at the end of the study to assess similarities and differences in South Africa's strategic significance during the two periods, and it is concluded that the RSA was indeed considered to hold a certain degree of strategic importance throughout both periods under discussion, although the emphasis of such value was altered in response to changes in both the internal and external environments.

Strategic significance

National capability

Ego perceptions

Alter perceptions

International sanctions campaign

Strategic minerals

Cape Sea Route

Communist expansionism

Trade relations

Normalisation of international relations



## SAMEVATTING

### DIE STRATEGIESE BELANG VAN SUID-AFRIKA GEDURENDE DIE VOOR- EN ONMIDDELLIKE NAKOUDE OORLOG PERIODE: 'N VERGELYKENDE STUDIE

Deur

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LEIER	:	PROF. M. HOUGH
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Die doel van hierdie verhandeling is om 'n vergelykende studie van Suid-Afrika se strategiese belang gedurende twee afsonderlike periodes, naamlik vanaf ongeveer die Tweede Wêreldoorlog tot 1989 en vanaf 1990 tot 1993, te doen. Die metodologie wat aangewend is, was om eerstens die teoretiese raamwerk wat betref die konsep strategiese belang te identifiseer en dan om die toepaslike veranderlikes wat vergelyk gaan word, uit te lig. Klem is veral gelê op die ontwikkeling van 'n nuwe era ná die einde van die Koue Oorlog, wat gelei het tot veranderinge in die eksterne omgewing en in die konsep strategiese belang. Hierdie konsep is in hierdie studie op drie kriteria gebaseer, naamlik 'n staat se nasionale vermoë; ego persepsies van strategiese belang, gedeeltelik gebaseer op bogenoemde nasionale vermoë; en alter persepsies, of persepsies van die eksterne omgewing rakende 'n bepaalde staat se strategiese belang.

Hierdie studie lê bewyse voor van Suid-Afrika se betreklike sterk nasionale vermoë in albei periodes wat bespreek word, veral wanneer dit met die res van Afrika vergelyk word. Die RSA se strategiese belang was veral groot gedurende die voor-1990 periode, hoofsaaklik as gevolg van die Koue Oorlog-konflik en die gevolglike supermoondheidstryd vir die uitbreiding van invloed. Suid-Afrika, met 'n rykdom van kardinale strategiese minerale, teen-kommunistiese sentiment, betreklike sterk ekonomie, en met beheer van die Kaapse Seeroete, is dus 'n bepaalde internasionale belang toegeken. Dit was duidelik na aanloop van voortdurende internasionale kontak en handelsbetrekkinge gedurende 'n periode toe die RSA se binnelandse beleid die teken van konstante internasionale kritiek was.



Die einde van die Koue Oorlog het 'n vermindering van strategiese belang wat betref bogenoemde aspekte tot gevolg gehad, terwyl Suid-Afrika se rol in Afrika oor die algemeen en in Suider-Afrika in besonder, toenemende belang aangeneem het in teenstelling met vorige vrese oor kommunistiese uitbreiding in die Derde Wêreld. Hierdie rol was veral toepaslik in die lig van die voordurende marginalisasie van Derdewêreldlande. Die resultaat was dat beide die ontwikkelde Noorde en die onderontwikkelde Suide, Suid-Afrika as 'n moontlike "redder" en "lokomotief vir ontwikkeling" vir Afrika beskou het. Suid-Afrika se rol as 'n internasionale ekonomiese vennoot en verskaffer van strategiese minerale het ook bly voortbestaan.

'n Vergelykende analise is aan die einde van die studie gedoen om ooreenkomste en verskille in Suid-Afrika se strategiese belang gedurende die twee eras vas te stel, en die gevolgtrekking is gemaak dat die RSA inderdaad 'n sekere mate van strategiese belang tydens beide periodes onder bespreking verleen is, alhoewel die klem van dié belang verander het na aanleiding van veranderinge in Suid-Afrika se interne asook eksterne omgewings.

Strategiese belang

Nasionale vermoë

Ego persepsies

Alter persepsies

Internasionale sanksieveldtog

Strategiese minerale

Kaapse Seeroete

Kommunistiese uitbreiding

Handelsbetrekkinge

Normalisering van buitelandse betrekkinge



## CHAPTER 1: THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Strategic significance is largely determined by a state's national capabilities. It is primarily these capabilities which not only lead to ego perceptions of own importance to the international community, but also alter perceptions as to the importance of a specific state. Strategic significance is of relevance to all states in that no one state exists in a vacuum and all members of the international community are therefore subjected to the perceptions and judgements of the other members. A state's strategic significance is not static and is continually changing according to circumstances. These circumstances would include a change in national capability or changes in ego and alter perceptions. The latter two concepts are particularly susceptible to change as environments move between peace-and-wartime. It must also be remembered that perceptions are often a subjective attribute which can ultimately influence a state's overall significance, in spite of evidence that disproves the specific perception.

The term "strategy", has itself undergone a change as regards its use and meaning. It has evolved from the strict interpretation of "military strategy", to a more total concept which involves a variety of factors other than pure military power. This has also affected the concept of strategic significance. The concept of strategy is discussed below in an attempt to bring this evolution to light.

### 1. The concept of strategy

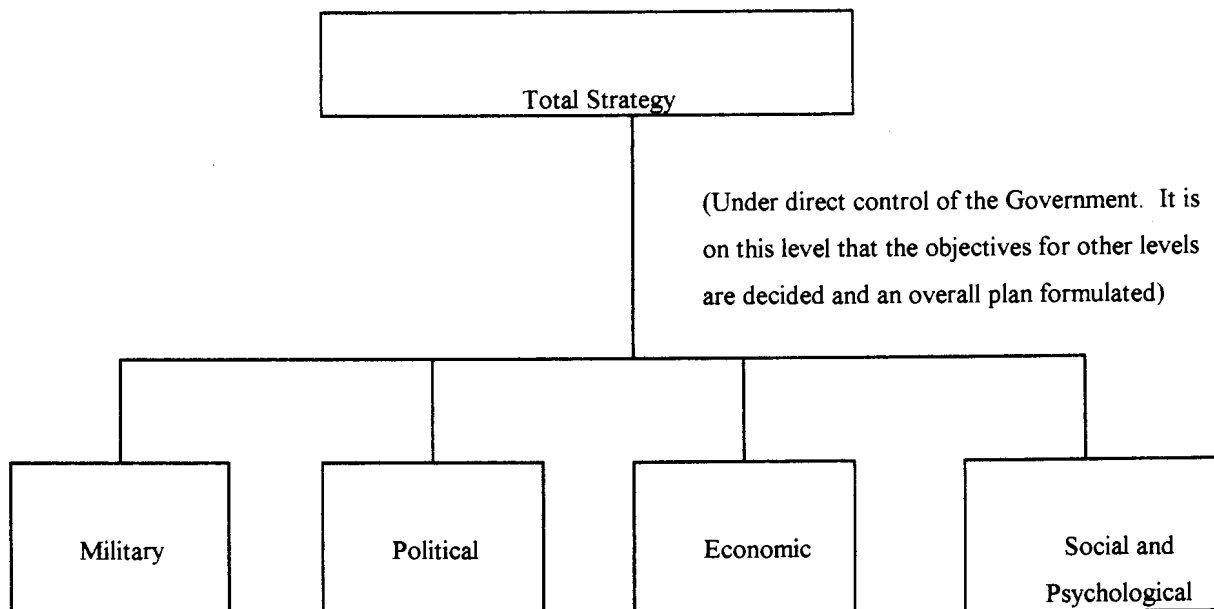
According to Beaufré (1965), Liddell Hart's traditional definition of military strategy as "the art of employing military forces in order to achieve the goals of political policy", is too restrictive. Beaufré views it instead as, "the art of applying force so that it makes the most effective contribution towards achieving the ends set by political policy".<sup>1)</sup> Strategy, according to Beaufré, is "the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute".<sup>2)</sup> The aim of strategy is to achieve the objectives laid down by policy, using available resources.

The objective may be defensive, offensive or may even be the maintenance of the political status quo. It is here that Clausewitz falls short in his definition of, "decision as a result of victory in battle", as military victory is not the sole manner by means of which a psychological effect over the enemy can be achieved. The outcome desired is thus to force the enemy to make a decision that to begin or continue the struggle would be useless. A psychological effect has then been produced.<sup>3)</sup> Strategy must be directed, by first creating and then exploiting a situation to such an extent that the enemy is morally debilitated and the art of strategy is the careful selection of the most suitable means available, both moral and material, in order to produce the necessary psychological pressure.<sup>4)</sup>

Following Clausewitz, the concept of strategy has developed by three extensions: a) strategy has gone beyond the primary use of armed violence to include such aspects as political, economic and ideological policy; b) strategy has gone beyond war to include peacetime military involvement and; c) strategy is sometimes defined as the use of complete state power for the achievement of all political goals.<sup>5)</sup>

Indirect strategy is therefore also involved and can be defined as, “using the minimum of force and military resources, the art of maximum exploitation of the narrow margin of freedom of action left by nuclear or political deterrence in order to achieve the desired, frequently large-scale, results”.<sup>6)</sup> Total strategy in the direct “mode”, which basically involves preponderant military action, has certain inherent limits. Aside from the obvious importance of the choice of military methods and the necessity of mobile military resources, direct action is frequently confined by the limits imposed by nuclear deterrence. This forces action below a certain level. Other limitations include local conditions and psychological instability of the theatre of operations which can result in unexpected popular resistance.<sup>7)</sup> Total strategy in the indirect “mode” thus involves more than military action and also includes national capabilities and overall national power in order to produce the desired effect and achieve policy goals.

Strategy can therefore be divided into various forms or levels which, when co-ordinated, can be directed towards the same objective. These levels can be tabulated in a pyramid shape as follows:-<sup>8)</sup>



Just as the term strategy has evolved into a broader concept, the term strategic significance has evolved in a similar fashion to cover an entire spectrum of factors that are both tangible and non-tangible.

## 2. The traditional meaning of strategic significance

The contemporary world is characterised by a condition of permanent international insecurity which forces states to rely on their respective national resources to ensure survival. These states are also entwined in a situation of interdependence involving various relationships ranging from allies to enemies.<sup>9)</sup> National security is still considered to be of the utmost importance to all states and a nation's national security policy is partially based on perceptions of its strategic significance. The concept strategic significance is thus linked to perceptions, both those of the respective states and those of their allies and enemies.

As explained, strategy is no longer viewed as a purely military concept, but has become a "total" approach where all elements of national capability, both tangible and intangible, are included. Nations are today faced with a completely different facet of strategy and strategic significance. The result has been a subsequent emphasis on such factors as economic capability and political leadership. Economic considerations have even begun to take precedence over ideological and other political issues. Military questions are thus no longer the sole issue of concern. States are forced to study the perceptions of other states as well as domestic ego perceptions, in an attempt to establish their own strategic significance as well as that of other members of the international system. In order to achieve this, national capabilities must be brought into account and an overall assessment made. It should also be noted that strategic significance is not a static concept and that both national capabilities and perceptions are known to change. Certain states are thus perceived as being of strategic significance for only a certain period of time. There are also different degrees of strategic significance, in that a country or region may be considered important by one state and relatively insignificant by another. Strategic significance has thus become a total concept and is influenced by ego perceptions of significance, national capability, and perceptions of significance by the world community. These factors must be viewed against a constantly moving background of events. National capability is of vital importance in this regard and will be discussed below.

It should also be noted that the above-mentioned concept of capability and strategic significance has, as expected, developed further in the post-Cold War era. Although certain elements of the traditional meaning of strategic significance, such as economic capability, have remained the same, other aspects such as a state's human rights record and democratic political institutions, now also play an important role in this concept. This will be further discussed at a later stage.

### 2.1 National capability

A state's national capability and resultant level of power, is closely linked with the ability to act purposefully in a given situation, especially as regards causing another state to do something which it would prefer not to do. It is the capacity to perform an action, usually to coerce, persuade or force.<sup>10)</sup> Capability is, however, linked to situations and is therefore relative. In other words, a strong and effective capability in a certain

situation does not imply the same strong capability in a different situation. Capability and the distribution of power are thus dynamic concepts which are subject to change under a variety of factors.<sup>11)</sup> Holsti refers to power as: “The general capacity of a state to control the behaviour of others”. In order to achieve this, national resources must be mobilised for political purpose or in support of specific foreign policy objectives. Holsti emphasises the importance of resources in a particular diplomatic situation, as well as the difference in needs between two countries in what he terms any “influence relationship”. In other words, if a nation needs something from another, it is vulnerable to the latter’s acts of influence.<sup>12)</sup> Another factor to be considered regarding the effectiveness of acts of influence is the responsiveness of the targeted state.<sup>13)</sup>

A nation’s leaders develop a foreign policy on the basis of projections as to what they perceive as their own power, as well as the power of other states. Perception is the key word and international conflicts of interest become a game. Each move by the opponent must be perceived and counteracted by means of the effective use of capabilities. National power is, amongst other things, basically a state’s ability to wage war and it is therefore important to calculate the capabilities and intentions of both future and present capabilities.<sup>14)</sup> An effort must also be made not to exaggerate or underestimate an opponent’s capabilities as this can lead to irrational foreign policy decisions.

According to Morgenthau, international politics is a struggle for power, although politics and power are not necessarily synonymous. Politics is, in essence, based on conflict and all political systems are aimed at the management of politics and power. Power can either be the ability of an individual or a group to mobilise the appropriate resources in order to get others to do something that they would otherwise not do or to refrain them from taking a certain action. Power can also be the inadvertent impact of groups or individuals on others. Power is relative, its distribution is constantly changing, and it is also linked to a government’s perception of its ability to achieve the nation’s goals. Military force is but one of the ways in which power is manifested, but a state must demonstrate the capability and the will to utilise the power it claims to possess. Perceptions of credibility are thus vital. Power and wealth are closely linked and the great powers through history have tended to be great economic powers.<sup>15)</sup> Coulombis *et al* state that power has three key “ingredients”, namely force, influence and authority. Power can also be actual (immediate) or potential.<sup>16)</sup>

A government must therefore study available resources and develop a plan as to how they will be effectively incorporated into external objectives. The measurement of a state’s capabilities is thus not a complete indication of its power or influence. Pearson *et al* have theorised that all foreign policy behaviour can be traced to national interests and various systemic, idiosyncratic factors, as well as national attributes. In this case, systemic factors are conditions in a state’s external environment and include geography and the international system structure. National attributes, for example, economic and military capability, also affect behaviour; while idiosyncratic factors refer to the personal characteristics of leaders.<sup>17)</sup>

Hocking *et al* refer to resource profiles and capabilities in their analysis of power. These include physical capabilities, organisational capabilities, attitudinal capabilities, network-accessing capabilities, and information-related capabilities. The latter aspect has been identified due to its significance in the late twentieth century. Knowledge has, in fact, become an element of state power.<sup>18)</sup> These factors and others are discussed below.

### 2.1.1 Strong and weak states

Buzan uses the term weak or strong *states* to refer to the degree of socio-political cohesion; while the term weak or strong *powers* refers to the classic distinction between states as regards their military and economic capability.<sup>19)</sup> Strength as a state is not related to power, for example, weak powers such as Austria and Norway are strong states. Many weak states are located in the Third World, primarily as a result of decolonisation. Domestic violence is endemic in such states and weak states are often trapped in a situation where a historical legacy of economic development and political power results in their being underdeveloped and politically affected. One of the primary characteristics of weak states is the lack of a strong domestic political and societal consensus to eliminate excessive use of force in the domestic political situation.<sup>20)</sup>

There is no single indicator which defines the difference between weak and strong states, although Buzan mentions a list of possible conditions in weak states. This list includes such aspects as high levels of political violence; the lack of a coherent national identity; excessive state control over the media and; major political conflict as regards the ideology to be used to organise the state.<sup>21)</sup> While national security in a strong state can be regarded as protecting the components of the state from outside threats, only the physical base of a weak state may be sufficiently well-defined to constitute an object of national security. There is, in fact, little idea of the state and the governing institutions are often perceived as a threat. National security in such a situation thus differs considerably from national security in a strong state. In a weak state, individuals and sub-state units become the most meaningful security referents.<sup>22)</sup> National security thus cannot be considered apart from the internal structure of the state.

The two primary sources of national capability are physical and non-tangible elements of national capability. The former refers to the more tangible elements such as geography, natural resources, economic capability, and population; while the latter refers to elements such as national morale and national character, which determine the level of support for government initiatives and policies. External sources of national capability refer predominantly to the level of international interaction experienced by a state through alliances, regional co-operation, etc. These sources should be considered to be in a continual state of flux in that strategic alliances are known to change along with changes in the international community. Africa represents a good example in this regard in that the end of the Cold War has seen not only diminished interest in the African continent by the rest of the world, but has also resulted in an increase in funding and co-operation away from Africa towards the former Eastern-Bloc countries and own domestic programmes.

The intangible sources of national capability are often the deciding factor as regards a conflict between forces with similar tangible resources. There are many examples of states disadvantaged as regards tangible sources of power, who have defeated larger states due to such factors as political will and leadership skill. Ultimately, the victor will be the side which is willing to sacrifice the most for victory. The most effective use of power is thus the ability to impose the will of one side on the other. It should also be noted that the importance of owning vast amounts of natural resources has declined as interdependence amongst the world's states has increased. Other tangible aspects of importance include location and size.<sup>23)</sup> The determinants of national capability, as well as changes in the international community following the end of the Cold War and Africa's position in this community, will be discussed below.

### 2.1.2 Physical determinants of national capability

Physical determinants are tangible factors and include such elements as available natural resources, military and industrial capacity. These are vital attributes of national capability and overall strategic significance. They are, however, subject to change and thus form part of the moving background that influences strategic significance. Each state possesses different physical determinants and these usually form the base of initial strategic significance. It therefore stands to reason that a state with an abundance of vital physical elements will be perceived as having a certain degree of strategic significance.

#### 2.1.2.1 Geography, location and size

The size and population of a state, as well as its geographical position, are important indicators of power or the lack thereof, as well as position in the international system.<sup>24)</sup> When studying the strategic alignment of a state, the attitudes, interests and policies of neighbouring states, as well as their military reach, should also be taken into account. The central position of a state in an international system generally leads to increased confrontation and a correlation has been found between the number of frontiers a state possesses and the number of wars or hostilities engaged in.<sup>25)</sup> Yet a large state, with an accompanying large population, does not necessarily result in a powerful nation. This has been effectively demonstrated by Israel, which with both limited territory and population, is an important player in the Middle East.

The size and geographical situation of a state are therefore important factors in an assessment of power and significance. Britain, with its position of insular isolation, displays the advantages of natural geographical boundaries and has suffered few invasions as a result. Japan also enjoys an insular position and until its defeat in World War II (by the United States), had never experienced a successful invasion. Geographical location has a profound effect on a nation's foreign policy and military strategy, as it effects the vulnerability, accessibility and mobility of the military establishment. Distance is here a primary concern due to the high cost of transporting military forces and equipment. Mountains, forests, deserts and swamps all increase the degree of difficulty and cost of transportation. Recent advances in transport technology have, however,

managed to overcome some of these difficulties. Yet there is no denying the substantial costs involved in the geographical transfer of military force.<sup>26)</sup> There are thus two key geographical features which can be considered to affect foreign policy, namely, conditions along a nation's borders, and distances that must be traversed to reach key strategic areas. Geography can also influence the scope of interests and the degree of conflict or co-operation experienced.<sup>27)</sup>

Geography is considered to be one of the most stable factors on which the power of a nation depends, as geographical location is highly unlikely to alter much from the past. No matter how small and seemingly insignificant the English Channel, neither Napoleon nor Hitler could ignore it.<sup>28)</sup> Geography is thus a constant in foreign policy and cannot be overlooked as an important strategic influence. States develop foreign policies using their geographical location in order to increase trade, maintain or alter contemporary power configurations, and for defence against invasion.<sup>29)</sup>

The importance of location does, however, vary according to the current political situation, with states (or parts thereof) acquiring strategic importance under certain circumstances. This generally entails the establishment of bases for protection or the launching of attacks. The Panama Canal ultimately altered the strategic importance of the Cape Horn Route and the importance of the Falkland Islands also diminished with time.<sup>30)</sup> Positions of strategic importance may be effected by technological advancements and international events. Military powers have generally tended to expand territory either by the acquisition of colonial territories or by expanding already-established boundaries. Large areas also tend to become an economic burden in terms of transportation costs, especially if the nation concerned has little resources and an insignificant population. An immense geographical area can, however, serve as an impediment to foreign aggressors, as invading armies are able to take control of relatively large areas of land without being a threat to military power centres. An added advantage of sheer territorial size is found in the area of nuclear warfare, as there tends to be a smaller geographical concentration of industry and population. Large states thus result in an increased number of independent targets for nuclear deterrence, as vast territory leads to the location of nuclear retaliatory forces at a further distance from densely populated areas.<sup>31)</sup>

It should also be noted that the conquest of a large portion of a country often breaks the will to resist and this is generally the aim of military conquests.<sup>32)</sup> The size of a territory is an important determinant of natural resources and overall growth potential and a state of only moderate size and few natural boundaries has less chance of expanding or even surviving.<sup>33)</sup> Together, location, territorial size and natural boundaries have a critical influence on a nation's chance of success and survival.

#### 2.1.2.2 Climatic conditions

Geographical features such as climatic conditions can impose severe limitations on agriculture, and dramatic climatic changes such as a severe drought or heavy flooding, can rapidly have a disastrous effect on a

nation's economy and overall power capacity. Geography, however, remains a descriptive element and does not necessarily determine international relations, although nations have to be able to utilise given environments with their available resources, terrain and climate in order to serve necessary ends. Climate does therefore have an influence on power, but this influence is neither predictable nor regular. Although some have claimed that civilizations and centres of power have risen in relation to certain climates, development in this regard has, in fact, taken place at some point in most climatic zones. Whether this is due to climatic changes or technological advancements which nullify the influence of climate, is not the issue. Political power is, however, clearly related to at least some extent to geography and climate forms part of this aspect.<sup>34)</sup>

### 2.1.2.3 Natural resources

Natural resources are a vital element of capability and overall strategic significance. A state well-endowed with resources is automatically perceived as a stronger state. Such states can survive negative external influences for longer periods and are thus more immune to external pressures such as economic sanctions. Natural resources are not, however, continually renewable and a state would be committing a grave error if too much reliance was placed on these resources as the only source of national capability. Nevertheless, a state with an abundance of natural resources is normally perceived as having greater strategic significance than one with minimal resources.

#### a. Agricultural resources

The most elemental of all resources is food and a nation that is virtually self-sufficient in this regard has a large advantage over those states which depend on others to survive, especially over long periods of time.<sup>35)</sup> A pertinent scarcity of food thus translates into a source of permanent weakness for any state and these states are forced to act according to this specific weakness rather than according to other available strengths. Changes in the consumption of food as a result of changing nutritional ideas or changes in agricultural techniques, can lead to either self-sufficiency in food or the lack thereof. An adequate supply of foodstuffs is thus a primary source of concern for any government, especially in times of war when the labour force and transportation are restricted.

As a result of climatic constraints, no country can claim to be completely self-sufficient as regards foodstuffs, although the United States (US) is considered to be one of the countries closest to self-sufficiency in this regard. The United Kingdom (UK), on the other hand, has been known to import approximately half of its total food requirements in the past. This is considered a major weakness in overall power structure, as blockades can successfully cut off the import of foodstuffs and basic necessities in times of hostilities. This policy was followed by the Allied powers against Germany during the course of both World Wars. The UK and Japan are particularly vulnerable to a blockade.<sup>36)</sup>



b. Mineral resources

Natural resources and their location are of the utmost importance to any nation and have a direct impact on a nation's power status. Some of these resources, for example oil, have become more important than others and natural deposits of such minerals deliver additional influence in international affairs.<sup>37)</sup> Minerals, unlike foodstuffs, cannot be coaxed from unyielding soils using intricate agricultural methods as they are distributed on a less regular basis.

No single developed state is self-sufficient as regards resources and this has resulted in a generally large trade in minerals. Mineral resources are also exhaustible and will eventually run out. They are thus an unstable element of national power. Another important difference between food and mineral resources is that the former is perishable, while the latter can be stockpiled and generally does not deteriorate under exposure.<sup>38)</sup>

c. Energy resources

Fuel resources (natural gas, coal and petroleum) have a larger distributive base than metallic minerals, but few states possess these valuable resources. Together, only fifteen countries produce approximately 95 percent of the world's coal and a further ten countries produce 85 percent of global petroleum. Nations lacking these mineral fuels either resort to dependence on other states as regards imports or attempt to develop alternative fuel sources, which is a very costly procedure. It is therefore natural that any state will attempt to utilise its overall power position in order to ensure a continuing supply of these important resources.<sup>39)</sup>

Fuel shortages can have tremendous repercussions for all states. Mention should also be made of nuclear and atomic power, which although limited in scope to a few countries, may become a future source of industrial power.<sup>40)</sup> Unfortunately, this power has been increasingly used for negative purposes and it must ultimately be decided whether its positive effects outweigh its dangerous shortcomings in the "wrong hands". Resources must be mobilised in support of a state's sphere of influence if they are to be effective and these resources then become a foreign policy instrument. These aspects all effect the assessment of a nation's power and significance. A state with an abundance of natural resources and mineral fuels therefore has an unbridled advantage over those who have limited supplies or lack certain resources completely. The latter have to strive to import key minerals and are thus sensitive to market fluctuations and influences. This leads to heavy dependence, a situation which obviously weakens a nation's power; while those rich in natural resources maintain a definite strategic advantage. There is, however, another source of national capability which cannot be ignored and that is population.

#### 2.1.2.4 Population and manpower

The size, skills, motivation and homogeneity of a country's population play an important role in a government's national capability and foreign policy, affecting such aspects as the degree of assertiveness and the rate of success as regards influencing other states.<sup>41)</sup> Population in its broadest sense refers to the total number of human beings that a state incorporates. The assumption can be made that the larger the population, the greater the state's capability to perform more tasks, more effectively. Population data must, however, be qualified according to specific circumstances. Factors such as age and sex distribution must therefore be taken into account during an assessment of national capability.<sup>42)</sup> A population that is healthy, unified, well-informed and loyal to its government is likely to be far more powerful than an undernourished, illiterate, overcrowded, and disloyal population.<sup>43)</sup>

Manpower refers to that portion of the population which can contribute to the political, military and productive capability of the state and does not include those individuals merely required for the effective functioning of society. An example of the latter would be food producers. Any capability assessment that involves manpower should also consider trends of evolution and development within the population.<sup>44)</sup> The human component of national power can be divided into qualitative and quantitative elements. The latter concerns the actual size of the population, while the former involves national character and diplomacy, as well as national morale.

##### a. Size and distribution

No nation is able to become a superpower unless it possesses a population large enough to man the necessary industries which support the conduct of contemporary hostilities and outright war. This does not, however, imply that the larger a nation's population, the greater its power and China, with a vast population, emphasises this point. Large populations can also have a negative influence on national power, especially in the underdeveloped nations of the Third World, where food supply is constantly outpaced by the needs of an ever-increasing population. Scarce resources have to be diverted from the strive for national power in order to care for undernourished and diseased populations. In such a situation, population control becomes an essential precondition for the achievement of national power.<sup>45)</sup>

Population density (the relation of population to area) varies according to geographical elements such as available resources and migration. There is no optimum population density and this factor only becomes important to national power when it is high or low in relation to resources and the current technological level.<sup>46)</sup> Overpopulation restricts the availability of capital for investment and lowers the level of education, health and welfare. Such a state is also likely to be militarily ineffective. In spite of the fact that a vast body of labour is available, such labour is basically unskilled and thus ineffective without the necessary training.<sup>47)</sup> Such training requires financial support for which the already-strained resources will be unable to provide.

There is also the issue of ethnic make-up and diversity which can challenge unity and lead to genocide. A state will find it difficult to mobilise national capability and execute effective foreign policy if all energies are concentrated on maintaining peace between feuding ethnic groups.

Underpopulation results in equally significant weaknesses as regards national power and even though large-scale arable land may be available, the nation will only be able to provide a small market. It will thus not be possible to establish important industries or generally profit from the abundance of arable land. Effective defence of a large area using military force from such an under-populated nation is largely impossible and public order becomes more difficult to maintain.<sup>48)</sup>

Both migration and especially immigration, have an important impact on national power, particularly where it becomes a method of reducing an excessive population in overcrowded countries and increasing the population in critically underpopulated nations. Tighter immigration controls have been introduced in various countries around the globe, with fewer immigrants permitted into these countries each year. Temporary migration, in the form of seasonal workers who are generally hired as manual labourers, is a factor of growing importance and has various advantages for the “host” country. One such advantage is that these labourers can merely be “exported” during times of recession. They are also not authorised to vote. There is, in fact, a relatively constant requirement for unskilled labour in developed nations, where the permanent population deems itself too educated for such work.<sup>49)</sup>

b. The importance of demography

Political demography is a discipline of international relations and can be defined as the science relating population to world politics.<sup>50)</sup> The dynamics of population changes, such as births and deaths, are thus of great relevance and political demographic data makes the prediction of social, political, economic and cultural changes (albeit with a margin of error) possible. Demographers recognise that changes in population variables influence the relative power position of states and that events such as territorial transfer are largely dependent on the population inhabiting the relevant area.<sup>51)</sup> It can be noted that a society’s ethnic divisions should be taken into account as dissident groups can become an important target for those aiming at the overthrow of a rival government.<sup>52)</sup>

Political demography makes certain assumptions, namely:- (a) rapid population growth on a worldwide scale is likely to continue; (b) national and international institutions and policies influence the population; (c) changes in the population influence national and international policies and institutions; and (d) sovereign territorial states strive to regulate own populations in order to improve their power positions.<sup>53)</sup>

A nation’s population is therefore of primary importance when making an assessment of strategic significance. It should, however, be noted that national character and national morale, as well as the quality

of government, are also key factors in such an analysis and are thus discussed at a later stage.

c. Technical and educational levels

Education is a vital aspect as regards the quality of manpower. Literacy of the population is one of the primary considerations in this regard, especially as concerns the establishment of an effective administration and the building of consensus. This aspect is crucial if there is to be any attempt at an international role for the state concerned. Another important element is the development of “tool skill” so that valuable time and effort will not be lost in attempts to make machinery work. This will entail essential training. A third factor is the number of available educated specialists, as well as their level of performance. Academic, scientific and technological efforts should thus increase if true national capability is to be achieved.<sup>54)</sup>

One of the reasons for the necessity of a high level of technical expertise is that numerous issues on international agendas are now extremely technical in nature, for example, satellite broadcasting and international monetary concerns. As these issues are now discussed at international fora, it is vital that any government wishing to participate in these discussions have a solid understanding of the issue at hand. This would, in turn, provide a certain degree of influence over those governments having a mere rudimentary knowledge of the problem. In such a case, knowledge has more value than raw capabilities.<sup>55)</sup>

2.1.2.5 Economic capability

Economic strength is a vital element of national power. It allows those who possess it to influence others, purchase goods and services and produce much of what is required for own needs; as well as maintain relative control over the future. The collapse of the former Soviet Union’s economy during the 1980s lent further evidence to the claim that economic strength is valuable in an assessment of national capability and power. Economic capability will determine the extent to which an actor (nation) is involved in international affairs.<sup>56)</sup>

Over and above the Gross National Product (GNP), a nation measures its overall economic capability on the basis of five broad groups of factors, namely, foreign economic relations; industrial strength; agriculture; energy and; minerals. These “standards of power” are generally used as international standards of economic capability. GNP is still perceived as the primary determinant of economic strength, although its value may fluctuate in accordance with strengths and weaknesses in the above-mentioned five groupings.<sup>57)</sup> GNP is equal to the total value of all goods and services produced by the national economy during a single year. Figures are reported in a monetary unit and as this unit is convertible into one currency, it becomes possible to compare overall economic capabilities.<sup>58)</sup> Unfortunately, GNP comparisons are subject to various shortcomings, such as the exaggeration of the purchasing power of one currency against another and are thus merely a rough indication of national productive capacity.<sup>59)</sup>

The economic resources of a nation are divided into four basic groups:- (a) real capital, in the form of equipment, raw materials and goods for later sale; (b) the labour force, consisting of skilled workers in all fields; (c) monetary debt owed by foreigners; and (d) a nation's land with all its water and mineral resources.<sup>60)</sup>

Bernholtz points out that a nation's relative economic strength corresponds roughly to that of its population. This can be attributed to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution when population growth was linked to a rise in *per capita* incomes. It should also be noted that even a highly developed economy can become vulnerable if there is even vague dependence on foreign sources of energy, food or raw materials. This is especially serious in times of hostilities and war when economic instruments of coercion and persuasion are enforced with increased effectiveness. This situation was experienced by the Central Powers during both World Wars when the British made use of a blockade. This not only led to a severe food shortage in Germany, but also resulted in a shortage of goods needed for military purposes.<sup>61)</sup>

A primary factor in the assessment of a nation's economic capability is the presence of the necessary flexibility in order to confront actual problems and challenges. Economically, this requires a surplus economic production above subsistence needs in order to support covert and conventional forces, as well as foreign aid. Economic capability is thus the most broadly convertible power factor. For this same reason, a nation also requires a population that is skilled, dedicated and obedient, and thus capable of collective action. This capacity can be limited and negative factors in this regard include ignorance, personal independence and political dissidence.<sup>62)</sup>

The contemporary system of states has generally been characterised by an uneven distribution of economic capabilities, with certain countries such as the US displaying strong overall economic capacity in the past and thus dominating parts of the globe.<sup>63)</sup> It is in part due to impressive economic strength that the US has been able to extend its sphere of influence to all corners of the world. The primary powers concentrate on the protection of the production of strategic materials within their borders, in an attempt to achieve a higher degree of self-sufficiency. Methods utilised during this process include the use of marginal resources, stockpiling scarce materials, and developing substitute materials. Unfortunately, a higher degree of self-sufficiency is expensive to achieve and the above-mentioned methods require a larger percentage of national income if they are to come to fruition. Nations therefore attempt a balanced policy between the extremes of excessive dependence on imports and absolute self-sufficiency. Misuse of resources should also be guarded against in order to prevent exhausted supplies and anti-pollution measures are gaining strength worldwide.<sup>64)</sup> Economic capability is thus directly linked to a nation's strategic position in the international community.

As noted, economic transactions do, however, create vulnerabilities and a blockade is only one example of economic coercion. Disruptions of transaction flows can be disastrous for economies and nations become

sensitive to market fluctuations. The South African Government experienced attempts by the international community to enforce change by means of economic sanctions. Such attempts vary in effectiveness according to the target state's own economic capability and its capacity to withstand such disruptions, especially over a prolonged period. Techniques of economic warfare include blacklists and pre-emptive buying, all of which have varying degrees of effectiveness.<sup>65)</sup> Economic capability and self-sufficiency are therefore of the utmost importance to a nation's survival and as governments usually place a high value on the achievement of solid economic welfare, all are vulnerable to economic coercion in its various forms.

a. Industrial capacity

Unless industrial capacity is at a high level, natural resources will not have an extensive effect on a nation's power and status, even if raw materials are available in large quantities. Industrial plants are needed to transform raw materials into industrial products. India, for example, possesses an abundance of certain valuable raw materials, but in the past has lacked the industrial capacity necessary to attain great power status. The development of heavy industries has become an essential component of national power and victory in times of war depends heavily on the quality and quantity of armoured vehicles, roads and weaponry.<sup>66)</sup> Innovation, organisation and skill all play an important role in industrial capacity and thus the strategic significance of a nation. It is this level of industrial capacity that marks the difference between the small and great powers of the international system.<sup>67)</sup>

Most resources need to be refined and fabricated after removal and for power potential to increase, this refinement and fabrication needs to be completed without delay.<sup>68)</sup> A strong industrial capacity is thus vital. A nation must also be able to shift from methods of production used in times of peace to those necessary in times of war. Industrial plants will have to be re-equipped and labour diverted in such a situation. Production quality invariably decreases during such emergencies and this negative factor must be taken into account during an assessment of national capability.<sup>69)</sup> India lacked the industrial establishment necessary for the refinement and processing of its abundance of raw materials as a result of the lag between the potentialities (resources) and actualities of power. It is thus inevitable that a nation's change in industrial rank will be accompanied by a change in its power hierarchy. This point emphasises the dramatic increase in the importance of such aspects as industrial capacity for national power status. Nations of the third and fourth rank also tend to become dependent on nations of the first rank in that these superpowers supply the less advanced states with modern weapons, communications and transportation.<sup>70)</sup>

b. Technological capability

An expanding GNP is an indication of national economic growth and results from increased employment labour and improved labour productivity. This is usually preceded by such factors as technological innovation and increased investment in human resources and capital goods. Such economic growth has

particular relevance for the military establishment as it generally contributes to a military build-up.<sup>71)</sup> Military capability is discussed at a later stage. A nation needs to be practically self-sufficient on the technological level if it wants to compete with other nations on this same level. Technology has made numerous advances through the ages and many of these advances have resulted in changes worldwide. There has been the development of nuclear and other weapons of modern warfare; a revolution in production methods as regards automation; travel into space; the conquest of certain human afflictions; and numerous other technological developments.<sup>72)</sup> The application of scientific technology to the conduct of warfare has been of particular relevance, especially as regards nuclear weapons and the modern nation-state became vulnerable to nuclear destruction as a result.<sup>73)</sup> These weapons thus added a new vulnerability to international politics, especially for those who did not possess them.

States are required to maintain pace with these technological advances if they wish to compete in the international arena and if they wish to offer citizens defence against modern weaponry. Modern technology in the form of nuclear weapons has, however, decreased the gap between weaker and stronger states and has resulted in the concept of war being extended to complete annihilation.<sup>74)</sup> States which do not possess modern technology are thus disadvantaged on various levels. There also appears to be a link between technological, scientific and economic development and the growth of multilateral diplomacy.<sup>75)</sup> It would thus appear that modern political power has become linked to modern technology.

#### c. Communications infrastructure

Changes in technology have also resulted in revolutionary communications, with the world becoming smaller and more accessible as a result. It is now possible to travel to any part of the globe in a minimum of time or at least communicate with a specific area. Psychological warfare has also become increasingly popular; as has the ability to reach almost all corners of the world with ballistic missiles. It is now possible to apply economic pressures with relative ease and devastating effects. Although this has resulted in an increased sense of unity among mankind, states have also become more vulnerable to both military attack and economic pressures.<sup>76)</sup>

There can be no denying the impact of the mass media on patterns of social life. Modern communications now reach a much larger audience and this, in turn, has an effect on international politics, especially in the case of propaganda and the “image” projected by a state. In fact, national preoccupation with such image projection has had an impact on the formulation of foreign policy in that many states wish to adhere to the image projected.<sup>77)</sup> Another consequence of the increasing amount of global communication is that requirements are known and actions become predictable.<sup>78)</sup> It has become clear that states having access to modern communications do indeed possess a certain advantage over those who do not.

The “globalisation” of international communications, has been defined as: “The way in which, under contemporary conditions especially, relations of power and communication are stretched across the globe, involving compressions of time and space and a re-composition of social relationships”. One of the more important functions of globalisation in modern times is the “free flow of information”, where images and information have an influence across the world. The result has been that large transnational companies and not states have become key players of the time. The question has thus been asked: “Without the nation, can democracy survive?”. International communications also affect world boundaries and influence culture.<sup>79)</sup>

As power and politics are linked, the global flow of news is considered political in nature. It has been described as reflecting and determining the international power configuration. International news can thus be considered a powerful tool for those in power.<sup>80)</sup> Another key aspect of globalisation has been the application of deregulation policy, where communication technology developed even faster and the transfer of capital no longer recognised national boundaries, thus decreasing the power of the state and diminishing the value of traditional classifications of power.<sup>81)</sup> Communications have thus become an important, but often overlooked, element of national capability.

#### 2.1.2.6 Military capability

Military power is one of the most obvious tangible factors of national capability and usually occupies a vital position in a capability assessment. Manpower and equipment are initial concerns and attention is also given to such factors as controlling doctrines and patterns of deployment. Such assessments have, however, been effected by the development of new weapon technology and techniques which can lead to unexpected military superiority and thus a faulty original assessment.<sup>82)</sup> When a sovereign state wishes to exert influence on another state, system of states or organisation, it can employ methods of both a coercive and non-coercive nature. Although the geographical size of a country is an indicator of power, this factor is not necessarily a reliable indicator of national military power and there is no strong link between the size of national territory and national military power. Yet states with small territories have rarely featured as primary military powers. Another factor to be considered is that a country can be dissatisfied with a certain situation whether locally or internationally, but if military force is lacking, policy will remain relatively passive, with the emphasis on diplomacy and not force. It should also be noted that a country can enter a crises relatively ill-equipped, but can rapidly develop a stronger military capability in some cases.<sup>83)</sup> In other words, it is advisable not to emphasise the “moment”, but instead to make a strategic assessment of the possibilities.

##### a. Uses of military capability

Coercive means would entail threats or actions aimed at depriving the conflicting party of something to which it attaches a certain value, such as peace, territory or independence. Sovereign states, throughout



history, have tended towards the employment of military power, thus emphasising a coercive means of influence. Even though military power can be used in a non-coercive manner, states generally employ military strength in an attempt to force a situation in their favour.<sup>84)</sup>

Another important factor of military capability is deterrence. When the enemy or opposing forces perceive the other side's military capability to be larger, stronger or better equipped, an attack can be effectively deterred. Losses would thus be deemed unacceptably heavy. This is especially relevant as regards second-strike capability. It is, however, not only the size of the military establishment that carries importance in a study of general strategic significance; the quality and type of weapons, quality of military leadership, as well as the systems of combat and standard of military organisation, are all equal factors. Flexibility and adaptability are also vital for survival of the establishment.<sup>85)</sup>

In modern world politics, military means is viewed as central to the attainment of goals. The presence or absence, quality and quantity of military means is of primary importance in the calculation of state power. The great world powers in any given state system have generally been great military powers and charismatic leaders of weak states have been able to move from a position of physical weakness to one of strength by means of effective military action.<sup>86)</sup> In order for military potential to become actual military capability, a nation must be able to produce certain goods and mobilise certain services. These goods and services include raw materials and a strong labour force. As non-military activities must continue during periods of hostilities, a nation must be able to subsist and deploy only those materials and labour that are necessary for the active employment of its military forces. Technological and economic capacity is thus dependent on such factors as the size of the population, the economic productivity of the population, and natural resources.<sup>87)</sup>

#### b. Types of military capability

In contemporary times, states can possess at least three radically different types of military capability, each demanding different technology and costs. A state strong in one of these types can be weak in others and each type is used for a different purpose.

Recent years have seen an emphasis (and subsequent de-emphasis) on the *nuclear capability*. This capability can be viewed as the ability to disrupt, if not destroy, the social, economic and political structure of a large area in one "fell swoop". States must possess both a second-strike as well as a first-strike force for such an attack to be successful and this force is generally viewed as a deterrent; that is, implying that the cost of employing such a force against an enemy who possesses a similar force generally outweighs any possible gains. Credibility is vital in such a situation and it is this same credibility which is expensive to maintain, as the image must be projected to signal that the state concerned is wholly committed to a nuclear attack or counter-attack if necessary.<sup>88)</sup>

- The second type of military capability is termed *conventional force* and has both an active and a passive role, with forces serving largely as deterrents. Active functions of a conventional force would include a direct assault on enemy states or on foreign territory; while passive functions include actual defence from foreign invasion and defence by deterrence.<sup>89)</sup> During the Cold War years, with the emphasis on nuclear warfare and its prevention, the role of conventional forces was curtailed to that of a “back-up” force; but the onset of the Gulf War in 1991 emphasised the importance of ground-to-ground and ground-to-air combat. Large conventional capabilities therefore remain essential for the advancement of interests, as well as for the achievement and maintenance of a sense of security.
  
- *Sub-conventional force* represents the third type of military capability and is often referred to as “people’s war”. This basically involves the use of a population (or part of it) against its own government. Leadership is generally held by a local elite with foreign connections. Sub-conventional warfare is cheap, yet effective and is often aimed at exporting revolution or installing regimes abroad similar in nature to one’s own. Such warfare is most effective in situations marked by alienation between elites and masses, and governments can usually only contain guerilla insurgency if numerical superiority is obtained over the insurgents. An alternative to this numerical superiority is to totally destroy the insurgents and any bases they may have built up within the population.<sup>90)</sup>

A state that is militarily weak will naturally attempt to use non-military instruments in its foreign relations and options for instruments and techniques will thus be curtailed, especially in the contemporary situation where disarmament has gained a certain degree of international popularity.<sup>91)</sup> Military power, however, remains an essential condition for the continued survival of states, both as a deterrent against aggression and a benefit for future allies. Actual military strength is determined by, amongst other things, technical advancement and the political attitudes of both soldiers and civilians.<sup>92)</sup> Examples of technological superiority during military conflict would be Germany’s use of the submarine during the First World War and the use of the tank by Britain during the same war. Co-ordination of the air, land and naval forces of both Japan and Germany was also considered an advantage during the Second World War and one cannot neglect the extensive technological advantage of possessing nuclear weapons. The quality of military leadership is yet another important factor.<sup>93)</sup> A state’s military establishment must thus possess an overall strength in all of its component parts as a “weak link” can eventually lead to the disintegration and ultimate destruction of the military capability.

A nation’s power, however, consists of far more than mere military power and economic capability. Its citizens and leaders are equally important and these and other non-tangible elements of national capability are discussed below.

### 2.1.3 Non-tangible determinants of national capability

The social determinants of capability are more intangible and thus difficult to measure. Social determinants cannot be ignored in an analysis of strategic significance, as they play a vital role in a state's overall capability. Physical resources alone are insufficient and attention must thus be focused on such factors as national character, national morale, and political leadership.

#### 2.1.3.1 National character and morale

This aspect of national capability has not received much attention in the last few decades, as is evident in the minimal amount of information available on the subject. Yet it should not be underestimated as it remains a component of overall capability. A nation formulates its character by the minds and wills of its members and this character is modifiable over time. There are, however, several aspects which endure through the ages and are identified with certain nations. Language, law and government, religion, and education all play a role in the formulation of national character.<sup>94)</sup> The concept itself can be described as the characteristics that are common or standard in a society or that make people "want to act as they have to act" in the existing social environment. It is thus a determinant of behaviour.<sup>95)</sup> National character has also been formally described as: "The relatively enduring personality characteristics and patterns that are modal among the adult members of a society".<sup>96)</sup>

National character is made up of intellectual and moral qualities and cannot do other than influence national power, as all who act for a nation, be it in times of war or peace, experience and reflect these qualities. The supposed initiative of the Americans and common sense of the British are two examples of national character. Differences in national character have made it possible for nations to pursue foreign policies that others cannot. The former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) thus had an advantage in the public acceptability of an extensive military establishment, in that national character instilled an obedience to the authority of the government. Governments of militaristic nations are therefore able to commence war whenever it is deemed necessary and can also move to a preventive war at a chosen moment.<sup>97)</sup>

Pacifist nations, however, have far less freedom of action as they are restrained by national anti-militarism. They pursue foreign relations in a more cautious manner and do not possess sufficient armed force to strengthen their policies. Pacifist nations are thus forced to rely on such factors as industrial capacity and geographical location for ultimate victory.<sup>98)</sup> An incorrect assessment of a nation's national character will result in errors in judgement and ineffective policies, such as the underestimation of German recuperative force after the First World War. German national character is again predominant when their lack of moderation is reviewed. From early time (the Middle Ages) to Hitler, the Germans appear to have failed to restrain goals and actions within the realm of possibility.<sup>99)</sup>

National morale is less stable than national character and can be defined as the degree of support and determination with which a nation supports the government's foreign policies.<sup>100)</sup> National morale is particularly visible in times of crisis and takes the form of public opinion. A government will find it difficult to pursue effective policies without a favourable public opinion and such levels of morale penetrate all national activities. There is no proven theory at present as to how a nation might react and what its morale will be under certain conditions. National morale also has a breaking point which is difficult to pre-empt.

Morale can be broken by tremendous war losses of both men and territory, while other nations may be able to withstand such losses with a mere decline in morale. German morale managed to withstand intensely unfavourable conditions in 1945 and this illustrates the unpredictability of reactions and the resultant effect on morale.<sup>101)</sup> Although national character and morale are two elusive factors that are difficult to gauge, their importance cannot be ignored.

#### 2.1.3.2 Political organisation

Power potential is reduced when the internal organisation of a state is either too rigidly stratified or when too many rewards are dispensed to too few recipients. Extreme internal political fractionalisation will also reduce political stability, which will in turn reduce power or at least perceptions of such power.<sup>102)</sup> States must thus be effectively organised.

Political organisation and the manner in which it is enforced by a nation's leaders, has a direct bearing on a state's power. Democratic societies encourage economic growth and innovation, but are severely influenced by public opinion. Politicians in democracies are therefore dependent on majorities for election and most of these majorities are basically ignorant as regards foreign policy. Personality changes are common in democracies and further complicate matters by introducing inexperienced politicians into office. Aristocracies lack innovation, but are able to plan and execute long-term goals; while strictly controlled dictatorships stifle initiation and subsequent growth and this leads to a further erosion of power. This often results in the suppression of suitable successors.<sup>103)</sup>

A nation's power also depends on the extent to which its political policies, philosophy and institutions are attractive to other nations. Domestic achievements or failures therefore have a direct influence on a nation's international standing and overall power position.<sup>104)</sup> During the Cold War, this was especially relevant with the United States (Democratic) and the Soviet Union (Communist), vying for support of their respective political philosophies and governmental systems. South Africa, for example, generally became a *pariah* state as a direct result of internal racial policies and the nation was subjected to intense pressure as the rest of the international system attempted to enforce change. It has been theorised that the type of government system, ie. democracy or dictatorship, is related to the three aspects of policy flexibility; the propensity to fight wars and; efficiency and discretion. It can also be noted that both democratic and non-democratic systems of

government are subject to bureaucratic pressures.<sup>105)</sup> Yet even prosperous, well-armed and well-governed nations cannot function effectively unless there are efficient bureaucracies to implement the necessary policies.<sup>106)</sup>

### 2.1.3.3 Political leadership

A “good government”, perceived as a source of national power, is responsible for maintaining popular support for foreign and local policies and for maintaining a balance between the human and material resources needed for these policies. Roles selected must be neither too elementary nor too excessive, as either of these alternatives can result in the unsuccessful execution of policies.<sup>107)</sup> A government must achieve the correct “mix” of resources and this is achieved by possessing sufficient quality and quantity of these resources in order to ensure maximum possibility of success. It is in this context that a large population becomes a weakness rather than a strength when resources offer inadequate support. Popular support for policies must also be secured by a government in order to mobilise elements of national power.<sup>108)</sup>

A government must also avoid extending the gap between public preferences and foreign policy requirements and should be willing to compromise on certain non-essential issues. It should not, however, become a “slave to public opinion”, but should take a leadership stance, especially on important issues. A responsible government should aim at influencing public opinion in a responsible manner. It is often difficult for democratic governments to obtain supportive public opinion for their policies and without such support, national power can become largely ineffective.<sup>109)</sup>

Idiosyncratic factors also play a role in that it has been argued that single individuals are capable of influencing great events. This has, in fact, been termed, the “great man (or woman) theory” and focuses on individual decision-makers. Individuals can differ in both their world views and personality traits. Thus although objective conditions, such as natural resources, can impose restraints on a state’s capacity, differences in individual leaders can have an important impact on foreign policy and indeed strategic significance.<sup>110)</sup>

A “good government” is an essential prerequisite for the motivation of a population and its public opinion. This motivation, in turn, stimulates the use of resources and thus a state’s national capability. A nation’s political leadership should therefore be able to generate effective policies in order to harness a state’s ultimate potential. This concept of policy formulation also stretches to economic policy and this issue is discussed below.

#### 2.1.3.4 Economic policy

Although a state's economic potential and capability are essential components of overall strategic significance, the way in which these elements are combined in an effective economic policy cannot be ignored. When undertaking an analysis of strategic significance, attention must thus also be directed to the way in which a nation is organised economically for both domestic and international action. Matters to be addressed in this regard include an assessment of economic production and efficiency.<sup>111)</sup> Governments are also in search of access to markets and sources of supply in order to achieve economic growth. Few nations are sufficiently endowed with natural resources to sustain their own economies. International economic transactions have thus become increasingly important for economic growth and success.<sup>112)</sup>

Yet, as has been noted, increased economic opportunities result in certain vulnerabilities. Economies can be devastated by disruptions of transaction flows and nations which rely on a few select markets or commodities are particularly vulnerable. Economic transaction flows can be manipulated for various political purposes, although nations such as the US are better protected against such vulnerabilities than the smaller, developing nations. It is the larger, industrial powers which utilise economic instruments of policy against the latter in order to reward or punish. The ultimate aim of such instruments would be to change behaviour in the target state's domestic and foreign policies.<sup>113)</sup>

There is, however, another aspect in this regard which should be emphasised, namely, the importance of being able to adapt the domestic economy to more advanced and successful international practices. Domestic economic policy should therefore be highly variable and continuously changing. Failure to adapt sufficiently or at the right pace could result in a loss of power and an increase in vulnerability.<sup>114)</sup> A nation's domestic economy capability (and policy) and the political outlook of its decision-making elite will determine the extent to which it will be involved in the international economy. Economically irrational decisions can, however, be politically motivated and an important issue facing decision-makers in the new era is the correct blend of economic interdependence and economic independence. There can be no denying that interdependence compromises national sovereignty to a certain degree.<sup>115)</sup>

The greater a state's national economic capability, the greater its ability to withstand such pressures. Although a capability analysis should not lead to absolute conclusions as to the overall power of any one state, its importance in the determining of strategic significance cannot be ignored. A thorough capability analysis provides an indication of the available resources that a specific state can utilise during various situations and is thus a vital element as regards the state's ability to act effectively in these situations. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a nation's national capability determines its status and power in the international community. What is also vitally important, is the perception of capability as regards the ability to successfully pursue foreign policy initiatives and to what extent it will be possible to "convince" another nation to follow a particular course of action. These perceptions are termed ego perceptions and are

prevalent in official government statements and policies. Nations commit themselves to actions on the basis of these perceptions.

#### 2.1.4 Ego/role perception

Nation states define their chosen roles in the international system in terms of actions to which they deem themselves committed. These roles provide guidelines for actions within specific situations and reflect government objectives. States generally pursue three major orientations, namely, isolation, nonalignment, and coalition formation; and the choice of any of these orientations reflects domestic attitudes and requirements, as well as external conditions.<sup>116)</sup>

States play first, second or third party roles, depending on their respective positions in a specific situation. First parties are the more powerful nations that are mostly involved in major contemporary conflicts; while second parties are lesser parties who are allies. Third parties are minor and major powers who are not directly involved in the major conflicts of the day and whose role depends on their relation to such conflicts.<sup>117)</sup> First parties tend to pursue militant policies aimed at objectives of power and increased prestige and territory. Second and third parties tend more towards policies aimed at mediation or provocation.

The basic structure of the international system affects the choice of roles. The stronger powers generally determine the interests of the other states in the system, irrespective of whether it is a hierarchical, bloc, or multi-bloc system. A "stronger" system therefore results in less freedom of action for weaker members, with the major actors determining power distribution according to their interests and needs. A diffuse system, with a wider distribution of power, usually results from location or from a specific threat. Alliances can result from a common threat perception or common values and ideologies.<sup>118)</sup>

National roles can thus be attributed to:- (a) ideological and attitudinal attributes; (b) external conditions; and (c) national attributes. Ideological and attitudinal factors include public opinion and regional identification; while external conditions refer to threat perceptions or shifts in international conditions. National attributes depend primarily on such factors as economic needs, capability strength and public opinion.<sup>119)</sup>

Religious ideologies have never quite succeeded in establishing an absolute universal empire. Deeply religious leaders often accept their own roles and that of their nation as fate and concentrate purely on ideological aspects, paying little attention to different courses of action. Statesmen, however, are likely to employ rational calculations in their quest for expanded national power and are thus able to prevent rash and irresponsible actions. States which pursue intense power politics are therefore more capable of moving towards the establishment of a universal empire than those motivated solely by religious or ideological motives. On the other hand, it is not impossible for political leaders to liberate themselves from their

ideological systems and follow rational action, thereby expanding the power of the state.<sup>120)</sup>

External and internal conditions thus determine a state's role perception and lead to objectives, decisions and ultimately, actions. This results in a certain amount of prediction and consistency of policy, although it must also be noted that some governments play inconsistent national roles in accordance with the dictates of the situation. Such nations may be mediators in one situation and allies in another.<sup>121)</sup> It is also possible for two states with similar role conceptions to take entirely different actions when confronted with a similar situation.

Role conceptions can be considered the resultant effect of the attitudes, values and beliefs of those responsible for formulating objectives and ultimately initiating actions; with ego perceptions of strategic importance playing a particularly relevant role. Policy-makers refer to the term "definition of the situation" and it is through reference to such a situation that a nation's role and objectives are formulated. Public opinion, important events abroad, social values and threat perceptions are of considerable importance in such a situational analysis and policy-makers place varying degrees of emphasis on each of these components when defining the situation.<sup>122)</sup>

Developments in the international and local environments have indicated that it is not uncommon for nations to dramatically alter their overall role perception. South Africa, for example, gradually moved from a situation of relative isolation to the position of regional developer and ally. The US appears to be moving away from the role of global protector and this task now appears to have become an important issue for the United Nations (UN). States thus all perceive themselves as playing various roles in the international system, as well as in their national and regional systems.

These perceptions and their sources can be classified as follows:-

*Bastion of revolution, liberator:* Ideological principles; anti-colonial attitudes; desire for ethnic unity.

*Regional leader:* Superior capabilities; traditional position in region.

*Regional protector:* Perception of threat; geographical location; traditional position; needs of threatened states.

*Active independent:* Fear that "bloc" conflicts will spread; need to develop trade with all countries; geographical location.

*Liberator supporter:* Anti-colonial attitudes; ideological principles.

*Anti-imperialist agent:* Perception of threat; anti-colonial attitudes in public opinion; ideological principles.

*Defender of the faith:* Perception of threat; ideological principles; traditional national role.

*Mediator-integrator:* Geographical location; traditional role; cultural-ethnic composition of state; traditional non-involvement in conflicts.

*Regional collaborator:* Economic needs; sense of "belonging" to a region; common political-ideological,



cultural traditions with other states; geographical location.

*Developer*: Humanitarian concern; anticipated consequences of development “gap”; superior economic capabilities.

*Bridge*: Geographical location; multi-ethnic composition of state.

*Faithful ally*: Perception of threat; weak capabilities; traditional policy; ideological compatibility.

*Example*: No sources revealed.

*Protectee*: Perception of threat; weak capabilities.<sup>123)</sup>

States often belong to more than one of the above-mentioned categories, depending on the specific situation. It is therefore not unusual for states to hold conflicting and contradictory perceptions at the same time. It should also be noted that the concept of ego perception is not merely concerned with role-playing, but also involves perceptions of the state’s own importance. South Africa, for example, perceived itself as being of great strategic significance to the rest of the world as a result of geo-strategic positioning and an abundance of natural resources.

States do not exist in a vacuum and form part of the international system within which they function in a regulated manner. All states function in this external environment, each filling a unique position in the system depending on their strategic significance to other members. These positions are known to fluctuate.

#### 2.1.5 The external environment

States can be said to operate in an environment often dominated by each state’s respective power position. Power in this particular case predominantly refers to the ability to influence or change the behaviour of others.<sup>124)</sup> This power is in turn linked to national capability. It should also be noted that as the international system is dynamic in nature, changes in perceptions of strategic significance can occur. In much the same way that nations hold ego perceptions of their own capability and these perceptions manifest themselves in official statements and policies, the international community also holds perceptions of the capabilities of other nations and commits itself to certain actions in this regard. The external environment is thus divided into external perceptions and external actions. As no one state can exist in isolation, these alter perceptions and the roles played by other states cannot be ignored. The external environment can also influence a country’s international commercial activities, as all states are subject to various regulations, international monetary policies, etc.<sup>125)</sup>

It is thus inevitable that certain nations will begin to affect and influence each other and it has, in fact, been stated that, generally speaking, the more similar countries are in such aspects as economic, political and cultural characteristics, the greater the level of communications, trade and general interaction. The level of interdependence also plays an important role in the way in which states relate to each other. A country’s external environment thus has a definite affect on behaviour.<sup>126)</sup>

A state will thus pursue national interests in the international arena in accordance with its national capabilities. This will in turn indicate power positions and strategic significance in comparison to other states in the international system. As regions increase in importance and the nation-state itself loses a certain degree of its previous prestige, these perceptions and actions will also be directed towards certain regions. The end of the Cold War has seen a withdrawal of previous global support from the Third World in favour of the former Eastern European countries. Africa is now being forced to look internally and regionally for other sources of assistance as a result. The increasing marginalisation of Africa will be further discussed at a later stage in this chapter. In addition, the new era that followed the Cold War also had an impact on the actual concept of strategic significance, in that new aspects were emphasised. This is discussed below.

### **3. The effect of the end of the Cold War on the concept of strategic significance**

The Cold War can be assumed to have commenced as early as the late 1940s. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, it became a search for strategic advantage and involved competition for influence in the Third World. Yet it later became clear in the time of Gorbachev that East-West relations were more stable.<sup>127)</sup> The Cold War was “unofficially” declared over in 1989 as a result of improvements in Soviet-American relations, as well as “glasnost” and “perestroika” in the Soviet Union. The assumption was that the world would become less bipolar and that restraints on the use of nuclear weapons would result in an increase in the probability of conventional warfare. It eventually became evident that the end of the Cold War would not necessarily end the rivalry among nations, but would instead increase instability and violence in international relations. Yet the Soviet Union became more concerned with domestic problems, as did many countries around the globe and the ideological intensity of the previous years diminished.<sup>128)</sup>

Various changes took place in the international system following the end of the Cold War. These included systemic changes such the emergence of a global economy; the global movement towards the concept of democracy; the diminishing importance and power of the nation-state; changes in the distribution of power in the international system, including the decline of Soviet power, the decline in American economic power after the Second World War and the increase in Japanese economic power; and changes in relations among countries to a more unstable nature and a curious fluctuating mixture of co-operation and competition.<sup>129)</sup> In the new era, economic measures were likely to overtake military capabilities in importance and it was doubtful that Soviet-American competition in the Third World would be a significant factor in the near future.<sup>130)</sup> This era was in fact termed by some as the “New World Order”.

#### **3.1 Effect on national capability**

The traditional determinants of national capability have undergone a re-evaluation in the new era. The emphasis on different aspects in this regard can be considered to have had a profound influence on perceptions of national capability for many states. The position of Africa has also been altered by changes

in the external environment. These changes have resulted in what can be termed the marginalisation of Africa, with the former communist-bloc countries now attracting investment and international attention at the expense of Africa. This change in stature has effectively intensified the extensive problems faced by the continent. The issue of human rights violations has come to the fore, with the major industrial powers withholding economic support from countries accused of human rights abuses and there has also been increased support and assistance for nations turning to a democratic system of government. This has been termed “political conditionality” and refers to the insistence by donors that developing countries show evidence of increasing political pluralism, democratisation and respect for human rights if they want to be considered for economic assistance.<sup>131)</sup>

This can be considered in contrast to the Cold War era where South Africa, for example, was perceived as having a certain degree of strategic significance as a result of such factors as geo-strategic positioning. For the Third World, the post-Cold War era has not, in fact, resulted in a diminishing of the gap between the industrialised and the developing countries.<sup>132)</sup> The implications of the new era for the concept of strategic significance, especially for the Third World, are discussed in further detail below.

### 3.2 Effect on perceptions of strategic significance

Factors such as the increasing military disparity between weak and powerful states resulted in increasing external influence in Africa. This in turn led to increasing destabilisation on the African continent and eventual marginalisation. In response, Africa not only sought to diversify international relations, but also emphasised the importance of intra-African unity.<sup>133)</sup> The continent thus realised the importance of strategic alignment as a unit or at least in regional groupings.

One of the biggest changes in the post-Cold War era has been the so-called “de-ideologizing of external involvement in Africa”. In other words, the superpowers began to co-operate in the resolution of conflicts in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, for example, South Africa and Angola. Another important consequence was the collapse of communism and the resultant economic and political upheaval in the former Soviet-Bloc. Africa’s survival had up until that time been formulated within the Cold War atmosphere and the end of this era removed the continent’s bargaining power and severely dampened the enthusiasm of those who had for decades promoted the communist ideal.<sup>134)</sup> As Africa was no longer able to align itself with communist countries, hereby maintaining a degree of strategic significance, new measures of national capability would have to be emphasised.

Other issues of importance to be addressed in the new era include political pluralism, the management of national economies, and negotiations as an alternative to armed conflict. Yet for Africa, an immediate concern in the early 1990s was that Eastern Europe would be restructured at the continent’s expense. This was noted by a senior Kenyan official: “Eastern Europe is a pretty girl and Africa is a shabby

woman... everyone is already tired of Africa". South Africa's return to international favour in fact worsened the situation for the sub-continent as the RSA became an investment rival. As regards the link between economic and other assistance with successful democratic and economic development, it has been noted that similar demands were not made on Eastern Europe.<sup>135)</sup> Yet in an attempt to resist marginalisation and also partly as a result of the fall of the communist system, certain states in Southern Africa in particular, moved towards a more liberal economic dispensation. In 1990, privatisation was also gaining in favour.<sup>136)</sup>

The Secretary-General of the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, emphasised the possibility of a new iron curtain between North and South in the era following the end the Cold War. He noted the new security concerns, including the marginalisation of Africa, as Eastern Europe became politically, economically and culturally easier to assimilate into Western European society. The new iron curtain would be an economic and technological one, held in place by any progress made by the North as regards technology, automation, data processing or genetics. In an attempt to inform Third World public opinion of the international changes and their implications for Africa, various initiatives were adopted, including at Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit meetings.<sup>137)</sup> Boutros-Ghali also re-affirmed the fact that there would be no expansion of aid to developing countries unless a market economy was developed, along with a democratic political system. Birth rates in several countries would have to be lowered. It was vital for the countries of Africa to co-operate with each other if they were to remain economically viable, as the industrialised nations continued to ignore problems in the Third World. Foreign aid should thus be directed towards sub-regional and regional co-operation. It was also important to establish mechanisms which would deal with military confrontations, political tensions and various natural disasters, as these impeded aid programmes.<sup>138)</sup>

Ultimately, however, the post-Cold War era and its revised version of strategic significance would point to one major aspect, namely the need for Africa to unite, if not as a continent, at least in regions, in order to increase influence on the international level. "Coalition building" and regional co-operation would thus be vital for survival.<sup>139)</sup>

The US and NATO allies immediately identified Eastern Europe as a priority for development and resources and the US adopted an African policy that has been termed a "wavering, hypocritical policy of cynical disengagement". Development assistance was also linked to democratisation and human rights; while the money for democratic endeavours became notoriously difficult to obtain. For Africa at least, the post-Cold War era merely continued to reflect the fact that the continent's requirements were secondary to the global political and economic system. It had thus become clear that while the old global order had been based on East-West ideological conflict, the new era was based on the economic and political supremacy of the West. The result was not, however, an order anymore peaceful than its predecessor. As a result, there was renewed emphasis on peacekeeping and "peacemaking", particularly as a role for the UN and other regional organisations. Collective security would assist nations in sharing the burdens of global security and order.<sup>140)</sup>

Another issue to be faced was that of disarmament, with the developed nations insisting that the Third World no longer needed armaments following the diminishing of superpower conflict. The other reason for urging disarmament would naturally be to prevent a Third World nuclear arsenal from becoming a threat to global security. International development aid, as endorsed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), would thus be tied to reductions in military expenditure. Disarmament could, however, prove difficult to enforce if Third World countries carried a perception that a threat to their own security would not be taken seriously by the rest of the world. They would thus be motivated to develop or at least maintain their military capability.<sup>141)</sup>

Few African countries can afford to be without IMF and World Bank support and it has been suggested that these institutions have become more powerful than the former colonial rulers. Issues that became important in the post-Cold War era, at least as regards aid provision, included calls for transparency, the rule of law, participation, accountability, and consensus building.<sup>142)</sup> Africa was thus under increasing pressure to perform politically, unlike in the past when development was not linked to political aspects. There would also be an increased emphasis on African peacekeeping activities by an African peacekeeping force, whereby the international community could become less directly involved in the continent. In order to increase or at least retain some degree of strategic significance, African states would need to conform to the aspects noted above.

Although mention has already been made of Africa's increasing marginalisation following the end of the Cold War, a more detailed analysis of this situation is provided below in order to establish its effect on the African continent.

### 3.2.1 The marginalisation of Africa

Continuing marginalisation of Africa was predicted in the 1990s, particularly as the new order contained few programmes for growth and development in the Third World. It was clear that these countries would be forced to turn to regional co-operation in an attempt to improve their situation as traditional sources of financial support dwindled.<sup>143)</sup> South Africa forms a part of the African continent and as one of the strongest powers cannot be ignored in the long term. Instability was rampant in the era following the Cold War and as noted, the primary consequences for Africa during this period were increasing poverty and marginalisation. It was also anticipated that there would be increasing external intervention as regional conflicts grew and spread.<sup>144)</sup>

#### 3.2.1.1 Economic marginalisation

Africa has lost much of its previous significance to the international community. The end of the Cold War effectively dissolved Soviet interest, which in turn diminished the need for Western counter-influence.

Impoverished by extensive bad debts, militant governments and underdeveloped economies, the Third World holds little attraction to foreign investors. The collapse of communism left a number of Soviet-Bloc states in dire straits, desperately in need of international funds. Considering Africa's poor economic and political record, these former communist states were widely perceived as being a much safer investment for such funds and Africa has been pushed aside as a result.

The wave of marginalisation that followed the end of the Cold War threatened to push Africa to the periphery of the periphery. The continent's history had left a global perception of economic crisis, famine, dictatorship, human rights violations, and violence. The 1980s were deemed particular bad for Africa and witnessed stagnant agricultural production, economic decline, negative per capita growth rates, and increasing civil unrest. By the early 1990s, this situation had not improved. At least during the Cold War the African continent had maintained a certain degree of geo-political and strategic relevance, but this was no longer the case. The globalisation of the market also contributed to Africa's marginalisation and the continent's currencies have become increasingly devalued, as have labour and natural resources. This results in diminishing freedom to act. It would appear that a so-called "vicious circle" was in operation as the marginalisation of Africa led to increasing poverty and socio-economic crisis. This in turn contributes to marginalisation at the international level.<sup>145)</sup>

Sympathy for Africa has diminished as regionalism and trade blocs gain in importance, and as previous partners turn to their own domestic problems in the face of budgetary constraints. The situation was indeed bleak for the African continent and a fundamental transformation of African economies would ultimately be required. This would involve, amongst other things, increasing national and collective self-reliance and economic integration at the sub-regional and regional levels.<sup>146)</sup>

Effective change would require a long-term transformation process carried out under national leadership. Development would have to be human-centred, and the agricultural and industrial sectors would have to be revitalised. Regional co-operation and integration was vital, as was an improvement in governance on the continent. Considerable effort would also have to be made to mobilise the necessary resources for the financing of development programmes.<sup>147)</sup> The African continent thus remained in need of assistance, but considering that this assistance was likely to be limited, especially as regards traditional sources, these nations would have little choice but to look to each for support.

Various theories have been put forward as possible instigators of Africa's economic crisis, for instance the fact that many Third World states were forced by the colonial powers to adopt a monocultural, primary commodity-based economic pattern. These economies are particularly vulnerable to market fluctuations and are maintained by the urban and agricultural elites that emerged when independence was achieved. These elites lack the expertise needed to ensure a successful economy and are primarily orientated towards trade and consumption. This leads to a dependence on foreign capital and ultimately, an increased outflow of

capital. Third World economies thus have an “in-built tendency” towards balance of payments deficits which can only be filled by drawing on loans.<sup>148)</sup>

By 1992, Africa was, in fact, losing more than \$130 billion in annual earnings as foreign assistance was directed to Eastern Europe. The IMF alone had redirected approximately \$4 billion in financial aid over a seven-year period.<sup>149)</sup> Evidence of the continent’s marginalisation was presented in a North-South Roundtable document: “Africa as a continent has become increasingly marginalised. Its share in the world economy had fallen to under 2 percent by 1985; its terms of trade have fallen by 4 percent since 1980 while its indebtedness to the rest of the world has arisen to some \$280 billion. Perhaps worst of all, serious poverty has risen while incomes per head in sub-Saharan Africa have fallen by 20 percent over the last decades”.<sup>150)</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa’s marginalisation is thus difficult to ignore, when the facts dictate the obvious. This area of the globe accounted for 3,1 percent of global exports in 1955, but this figure had fallen to 1,2 percent by 1990, which implies annual trade losses of approximately \$65 billion. This dramatic decline is due to the region’s apparent inability to remain competitive in international markets, something which Africans will have to rectify on their own. Other negative factors have been the high level of dependence on relatively few export products and declining market shares for the continent’s own major exports.<sup>151)</sup>

No matter which theory is ultimately accepted as the cause of Africa’s economic crisis, practically the entire continent has suffered in the midst of extensive economic turmoil. Much of the developing world has consistently proved that it is unable to escape the cycle of poverty, disease and environmental degradation which pervades these countries. This has been duly noted by the governments of the developed world and at the 1981 Cancun Summit, North-South dialogue was “jolted” by the lack of sympathy displayed by the North towards the poorer countries of the world. The result was an inability to agree on the need for concessions to these countries. Even though many Third World nations eventually adopted structural adjustment programmes, interests, aid and investments began to be focused away from the developing world towards Eastern Europe.<sup>152)</sup>

Political liberalisation to date has been somewhat erratic and it has been noted that donor conceptions of political and economic transitions could ignore both a recognition of African cultural realities and an idea of how these transitions might accommodate evolving African cultural norms. The most successful transitions appear to have occurred in the smallest countries, while the larger and more heterogenous states are finding political and economic liberalisation a more complicated issue. Domestic political and economic realities thus cannot be ignored. The challenge for African nations in this new era will be to define, obtain consensus on, and implement new strategies for rebuilding their domestic orders while confronting changing international realities.<sup>153)</sup>

### 3.2.1.2 Strategic/military marginalisation

Nations such as the US began to doubt the strategic importance of Africa, as evidenced by a US study: “The US has essentially no serious military/geo-strategic interests in Africa anymore, other than the inescapable fact that its vastness poses an obstacle to deployment to the Middle East and South Asia, whether by sea or air”. Armed assistance in Africa’s seemingly endless conflicts was now doubtful.<sup>154)</sup> Yet no matter how much the developed world continued to assign Africa to the background, there was one factor which could not be ignored, as stated by Robert Kaplan: “Africa may be marginal in terms of conventional late twentieth-century conceptions of strategy, but in an age of cultural and racial clash, when national defence is increasingly local, Africa’s distress will exert a destabilising influence on the United States”.<sup>155)</sup>

In other words, certain aspects of Africa’s strategic significance would remain in the post-Cold War era. Although superpower conflict was now a thing of the past, regional conflict and destabilisation held an inherent danger for international security. Aside from the issues already mentioned which have demanded attention in the new era, there are two others which could result from marginalisation and which would undoubtedly have an effect on the international community. The first is the flood of immigrants from Africa to the more developed parts of the globe, as the continent becomes less and less able to deal with refugees and disease. Second, is the issue of ecology, especially as regards conflict over fast diminishing natural resources in Africa. Thus although Africa has been removed from superpower strategic calculations, the continent is likely to remain, at least in the short-term, part of the global political and economic environment.<sup>156)</sup>

### 3.2.1.3 Political/diplomatic marginalisation

South Africa faced the full effect of marginalisation in the early 1990s, as evidenced by the fact that in 1992, not a single event in the RSA was considered a top international news event. It would appear that the RSA was no longer distinguishable from the rest of the continent, fading into what has been termed “the general background of disaster”, so rife in that section of the globe. In addition, the post-Cold War era had introduced other challenges, namely the democratisation of such areas as the former Soviet empire and the continuing pressures of states in the Gulf. South Africa would thus have to display evidence of economic and political success if the country did not want to be judged on the poor record of the rest of the continent, where interest was definitely lacking.<sup>157)</sup>

Africa and the rest of the Third World were thus under increasing pressure to alter their ways and focus on democracy, human rights and economic development. With the former Eastern-Bloc countries also clamouring for financial assistance, the international community was going to focus on the countries which they perceived as being the most needy and following the path to democracy. Africa, with its record of bad debts, corruption and civil violence could be relocated too far down the list for financial assistance. The



path was thus clear for regional organisations such as the OAU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to take the lead and attempt to establish the continent as a committed member of the international community. Nations would thus have to support each other in an attempt to survive increasing marginalisation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The concept of strategy has evolved from an emphasis on military strategy to a broader total concept which includes all elements of national capability. These elements are both tangible and intangible. Reference is made to the term total strategy in the indirect “mode” which also involves national capabilities and overall national power in order to produce the desired effect and achieve policy goals. The evolution of the term strategy has, in turn, evoked a similar change in the concept of strategic significance. Factors such as a state’s economic policies, national morale and political organisation have indicated that military capability is no longer the sole factor to be considered. In other words, an accurate assessment of a state’s strategic significance must include a thorough capability analysis of both tangible and intangible factors.

A state’s international strategic position is primarily determined by national capability and the ability to mobilise available resources in support of interests and policies. Capability potential plays a role in this regard and a realistic evaluation of a state’s capability must thus be undertaken to determine strategic position. Although power and wealth are linked and the great powers of the past have tended to be great economic powers, the measurement of a state’s capabilities is not a complete indication of its power or influence, in that capabilities have to be effectively incorporated into national objectives. Reference is made to both strong and weak states, with the latter’s greatest threat to national security being directed from inside the state itself and not from outside threats. In other words, weak states lack a strong domestic political and societal consensus to eliminate the use of excessive force in the domestic political situation.

Examples of tangible elements of national capability include size, location, natural resources, economic capability, population, and military power. Intangible elements are also considered vitally important as regards the fulfilment of objectives and include national character and morale, political organisation and political leadership. The level of public opinion and support is particularly important and both domestic achievements and failures have a direct influence on a nation’s international standing and overall power position.

In the post-Cold War era, however, it has become apparent that the concept of strategic significance and the elements which constitute it, have evolved even further to include other aspects such as political stability, involvement in peacekeeping activities, and democratic systems of government. In other words, if a state wishes to maintain a degree of strategic significance, it is vital to display these attributes.

When a state has made an evaluation of its national capability, a perception is developed as regards its importance to the international community (ego perception). This results in the formulation of a foreign policy and national strategy which attempts to include all aspects of national capability. Strategic significance is, however, dependent on recognition by regional and global systems. In other words, other states in a system determine the strategic significance of a particular state in that same system. This is also based on perceptions (alter perceptions) and must be seen against a changing background, that is, what is strategically significant at one point in time is not necessarily important at another point in time.

The contemporary world following the Cold War era is characterised by instability and insecurity, with states entwined in a situation of interdependence involving various relationships ranging from allies to enemies. The end of the Cold War has, in fact, resulted in numerous changes across the globe, such as the decline of Soviet power, as well as the diminishing importance and power of the nation-state. US-Soviet bipolarism has been replaced by what some term US-unipolarism and what others term global multipolarism. Whatever the terminology used, this new era in international relations has profound implications for the African continent, the most important being increasing competition for scarce international assistance. States in the contemporary world are placing increasing emphasis on domestic problems and any available assistance is being directed towards the former Eastern European countries. Whether this is because of Africa's dismal economic, political and humanitarian record of the past is not the issue at this point. What should, however, be noted, is that African states will increasingly have to turn to each other, either independently or regionally, if the continent is to survive. This is especially relevant as regards the new emphasis on economic concerns.

Strategic significance is thus a dynamic concept which undergoes constant change. It is a concept that must be seen in the overall context of prevailing conditions and perceptions. As mentioned above, national capabilities are a vital aspect of strategic significance. All states, both weak and strong, possess national capabilities to a certain degree and as has been mentioned above, strategic significance is to a large extent determined by how these capabilities can be mobilised in support of national objectives. As this study takes the form of a comparative analysis, the next chapter will deal with South African national capabilities in the period up until the end of 1989; while the subsequent chapter will cover the period from 1990-1993.

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## **CHAPTER 2: SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL CAPABILITY IN THE PRE-1990 PERIOD**

Circumstances usually play a major role in a nation's strategic significance at a specific point in history and the historical circumstances of South Africa were not an exception to the rule. During the Second World War, the Republic of South Africa (RSA) was considered an important ally of the West and although South Africa's internal racial policies were often criticised on the international front, the degree of strategic significance did not fluctuate much during the Cold War era. Not only did South Africa possess valuable minerals, but the country was also well-situated at the tip of the African continent. The latter aspect was considered particularly important to the West in light of attempted Soviet advancement in Africa. There can be little doubt that had South Africa not been considered strategically significant during these years, international condemnation of the RSA's apartheid policies would have been much more severe. South Africa's strategic importance up until the end of 1989 thus played a vital role in the country's qualified acceptance by the international community.

In order to compare the national capabilities of South Africa in the pre-and post-Cold War period, it is necessary to study both periods separately. The more constant factors such as climate, will only be discussed in Chapter 2; while the state of the variable factors will be discussed in both this chapter and Chapter 3.

### **1. Physical determinants of national capability**

As noted in the preceding chapter, the concept of strategic significance is related, amongst other things, to a state's national capabilities. A change in national capabilities can thus have an effect on a particular state's strategic significance. The measurement of a state's capabilities is, however, not always an absolute indication of power, as these capabilities need to be effectively harnessed in support of local and foreign objectives. Physical determinants of national capability include such elements as geographical location, size, population, natural resources, and industrial capacity. As noted, non-tangible elements of capability also play an important role in a state's overall capability and although they are difficult to measure as a result of their intangible state, cannot be ignored in an analysis of strategic significance.

South Africa is generally considered to be one of the largest and most prosperous states on the African continent. The RSA covers a large geographical area and has diverse climatic conditions, as well as a varied topography. South Africa also occupies a significant position at the tip of Africa and therefore has access to vital transport routes. During the Cold War era, control of the Cape Sea Route thus increased South Africa's strategic significance.

## 1.1 Geography, location and size

The geographical location of a state is a relatively stable factor in that it is unlikely to change and is thus considered to be one of the most stable factors on which the power of a nation is based. A state's geographical positioning is of vital importance to perceptions of strategic significance as it affects vulnerability and accessibility, especially as regards the military establishment and trade relations. Technological advances and other international events, such as the opening of new trade routes, can, however, affect the value attached to a nation's specific geographical location. Factors such as size of the country's territory, climate and topographical features are also important, as they provide an indication of both weak and strong points, for example, mountainous terrain would hinder attacking forces, as would extreme temperatures.

South Africa lies at the Southern tip of the African continent, between the Indian and Atlantic oceans. Although geographically removed from the rest of the world, the RSA thus occupies an important strategic position. The country has a latitudinal span from 22°S to 35°S and reaches longitudinally from 17°E to 33°E. South Africa stretches from the Limpopo River in the North to Cape Agulhas in the South and shares common boundaries with Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana. There is little variation between summer and winter daylight periods as a result of low latitude conditions. Separated from Europe by various physical barriers, such as the equatorial forest zone and the Sahara Desert, the RSA was isolated from sources of history and civilisation for many centuries. This had a direct bearing on South Africa's economic and historical development.<sup>1)</sup>

### 1.1.1 Topographical features

South Africa falls into two natural divisions, namely, the interior plateau, with a mean altitude of 1200m; and the marginal lands, which lie between the plateau and the coast. There is, however, a third major topographical feature, namely the great escarpment and this forms the boundary between the plateau and the marginal lands. The escarpment has various mountainous sections and some of the highest points in South Africa are found here. The plateau consists of the interior Kalahari basin and the peripheral highlands. The former is primarily a desert; while the latter consists largely of vast plains. The marginal lands lie between the great escarpment and the coast and consist of at least three major sub-divisions, namely, the Eastern plateau slopes, the Cape folded belt and the Western plateau slopes.<sup>2)</sup>

Conditions of periodic drought are complicated by the fact that rivers discharge less water than expected in relation to the level of annual precipitation. There is also a high evaporation rate. Many rivers also flow on a sporadic basis after inconsistent storms and then remain dry for the rest of the season. Even perennial rivers can have variations in flow as a result of the absence of lakes and permanent snowfields which serve to stabilise flow. A heavy silt load is another problem and the Orange River carries more silt to the sea than

any other African river, including the Nile.<sup>3)</sup>

### 1.1.2 Climatic conditions

South Africa has a subtropical location which results in warm and often dry conditions. The ocean masses on three sides of the country have an influence on the climate, as do the cold Benguela and warm Agulhas currents. Differences in mean annual temperature between East and West coasts on approximately the same latitude can thus be as much as 6°C. The East coast generally receives extensive rainfall, while drier conditions are experienced on the West coast.<sup>4)</sup> Completely different climates are experienced throughout the country, with certain areas receiving winter rain and others receiving summer rain. Although situated in similar latitudes to countries such as Australia and North Africa, South Africa tends to have lower temperatures than these countries. This is primarily the result of the presence of a plateau, with the coldest areas in the RSA coinciding with highest parts of this plateau. Despite this and a latitudinal span of 13°, mean annual temperatures are basically uniform across the country. Whilst the coldest areas of the country are situated in the highest parts of the plateau, the warmest parts are found in the lower-lying areas beyond the plateau.<sup>5)</sup>

Summer temperatures are generally hot and temperatures are highest towards the North. Winter temperatures are mild to cold, with certain areas experiencing overnight temperatures of below freezing point. Frost is also experienced in many areas on cold, clear winter nights. The Eastern coast is prone to high humidity in the summer months, while the cool West coast has much low cloud and fog. South Africa is generally considered a dry country and is prone to long periods of drought as a result of unreliable rainfall. These droughts have an important effect on the economy, as they often result in the requirement for certain imports. South Africa can thus be perceived as being fairly dependent on foreign trade relations in this regard. Droughts can also culminate in intense flooding and Port Elizabeth and East London are just two of the towns that have been devastated by such heavy rainfall. One of the highest rainfalls ever measured in the RSA in a single day of 24 hours is the 597 mm that was measured on 31 January 1984 at Lake St. Lucia.<sup>6)</sup>

As already noted, South Africa is located at what can be termed “the gateway to the world” and is strategically positioned, especially as regards trade routes. This positioning did, however, succeed in isolating the country, at least until the development of modern communications. The country is also generally open to enemy attack from both the sea and across land borders. Yet despite these factors, a country rich in natural resources can still wield a certain degree of power, especially if these resources are harnessed effectively by a well-developed economy.

## 1.2 Natural resources

Natural resources play an important role in the assessment of a state's strategic significance. Changes in this regard can result in an altered perception of strategic significance, as the state in question could become more reliant on the external provision of certain resources. Mineral, agricultural and energy resources are thus of vital concern to any state, as an abundance of such resources increases the level of self-sufficiency. When a state is forced to import extensive amounts of certain resources, it tends to become heavily dependent in this regard and is thus open to a certain amount of "economic blackmail".

### 1.2.1 Agricultural resources

The volume of agricultural production in South Africa was increasing at a rate of 3,9 percent per year by the early 1980s. Although rapid mechanisation and the declining share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) resulted in less of the labour force being employed in agriculture, it remained an important employer of labour, with 52 percent of the population employed in the rural sector. Despite unfavourable climatic conditions in South Africa, food production exceeded the demand for food. South Africa was, in fact, one of six net food exporting countries, despite the fact that two thirds of the country was considered dry and thus only suitable for such activities as cattle ranching and sheep farming. Irregular and marginal rainfall was primarily responsible for South Africa's characteristically unstable agricultural production pattern.<sup>7)</sup>

As mentioned above, the percentage of arable land in South Africa was considered small (12 percent in 1983). The importance of livestock farming declined relative to crop farming and during the period 1976-1980, arable farming contributed 63 percent of the value of farm output.<sup>8)</sup> The number of sheep for agricultural purposes actually declined from the early 1970s until the late 1980s, although the number of cattle showed a slight increase. The result was a decline in wool production during this same period. The amount of maize, wheat, sugarcane, meat and potatoes produced all increased up to the late 1980s and the gross value of agricultural products showed a tremendous increase.<sup>9)</sup>

South African agriculture comprised a modern White-owned commercial farming sector which was capital intensive and an African subsistence-orientated farming sector. In the latter case, overgrazing was commonplace, with overstocking resulting in extensive soil erosion and diminished soil productivity in various areas. While food production in commercial White agriculture increased at a rate of almost 4 percent per year by approximately 1983, the White population increased at a low annual rate of 1,8 percent. The Black population, however, increased at a rate of 3,1 percent per annum and the productivity gap between subsistence and commercial agriculture widened. The continuation of the tribal system was indicated as the primary cause of low productivity in the subsistence sector. Various reasons have also been given to account for the disparity between the modern and subsistence sectors, including a lack of



infrastructure.<sup>10)</sup>

### 1.2.2 Mineral resources

Ironically, it was the international sanctions campaign that forced South Africa to discover and harvest national resources in response to these international economic pressures and the RSA rapidly became a strong exporter on world markets, albeit secretly in many cases. South Africa possessed a wealth of minerals and by 1987, mineral sales were worth an astounding R28 838 million. This represented approximately 56 per cent of total export revenue and approximately 14 percent of GDP. Gold became the dominant mineral, with other important minerals for export being coal, copper, diamonds, iron ore, manganese ore, vanadium, and asbestos. Most of South Africa's mining production, especially as regards gold, took place in the "Witwatersrand" basin and the mining industry provided employment on a large scale.<sup>11)</sup> The RSA rapidly rose through the ranks to become one of the world's top mineral suppliers, with a supply for both international export and local use. Coal and other energy resources are discussed in further detail below.

South Africa is also renowned for a veritable treasure of gemstones. The first diamond was discovered in the RSA in 1866, with major discoveries made near Kimberly a few years later. Within a relatively short period of time, South Africa was promoted to one of the world's top producers in this regard. Diamonds were also discovered near Pretoria. It was here that the world's largest diamond, the Cullinan diamond, was discovered. Although several semi-precious stones have been mined in South Africa (including emeralds), tiger's eye became the most significant.<sup>12)</sup> As this study covers two periods, the figures below only indicate those of the pre-1990 period. More recent figures, ie. from 1990-1993, pertaining to this particular table are to be found in Chapter 3.

**Rand value of minerals sold 1970-1980 and index of physical volume of production <sup>1</sup>**  
(note: more recent figures are available in Chapter 3)

	1970	1980
<b>Value of minerals sold (R million)</b>		
<b>Total</b>	1 563	14 914
<b>Gold</b>	830	10 369
<b>Coal</b>	110	1 471
<b>Other</b>	623	3 074
<b>Index of physical volume of production 1990=100:</b>		
<b>Total, including gold</b>	117,6	104,3
<b>Total, excluding gold</b>	51,1	90,1
<b>Gold</b>	167,4	113,0
<b>Coal</b>	48,2	66,2

Source: RSA, Central Statistical Service, *RSA statistics in brief*, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>1</sup> The former Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei are excluded

### 1.2.3 Energy resources

South Africa possesses extensive energy resources, with coal and uranium being the most important. Coal provided approximately 84 percent of the country's primary energy requirements in the late 1980s. Existing reserves were estimated at 115 530 million tons, of which 58 404 million tons was recoverable. In 1986, 126,9 million tons were consumed locally, of which 50 percent was used for electricity generation. South Africa also exported energy in the form of coal and electricity and in 1986, coal to the value of R3 153 million was exported. Coal was only second to gold as regards the earning of foreign exchange. South Africa also possessed 14 percent of the Western World's uranium reserves.<sup>13)</sup>

Although radioactivity was detected in the gold ores of the Witwatersrand in approximately 1915, it was only after the Second World War that attention was paid to this issue. It was discovered that the decay of thorium and uranium was partly responsible for the radioactivity. Research culminated in a uranium production plant in 1952, where uranium was extracted from certain gold ores and following the construction of other plants, uranium production rose to 4 954 tons by 1959. Production was curtailed from 1961 due to a decline in demand, only to be increased again from 1974. The highest production of uranium in South Africa was 6 143 tons and this was attained in 1980. After 1979, the activities of various environmental groups and their anti-nuclear campaigns led, once again, to a decrease in output and several

plants were closed down. Prior to this stage of decreased production, it had been announced that a new process had been developed for uranium enrichment. South Africa's first nuclear power station, Koeberg, was commissioned in 1984.<sup>14)</sup> The RSA's nuclear programme will be discussed in detail at a later stage.

South Africa provided more than half of the African continent's electricity and in 1986, 130 000 million kWh was sold in South Africa. Escom supplied most of this amount and the growth rate in Escom's electricity sales was 4,8 percent over a five-year period. Escom's installed capacity at the end of 1986 comprised 21 coal-fired power stations, three hydro-electric stations, three gas turbine stations and a nuclear power station. Seasonal rain, however, made it difficult for hydro-electricity on a large scale. Industry became the biggest consumer of electricity.<sup>15)</sup>

South Africa thus possessed substantial natural resources and could be considered relatively independent of imports in this regard. An abundance of minerals and coal were of particular significance and as noted, these were exported on a large scale. South Africa became renown for gold and diamond exports and the country's reserves in this regard had a tangible effect on the RSA's strategic significance. As regards agriculture, although South Africa was subject to a relatively dry climate and little arable land, food production did in fact exceed demand. South Africa could thus be considered basically self-sufficient as regards natural resources during the pre-1990 period, except for one vital aspect which the country lacked, namely oil.

Oil or the lack thereof, has been termed the "Achilles heel" of South Africa, as the country does not possess any commercially viable petroleum deposits. Although a small amount was obtained in the South African Oil and Gas Corporation's (Sasol) coal-to-oil conversion process, most of the necessary supplies had to be imported.<sup>16)</sup> The first plant began operations in 1955 and production at a second plant commenced in 1980. A third installation began to produce oil in 1982. The US and West Germany contributed extensive technological assistance as regards the second and third installations. Oil was, in fact, considered vital for several sectors of the RSA's economy, which in 1989, was approximately 75 percent dependent on coal. South Africa consistently failed to locate significant amounts of oil and as a result, was dependent on external assistance in this regard.<sup>17)</sup>

The South African Government commenced gas exploration in an attempt to reduce this dependence and moderate success was achieved in two places, namely, fields near Mossel Bay and Kudu (off Namibia-formerly South West Africa). The aim in this regard was a project to convert gas to other liquid fuels, although costs were prohibitive.<sup>18)</sup> The requirement for gas conversion became increasingly important following changed international attitudes towards South Africa and the resultant oil embargo. This will be discussed in later chapters of this study. Suffice as to say that the conversion process was extremely expensive, far more expensive in fact than imported oil. As regards the oil embargo, it can be noted at this point that it was not universally implemented and South Africa thus managed to continue importing oil

supplies, although the financial implications can be considered extensive. The RSA also conducted research to establish other sources of energy, for instance, the development of electric vehicles and the substitution of sunflower oil for diesel fuel. Restrictions were also applied, such as a reduction of speed limits and a limiting of the hours of operation of gasoline stations. Oil was recycled where possible. Ultimately, however, the primary emphasis was on the maintenance of an oil stockpile.<sup>19)</sup>

As has been noted above, aside from oil, the RSA did not suffer a shortage of natural resources. It will be noted at a later stage that South Africa developed a threat perception as regards USSR control of the country's strategic minerals. The aim of the USSR in this regard would be to deny the West access to these minerals. Yet South Africa not only possessed substantial mineral reserves, which formed a large portion of export material, but also possessed various other natural resources, as well as a varied climate for the production of a large variety of raw materials and foodstuffs. Another aspect of importance was the availability of a large work force. All of these factors helped to boost the country's economic capability.

It is not, however, possible to provide an analysis of a state's national capability without incorporating its citizens into the study. A nation's population can be a decisive factor as regards strategic significance in that the people form an important part of the strength of the nation.

### 1.3 Population and manpower

Without an educated, supportive population, it would be extremely difficult for a government to implement any policies, be they domestic or international. Although such aspects as population groups and size are easy to measure, there are other factors such as national morale which are more difficult to gauge, but are not to be underestimated. It is rare to find a population totally unified as regards cultural groupings, language and political affiliations, although this would undoubtedly facilitate the situation for the government. South Africa, however, is inhabited by various cultural groups, with accompanying variations in morale, political groupings and various other aspects. Morale and other intangible aspects will be discussed at a later stage of this chapter.

#### 1.3.1 Size and distribution

There are four primary population groups in South Africa, namely, Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Asians. By far the largest ethnic community in South Africa is the Black community, which represented more than 20 million people in the late 1980s. This community has four primary ethnic divisions, namely, Sotho, Nguni, Shangaan-Tsonga and Venda; as well as four major language group divisions, namely, Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga and Venda; the Nguni group and Sotho group being the largest.<sup>20)</sup> During the period under discussion in this chapter, the Black community in South Africa appeared to be informally ruled by the Xhosas and the Zulus, each group having support in definite areas. Zulu support was primarily found in

KwaZulu, a self-governing area in Natal. Much Xhosa support, on the other hand, originated in the Cape (the Eastern Cape in particular). Each group also offered support to distinctive political parties, namely Inkatha (Zulu) and the African National Congress or ANC (Xhosa).

Approximately 54 percent of the almost five million Whites in South Africa in the late 1980s were Afrikaans-speaking, with a further 36 percent speaking English. Foreign influences were diverse, with fairly large Greek, Portuguese, Jewish, German, Dutch and Italian communities.<sup>21)</sup> The Coloured community, which then consisted of approximately three million people, is primarily resident in the Cape Province. This community has two sub-cultural groups, namely, the Griquas and the Cape Malays. The former is of Hottentot-European descent and the latter descended from the early Muslim community. Most of the Coloured community was originally primarily involved in activities such as fishing and agriculture, especially those who lived in small coastal towns. This community was, however, eventually fully incorporated into South Africa's industrialised activities.<sup>22)</sup>

The Asian community consisted of approximately 900 000 people, mostly of Indian descent. The first Indians came to South Africa from as early as 1860 to work in the Natal sugar plantations. When their contracts expired, they were given the option of staying or returning home. Most opted to stay and became permanent residents when South Africa became a Republic in 1961.<sup>23)</sup>

South African population figures in the 1970-1985 period (mid-year estimates)<sup>1</sup>

	1970	1980	1985
<b>Total</b>	19 211 000	23 994 000	27 241 000
<b>Whites</b>	3 864 000	4 522 000	4 867 000
<b>Coloureds</b>	2 170 000	2 695 000	2 986 000
<b>Asians</b>	652 000	819 000	902 000
<b>Blacks</b>	12 525 000	15 958 000	18 486 000

Source: RSA, Central Statistical Service, *RSA statistics in brief*, 1993, p. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes the Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei with an estimated population of 6 750 700 on 7 March 1991

Between the years 1986 and 1989, the total number of immigrants to South Africa showed an increase of 70 percent. Most of these immigrants were citizens of the United Kingdom and Europe, although many also came from the former Eastern Bloc. During this same period, there was a decrease of 60 percent in the total number of emigrants.<sup>24)</sup> The emigration of graduates on an annual basis can have serious implications for any nation if these numbers are not counter-balanced by educated immigrants. South Africa's racial policies

and the resident culture of violence were the primary instigating factors as regards emigration and Australia, with its similar climate and culture, has been a popular choice for emigrants. Emigrants are of particular value when they have achieved high levels of education or are adequately trained in a certain field. In the same way, educated and trained citizens who decide to emigrate are considered a loss to their country of origin.

RSA migration (numbers) 1970-1985

	Immigrants	Emigrants
1970	41 523	9 278
1980	29 365	11 363
1985	17 284	11 401

Source: RSA, Central Statistical Service, *RSA statistics in brief*, 1993, p. 1.

### 1.3.2 Employment in South Africa

The average growth in the economically active population in South Africa between the years 1980 and 1990 was 2,8 percent per annum. This was expected to decline to 2,7 percent per annum between 1990 and 2005. Corresponding international figures in this regard were 1,9 percent per annum and 1,5 percent per annum respectively. South Africa's economically active population thus grew at a tremendous rate. In contrast, the ratio of supply of lower-skilled to highly-skilled labour in the country was much higher than corresponding figures for other industrial countries. The ratio in this regard was 7,85:1 in 1985 and this was expected to rise to 9,76:1 by the year 2000. Canada, for example, had corresponding figures of 2,25:1 and 2,19:1.<sup>25)</sup>

One of the criteria used to assess the performance of a capitalist economy is the level of unemployment and underemployment. The former occurs when an economically active person is unable to find specific employment that he/she is prepared to take; while the latter refers to a situation where the output of the economy could be increased if a specific person was transferred to another job. Underemployment is often prevalent in agriculture, especially subsistence agriculture, as well as in domestic service. In the early 1980s, both unemployment and underemployment were visible in South Africa, particularly in the Black and Coloured population groups. Unemployment was also more prevalent amongst women. Indications were that this situation would worsen over time.<sup>26)</sup> Unemployment in South Africa showed a steady increase from the 1970s through to the late 1980s. There were indications that the average annual increase in employment opportunities in the formal sector would be insufficient for the amount of people entering the South African labour market each year.<sup>27)</sup>

### 1.3.3 Technical and educational levels

Educated and trained citizens are the strength of a nation. By 1988, there was an increasing need for skilled workers in South Africa. Many had, however, been recruited abroad and there thus remained a distinct shortage of technically-trained people. The skills shortage in the RSA was attributed, in part, to a past emphasis on academic qualifications. Although there had been some improvement in this situation, the number of people being trained in the technical field remained too low. The economic recession in the country had also resulted in a training output reduction in the industrial sector. Between 1984 and 1986, the total number of registered apprenticeship contracts actually declined by approximately seven thousand. There was, however, increasing recognition that this situation would have to improve rapidly if economic growth was to take place. This would be especially important once the economy improved and the long-term survival of industry began to depend increasingly on local skills.<sup>28)</sup>

A population must also possess significant communication skills for a nation to successfully utilise its overall resource capability. Unfortunately, there was a large group of citizens in South Africa with little knowledge of even the most basic reading and writing skills. This phenomenon was partially the result of years of apartheid and racial policies which prevented Blacks from attending White schools, universities and Technikons. Whilst much changed to rectify this situation, an overwhelming number of Black adults remained illiterate and their illiteracy only served to make them more vulnerable to manipulation by those who abused their ignorance.

The situation in South Africa in the late 1980s was characterised by township violence, strikes, demonstrations and “stayaways”. This is obviously not the ideal situation for scholastic achievement and the strain on pupils resulted in a lack of concentration and overall poor results. Teachers were often blamed for a lack of control as regards revolutionary students, even though they were also victims of brutal attacks. Teachers were also known to strike periodically and thus deprive students of teaching hours. All of the above-mentioned factors had a negative effect on pupils, who considered education to be of secondary importance to socio-political concerns.

Up until the introduction of multi-racial schooling, Black education was characterised by severe shortages of schools, facilities and equipment and the drop-out rate was high. Teachers were also paid low salaries and many were not properly qualified. Black pupils resented the history syllabus which emphasised the historical defeat of Blacks in earlier times.<sup>29)</sup> There were also inequalities as regards government expenditure per student.<sup>30)</sup>

According to statistics obtained from the South African Central Statistical Service, between the years 1970 to 1989, far more pupils attended primary school (to Std 5) than secondary school (Std 6-10). The respective totals in this regard in 1989, across all population groups, were 5 122 934 and 1 995 615.<sup>31)</sup> This

indicated a lack of emphasis on secondary education, which can ultimately result in a relatively “unschooled” workforce. There were also discrepancies between the four main population groups as regards the pupil:teacher ratio and the pupil:classroom ratio.<sup>32)</sup>

South Africans thus did not all have access to equal educational opportunities and this resulted in a mass of uneducated people who were generally illiterate. These people were particularly vulnerable to manipulation and often perceived revolutionary activities as the sole means of improving their situation. South Africa therefore had a chronic problem as regards education and it was hoped that a decrease in the general unrest situation in the RSA would lead to a marked improvement in the standard of Black education. The requirement for an overall improvement in the standards of education and technical skill cannot be underestimated as this is considered a vital aspect of a nation’s economic capability.

As South Africa possessed a population characterised by not only various population groups, but also variations in language and political groupings, a certain amount of conflict was to be expected. This state of affairs was, however, negatively affected by the fact that sections of the South African population were subjected to various levels of discrimination over a number of years. Such discrimination was especially relevant as regards education and employment. Political unrest and a vast number of uneducated citizens were just two of the results. This situation, in turn, led to an increase in the number of educated and trained citizens leaving South Africa, which can be considered a loss to their country of origin.

It has so far been established that the RSA possessed vast amounts of vital natural resources, but these alone are insufficient for economic prosperity. Natural resources must therefore be effectively utilised and transformed from raw materials by a well-developed and functioning economy.

#### 1.4 Economic capability

Economic capability is directly linked to strategic positioning in the international community and is based on foreign economic relations; industrial strength; agricultural, mineral and energy resources. As resources have already been discussed above, attention will now be focused on the other aspects. GNP is considered a primary determinant of a nation’s economic performance and will be discussed below; while the importance of a skilled workforce and the ability to confront economic challenges should also not be underestimated. Economic capability is considered the most broadly convertible power factor and even a highly developed economy can become vulnerable as a result of dependence on foreign sources.

GDP can be defined as the total value of goods and services produced by the factors of production over a specific period within a country and economic growth can be measured by studying changes in real GDP from one period to another. The table below indicates South Africa’s real GDP and economic growth from 1982 to 1989. A decrease in economic growth is visible in both 1983 and 1985. It should also be noted



that, with the population growing at a rate of more than 2 percent per annum, an annual economic growth rate of 1,5 percent indicates a yearly *per capita* decrease in the GDP of between 0,5 percent and 1 percent.<sup>33)</sup>

South Africa's real GDP and economic growth 1982-1989

	Real GDP (Rbn)	Economic Growth (%)
1982	122,9	
1983	120,8	-1,7
1984	127,0	5,1
1985	125,9	-0,9
1986	126,3	0,3
1987	128,8	2,0
1988	133,6	3,7
1989	136,4	2,1
Average : 1982-1989		1,5

Source: Roux, A, *Everyone's Guide to the South African Economy*, Struik Timmins, Cape Town, 1990, p. 14.

GNP measures the total value of output produced by South African citizens, even if they are located outside of the borders of the country. The GNP therefore takes such factors as interest and dividends on investments held abroad into account. In the late 1980s, the investments of non-residents in the South African economy actually exceeded those of South African investments abroad. GDP, however, remains one of the most commonly used methods of determining total production.<sup>34)</sup>

There was an undeniable deterioration in the RSA's growth performance from the end of the 1960s. The real GDP per capita showed no average growth during the seventies and fell by 0,5 percent per annum in the eighties. Up until the early sixties, foreign capital flowed into South Africa, but political factors such as the Sharpsville incident resulted in a lack of confidence by both local and foreign investors in the future of the RSA's economy. The economy managed to recover, but then suffered a slump in the seventies and eighties. One of the reasons for the slump was the predominance of South African exports which concentrated on basic materials. When international demand for such products declined, the country could not compensate with other exports. There was also a shortage of skilled labour, an internal unrest situation and the negative effects of drought to contend with.<sup>35)</sup>

Although South Africa constituted a large portion of the African continent's total GNP, the country's output was negatively affected during the 1980s by such factors as the impact of trade and financial sanctions,

stagnated labour productivity, and reduced net fixed investment. The potential long-term economic growth rate was estimated at 4,5 percent during the 1960s and 1970s, but then dropped to just 1,8 percent during the 1980s. South Africa's real GDP (average annual percentage change) was 5,7 from 1960 to 1969; 3,3 from 1970 to 1979; and 2,2 from 1980 to 1989.<sup>36)</sup> These figures indicated potential long-term problems for the South African economy, especially if the economic growth rate was going to fall below the population growth rate, which was 2,59 from 1960 to 1970; 2,78 from 1970 to 1980; and 2,54 from 1980 to 1990.<sup>37)</sup>

The South African economy entered a major recession at the end of 1981. There was a decline in the rate of growth of GDP which resulted in a decrease in demand, a drop in per capita income and a substantial increase in the unemployment rate.<sup>38)</sup> By the late 1980s, the South African economy was perceived as being on the verge of collapse as a result of four factors, namely, a general recession in the world economy since the 1970s; a political crisis; a structural problem in the South African economy which was characterised by low productivity growth and investment relative to the 1960s; and a set of government policies which succeeded in worsening the situation. The South African economy was classified by the World Bank as a developing "higher middle-income country" (other examples included South Korea and Brazil), with the most important sector being manufacturing. Manufacturing grew to 23 percent of GDP in 1980, compared to 14 percent in 1946. Agriculture's contribution, however, dropped from 13 percent in 1946 to 5 percent in 1983. The share of the primary sector in GDP in fact declined from 31,7 percent in 1950 to 18,4 percent in 1984; while the secondary sector increased its share from 14,1 percent to 25,5 percent over the same period of time. Both mining and agricultural exports were considered important aspects of the economy.<sup>39)</sup>

Although the issue of international sanctions against South Africa will be dealt with at a later stage, it can be noted at this point that sanctions applied before 1985, primarily the oil and arms embargoes, did not have an extensive impact on the situation in general. These sanctions merely hastened the decline of an already faltering economy.<sup>40)</sup>

#### 1.4.1 Industrial capacity

As already noted, an abundance of raw materials is insufficient to earn a nation economic power and status. A nation must also possess the necessary industrial capacity to transform raw materials into manufactured goods and products. A high level of technological development is thus necessary, as is the provision of industrial plants.

In South Africa, efforts were made as early as 1924 to encourage industrialisation in order to escape the dependencies of economic imperialism. Government intervention in the South African market economy eventually became an accepted feature. South African manufacturing was linked to the mining industry and in the initial phases of industrialisation, the products produced were in line with mine requirements. A prosperous minerals market also attracted foreign capital and in 1973, 73 percent of the firms approached

in a survey stated that over 90 percent of the technology used originated from outside the RSA. The industrial output of South Africa from 1919 to 1976 grew at an annual average rate of 5,9 percent in real terms, with two periods of rapid expansion taking place from 1936 to 1951 and from 1964 to 1975. The expanding industrialisation process was accompanied by changes in the manufacturing sector and more mechanised methods of production were introduced. It should, however, be noted that increases in output were primarily the result of the creation of more employment opportunities.<sup>41)</sup>

There was thus tremendous growth in the South African manufacturing industry between 1919 and the mid-1970s, especially as regards the number of operating establishments. The typical operation at the end of this period also employed more personnel, had more capital investment and produced an output 14 times greater than at the beginning of the period. The manufacturing sector also diversified its activities. The output of this sector was originally focused on the production of goods for the domestic consumer market and the mining industry. By 1976, however, the output from the machinery-making, chemicals, metal product, and electronic equipment sub-sectors had grown considerably. The manufacturing sector had thus progressed to one capable of producing almost all of South Africa's manufacturing requirements and was even looking towards the foreign market.<sup>42)</sup>

South African industry was concentrated in certain parts of the country and it was estimated that in 1975, 81 percent of industrial output was produced in the four major metropolitan regions. Much of industry was concentrated in the Witwatersrand area and there was concern regarding the water supply problem in this area, the strategic vulnerability of the country's industrial capacity, as well as the physical dislocation between capital and labour, which resulted in an extensive amount of migrant labour. There were also vast spatial differences in living standards, thus the need to decentralise industry.<sup>43)</sup>

The 1970s, however, witnessed a period of slow growth and instability in the world economy. The result was a drop in the growth of industrialised countries, a drop in the volume of world trade, and an increase in unemployment and inflation. This was accompanied by a drop in the growth of South African exports and a decline in manufacturing output. The fall in real manufacturing investment was most serious from mid-1980 to late 1984.<sup>44)</sup>

During this period, total fixed investment fell from RM 2 346 to RM 1 408. There was also a decrease in the index of the physical volume of manufacturing production, including a 50 percent drop in the output of motor vehicles and a 30 percent drop in the semi-durable and capital-goods sectors. The decline in output was followed by a decrease in employment and between 1981 and 1985, the manufacturing sector lost approximately 20 000 jobs. Employment growth was, however, visible in the state, financial services and mining sectors.<sup>45)</sup> The table below indicates figures for foreign trade between 1970 and 1980. Figures for the period following 1980 can be found in Chapter 3 of this study.



**RSA foreign trade in Rand million**

**Imports:**

	1970	1980
<b>Food</b>	102,9	289,7
<b>Indelible raw materials</b>	245,8	629,1
<b>Chemicals</b>	199,1	1 226,6
<b>Textiles</b>	161,9	356,8
<b>Metals and metal products</b>	193,5	680,1
<b>Machinery</b>	776,4	3 977,7
<b>Motor vehicles</b>	410,5	1 507,2
<b>All other manufactured goods</b>	345,8	1 411,8
<b>Unclassified</b>	104,3	4 302,3
<b>Total</b>	2 540,2	14 381,3

**Exports (including re-exports):**

	1970	1980
<b>Food</b>	302,4	1 641,4
<b>Metal ores</b>	94,7	593,0
<b>Chemicals</b>	63,2	443,7
<b>Diamonds, excluding industrial diamonds</b>	110,0	1 240,5
<b>Metals and metal products</b>	261,9	1 553,8
<b>Machinery and transport equipment</b>	110,0	400,2
<b>Other</b>	589,4	3 902,2
<b>Total, excluding gold</b>	1 531,6	9 774,8
<b>Gold: export value</b>	837,1	10 140,7

Source: RSA, Central Statistical Service, *RSA statistics in brief*, 1994, p. 12.

#### 1.4.2 Technological capability

Strongly linked to a nation's industrial capacity is the level of technological development achieved. As a result of various circumstances, such as South Africa's exit from the Commonwealth and in particular the international arms embargo against the country, South Africa placed a great deal of emphasis on self-sufficiency. Efforts were thus made to rapidly develop the country's technological capacity and although these efforts were originally focused on local military requirements, progress was also made as regards non-military technology. This was especially important considering South Africa's reliance on foreign technology. It is noted in various *Defence White Papers* that the development of military technology was considered vital for defence of the RSA and even though this proved to be an expensive endeavour, substantial funds were allocated to research and development in this regard.

Science and technology are vital factors for socio-economic development and affect such aspects as productivity, employment, international competitiveness, and economic growth. Technology is one of the primary factors responsible for an improvement in productivity and is believed to directly impact the creation of wealth.<sup>46)</sup> By 1989, it had been determined that although South Africa operated, qualitatively, at a First World level, the country's performance in quantitative terms was actually closer to Third World levels. An indication of this was the fact that South Africa had 3,6 full-time equivalent researchers per 10 000 inhabitants in 1985. This can be compared to the acceptable average for developed countries of approximately 25, and the average for developing countries of 3,5. The South African Government had, however, become aware of this problem and was intent on rapidly increasing the number of researchers.<sup>47)</sup>

A 1988 assessment determined that South Africa had indeed moved into the so-called "Information Age", where both old and new information technologies were not only being used, but were also being further developed. It was considered vital that the country maintain competitiveness with First World trading partners as history has proved that accelerated technological progress leads to overall rapid progression. South Africa would thus have to constantly upgrade commodity products and needed an aggressive technology policy to improve industrial competitiveness. Ultimately, education and training are keys to advancement.<sup>48)</sup>

One of the most important technological developments for the RSA was in the field of nuclear power, where South Africa co-operated with two foreign nations as regards such aspects as the establishment of the country's first nuclear reactor. One of the primary reasons for this international co-operation was that South Africa provided uranium to certain countries, which formed an essential part of their own nuclear programmes. The accent of South Africa's nuclear programme was, however, on electricity generation, although there is little doubt that its potential military application served as a deterrent and thus increased the country's strategic significance.

The South African Atomic Energy Board (AEB) was established in 1949 with the aid of Britain and the US. The US Atomic Energy Commission (USAEC) and the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA, formerly the Ministry of Supply) felt obliged to co-operate with South Africa as regards the development of the RSA's nuclear capability, as they relied on the AEB for uranium supplies. As noted above, this uranium was needed for British and American weapon programmes.<sup>49)</sup>

In 1957, the US and South Africa signed an agreement concerning nuclear co-operation between the two countries. The agreement was subsequently amended three times, with the last amendment in 1974 extending the agreement until the year 2007. This agreement also provided for the training of South African scientists in the US and the US supply of nuclear fuel and technology (subject to certain conditions). Britain had less of an influence on South Africa's nuclear development and a co-operation agreement between the AEB and the UKAEA eventually expired. The US later supplied South Africa with a 20 megawatt research reactor known as Safari-1 (an acronym for "South African Fundamental Atomic Research"). The reactor was sited at Pelindaba near Pretoria and went critical in 1965.<sup>50)</sup>

The US also supplied 93 percent enriched uranium to fuel Safari-1 and it was during the construction and operation of this reactor that South Africa gained knowledge and experience in the nuclear field. South Africa was eventually able to build her own reactor, Safari-2, which went critical in 1967. The primary purpose of Safari-2 was an exercise in independent reactor design and construction, but it was eventually dismantled in 1970 on the grounds that it simply could not compete with the relatively cheap power provided by coal-fuelled power stations.<sup>51)</sup>

The South African enrichment process was also assisted by West German technology. The West German Government was motivated by a desire to sell enrichment technology and receive orders for the manufacturers of components. A further advantage of this technological co-operation was the ability to ensure a secure supply of enriched uranium, which was not subject to non-proliferation conditions. The West Germans later withdrew from the agreement in 1976 when it became apparent that each partner wanted the other to supply the uranium for the plant. South Africa was no longer able to guarantee sufficient natural uranium feed for a commercial enrichment plant.<sup>52)</sup>

As already noted, South Africa's nuclear capability had been enhanced in 1970, when it was announced that a uranium enrichment process had been developed by local scientists. Development in this field was, however, supposedly directed at peaceful purposes. A pilot plant for the enrichment process went into full production in 1977. The re-direction of the nuclear programme towards a military goal, namely the production of seven nuclear warheads, was made by P.W. Botha, shortly after he took Presidential Office in the late 1970s.<sup>53)</sup> The reason behind this change of focus was given as Soviet expansionism in Southern Africa and regional anti-apartheid sentiment.<sup>54)</sup>

A nuclear test site had already been constructed in the mid-to-late 1970s and was discovered by Soviet satellites in 1977. Although it was widely believed that South Africa had conducted a nuclear test in 1979, this was denied by the South African Government.<sup>55)</sup> When oil prices began to escalate and Arab oil producers, as well as other states, imposed an embargo on supplies to South Africa, there was a sense of urgency as regards a reliance on nuclear power for local energy needs.<sup>56)</sup>

As a result of these changing circumstances, two pressurised water reactors for nuclear power were constructed at Koeberg, which was situated on the coast approximately 30km North of Cape Town. The contract for the construction was awarded in 1976 to a French consortium comprising three companies. As a result of incidents of sabotage, for which the ANC claimed responsibility, original deadlines for completion could not be met, but Koeberg-1 finally went critical and was connected to the power grid in 1984, with Koeberg-2 following in 1985.<sup>57)</sup>

Although South Africa had been considered a major planner in the formation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the country's domestic policies of apartheid led to political opposition in the IAEA and South Africa was removed from the IAEA Board of Governors in 1977. This and other similar actions were decided by the vote of the Soviet bloc and the non-aligned countries, even though the Western nations wanted to concentrate on technical functions and not international politics.<sup>58)</sup> Towards the end of the Cold War, the perceived requirement for a nuclear deterrent began to diminish. It also appeared that the South African Government saw several advantages in joining the *Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT), particularly regarding international relations. By the late 1980s, the termination of the nuclear weapons programme was recommended by a presidentially-appointed Expert Committee.<sup>59)</sup>

#### 1.4.3 Communications infrastructure

The economic infrastructure of a country forms the basis of its industrial development and incorporates all man-made structures, such as transport, electricity and communication, which assist in economic activity.<sup>60)</sup> Transport plays a vital role in the transfer of raw materials, produce and manufactured goods. The importance of communications should also not be ignored and technical advances have been accompanied by rapid progress as regards computer systems and satellite communications. It would be difficult for a nation to compete internationally if these were not available or were underdeveloped. Investment in transport and communication is therefore essential for the development of the economy, although this can strain scarce economic resources in the short term.

South Africa possesses a relatively well-developed communications and transport infrastructure. Although the RSA only occupies 27,9 percent of the surface area in km<sup>2</sup> of Southern Africa, by the 1980s, the country possessed 57,9 percent of the proclaimed road network, 65 percent of the rail truckage, and 60 percent of the international harbours in the region.<sup>61)</sup> In the first year of that decade, South Africa invested

approximately 17 percent of total gross domestic fixed investment in economic infrastructure. This was a decrease from previous years, where a maximum investment of approximately 28 percent had been made in the early 1970s. Although this figure stabilised slightly after 1980, it once again dropped to approximately 16 percent in 1984. It, in fact, became apparent that there had been a gradual decrease in investment in economic infrastructure from the 1970s.<sup>62)</sup>

As regards overall water supply and demand in South Africa for domestic, industrial and other use, in 1980 there was a total demand of 16 291 million m<sup>3</sup> and a total supply of 36 057 million m<sup>3</sup>. This represented a percentage of 45,2 (demand as percentage of supply) and this figure increased further during the 1980s.<sup>63)</sup> These statistics demonstrate the ability to provide sufficient water for both domestic and industrial use. Water is one of the most precious natural resources and it was surprising that such an “arid” country could satisfy demand to this extent.

In the three decades prior to 1990, road transport in South Africa increased in importance, accompanied by a rapid increase in vehicles, in particular commercial vehicles, and an improvement in road conditions. Modern motorways were built and South Africa was considered to have excellent roads in comparison with the rest of Africa. Although rail transport declined in importance to the economy as faster and cheaper road transport improved, the railways did expand to a certain extent. Electrification spread, as did containerisation; while the use of steam declined.<sup>64)</sup>

As regards air transport, the introduction of jet aircraft, especially the jumbo jet, transformed air services to South Africa and resulted in a substantial increase in the number of passengers arriving by air. There was, however, a change in the political situation as the former colonies North of the Limpopo became independent and withdrew overflying rights from South Africa. Yet air services to other countries across the globe increased, as did the freight business. Air travel also reduced the requirement for shipping and rising costs made it difficult for passenger liners to compete. There was, however, an increase in specialised ships to carry primary products for export. The result was an intensive capital investment in South African harbours.<sup>65)</sup>

Communication indicators, which include mail matter handled, newspaper circulation, telephones in use, and newspapers, showed a general increase from 1970 to the late 1980s.<sup>66)</sup> As a result of an increase in the number of economically active people, the South African Post Office experienced a substantial increase in business. There were also advances in telecommunications which resulted in new automatic telephone exchanges and satellite transmissions.<sup>67)</sup>

South Africa thus witnessed a period of growth as regards communications and transport. This can partly be attributed to an increase in the economically active population and their resultant requirements. South Africa possessed a well-developed infrastructure in this regard, which ensured access to foreign markets.



The country's geographical location at the tip of the African continent could also have resulted in isolation from international development had it not been for the local communications network. Compared to much of Africa, South Africa was considered relatively developed as regards transport and communications and was thus in a prime position to service the rest of the continent. This resulted not only in a degree of self-sufficiency for the country, but also led to a certain degree of dependence for the rest of Africa, especially as regards such aspects as the exporting of African products and raw materials through South African ports. The mid-1980s, however, saw political change and the resultant recession end the period of growth for South African transport and communications.

Overall, although the South African economy was considered relatively strong in relation to the rest of Africa, international condemnation of the nation's internal domestic policies and the resultant sanctions had a negative effect on economic growth. This situation was severely aggravated by governmental economic policies which not only failed to achieve the necessary objectives, but also succeeded in raising inflation, limiting investment and increasing unemployment. Yet it was in the military sector where South Africa progressed rapidly, especially as regards the development of armaments technology.

### 1.5 Military capability

Originally, South Africa relied on the support of the Commonwealth and other allies for defence requirements. The threat to the RSA was also relatively limited until approximately the early 1960s. Changes in the international community, however, such as international condemnation of South Africa's apartheid policies, as well as a situation of internal unrest, heightened South Africa's threat perception and necessitated the development of the country's military capability. South Africa made impressive progress in this regard and also developed a modern arms industry.

The passing of the *Defence Act* (Act no 13 of 1912) on 14 June 1912, brought the Union Defence Force into being on 1 July 1912. This resulted from efforts by the South African Government to form a unitary defence organisation following South Africa's unification in 1910. South African troops distinguished themselves during the First World War in East Africa, Palestine and France. The Union Defence Force then underwent considerable reorganisation in 1926 and the forces of the Union entered the Second World War in September 1939.<sup>68)</sup>

The South African Defence Force (SADF) came into existence in terms of the 1957 *Defence Act* (Act 44 of 1957). It consisted of four arms of service, namely, the SA Army, SA Air Force, SA Navy, and SA Medical Service. White males underwent compulsory training in the Defence Force.<sup>69)</sup> The sixties witnessed another reorganisation of the SADF and in the seventies, the command-and-control structure of the SADF again underwent major changes in order to adapt to changing circumstances. The first phase of an extensive organisational restructuring of the SADF took place in 1986.<sup>70)</sup>

### 1.5.1 An overview of the defence budget

The SADF was only maintained on a small scale after the Second World War, even though other nations were modernising their respective defence forces. The defence budget in 1961/62 totalled RM 61. Changes in Africa and the loss of international defence ties, however, necessitated increasing self-sufficiency in this regard and the defence budget doubled to RM 120 by 1963, and was once again almost doubled to RM 230 in 1964/65. This represented 21 percent of state expenditure. Considering that the sixties and early seventies were relatively peaceful, defence spending was limited for the following nine years and state expenditure on defence during this time fell to 12 percent (even though there was an increase to RM 472 in 1973). Changes in South Africa's threat perception in 1974 led to a five-year expansion programme for the Defence Force and defence expenditure increased to RM 700 in 1974/75 and RM 1 043,5 in 1975/76. This latter figure represented 4.1 percent of the GNP and 15 percent of state expenditure. An amount of RM 1 407,6 was then voted in 1976/77, with a further increase up to approximately RM 1700 expected in 1977/78.<sup>71)</sup>

Although the financial climate in the RSA during 1982 and 1983 was a limiting factor, technological breakthroughs were still made as regards sophisticated, locally-manufactured armaments. When the defence budget, expressed as a percentage of GDP, decreased from 5,5 percent in 1977 to 4,2 percent in 1982, during a period of increased SADF activities, the result was that operating costs formed a larger part of the total defence budget, ie. 72 percent in 1982/83 from 56,6 percent in 1979/80. This had a negative effect on acquisition, preparedness and modernisation programmes.<sup>72)</sup>

### 1.5.2 Manpower and armaments

The SADF was basically a Citizen Force, with soldiers of the Permanent Force forming a small part. National servicemen constituted most of the full-time force, doing two years compulsory military training. Although only White males were liable for this compulsory service, there were also many volunteers from other population groups. Following the two-year training period, an additional twelve years and twenty years was served with the Citizen Force and Commando Force units respectively. The former provided approximately 47 percent of the SADF's strength in the late 1980s, which was similar to corresponding Western establishments. Women have been accepted into the SADF since 1970 and have been appointed to supporting services in all four arms of service.<sup>73)</sup>

Prime Minister Malan had noted in the early 1950s, that the difficulties encountered with defence were the result of the RSA's inability to manufacture arms. By 1960, various African colonial states were being liberated and this added a degree of urgency to South Africa's defence requirements.<sup>74)</sup> In the early 1960s, the UN General Assembly and certain states led by the Soviet Union, began to emphasise the requirement for an embargo by member states against the supply of armaments to the RSA. *Resolution* 181, of August

1963, requested member states to uphold an arms embargo against the South Africa of their own free will. The country was considered to be a threat to world peace at the time.<sup>75)</sup> South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Louw, protested the international arms embargo on the grounds that it denied South Africa the right to self-defence; a right that was, in fact, recognised by Article 51 of the UN Charter.<sup>76)</sup> The issue of military and other sanctions against South Africa is discussed in further detail in later chapters of this study.

The Minister of Defence stated in 1965 that the RSA was engaging in the local manufacture of armaments as a direct result of external pressures. When the Suez Canal was later closed due to the Israeli-Arab war and shipping was re-routed around the Cape, South Africa requested that Britain authorise the sale of naval vessels and aircraft necessary for defence of the Cape Sea Route. Britain, however, refused to conform to the Simonstown Agreement and South Africa was forced to manufacture these vessels locally. The South African Government also attempted to encourage the growth of the South African shipbuilding industry by providing large amounts of money in subsidies. The first operational naval vessel to be built in the RSA for the South African Navy was a torpedo recovery boat, which was launched in Durban in July 1969.<sup>77)</sup>

In May 1968, Botha, the Minister of Defence, revealed to Parliament that South Africa would no longer ignore continual "meddling" in the RSA's domestic affairs. He introduced the *Armaments Amendment Bill*, which served to create the Armaments Development and Production Corporation of South Africa (Armcor). Armcor became responsible for effectively and economically meeting the armaments requirements of the RSA. It was also anticipated that South Africa would eventually be able to export arms.<sup>78)</sup> South Africa continued to expand the local armaments industry and a missile base was established on the Zululand Coast towards the end of 1968 for experimental tests and launchings. A Decca radar screen was then erected around the coastline, which served to provide South Africa with a protective covering for at least 200 miles out to sea; a move that emphasised the strategic significance of the Cape Sea Route to the RSA and also served as a countermeasure against the threatening stance of certain African states.<sup>79)</sup>

Not all of Western Europe, however, supported the imposition of an arms embargo in the 1960s. France became South Africa's primary supplier of weaponry and delivered arms worth approximately \$32 million to South Africa between 1969 and 1973. In 1971, Marcel Dassault, a French aircraft company, signed an agreement with Armcor for the construction of F-1 and Mirage jet fighters. France thus broke the 1963 UN arms embargo and continued to do so for many years, even after the UN Security Council imposed a mandatory arms embargo on weapon supplies to the RSA (see below). The Federal Republic of Germany also supplied arms to South Africa, including the already-mentioned nuclear technology and conventional military armaments and equipment. Technical assistance and vital information were also provided to South African weaponry manufacturers.<sup>80)</sup>

A compulsory UN arms embargo was passed in 1977 and will be discussed at a later stage.<sup>81)</sup> It was noted at about the same time that the full-time component of the SADF would have to be expanded to meet

necessary requirements, especially as regards the number of Permanent Force members and the national service component.<sup>82)</sup> It had already been announced in 1976, that the Armaments Board and the Armaments Development and Production Corporation would merge to form a single organisation.<sup>83)</sup> Ultimately, the cost of arms procurement that was met by Armscor increased from an amount of RM 32 in 1968 to RM 979 in 1978.<sup>84)</sup>

One of the problems noted in the early 1980s was that certain armaments were becoming obsolete, while more modern armaments were being made available to the RSA's perceived enemies. Continual emphasis was thus placed on armaments development and manufacture in order to meet the threat of the Soviet arms build-up in neighbouring countries.<sup>85)</sup>

South Africa was perceived as being under threat from many fronts and could not rely on previous allies for defence. Primary areas of concern included the expansionism of Marxism in Southern Africa, the activities of the ANC, and the potential for superpower conflict where South Africa would find it difficult to remain neutral. As opposition to the ruling South African regime increased, the South African Government continued to stress the principles of non-interference in domestic affairs and the right to self-defence. The result was not only an increase in local armaments technology, but also a rise in the defence budget. International condemnation of South African domestic policies and the resultant arms embargo thus contributed directly to the rapid development of South Africa's armaments industry.

Although this chapter concentrates primarily on South Africa's national capability, a brief study of the military policy environment at the time could provide insight into the perceived requirement for a strong military capability. This is discussed below.

### 1.5.3 Military objectives

According to the 1977 *White Paper on Defence*, the South African Government's military objectives were the following:

- a. The development of the national defence structure necessary to prevent and/or counter any threat to the RSA.
- b. The defence and security of the RSA and its body politic against any form of external aggression or internal revolution, irrespective of its source of origin.
- c. The involvement of the entire nation in the maintenance of law and order and in the defence of the RSA.
- d. Assistance and support to independent Black homelands, if requested, in developing their own defence forces, for the security of their territories, the maintenance of law and order and the assurance of their independence.<sup>86)</sup>

It was also stated that maintaining the sovereignty of a state's authority in a conflict situation was no longer a purely military action, but had become an integrated national action. As discussed in Chapter 1, the resolution of a conflict demanded military; economic; political; psychological; sociological; technological; cultural; diplomatic; and ideological efforts. Reference was thus made to a Total National Strategy. The US President stated the following after World War II: "No longer could appropriate military policy on the one hand, or supportable foreign policy on the other, be formulated in isolation, one from the other".<sup>87)</sup>

As noted, although the threat to the RSA was minimal in the late 1960s, a greater self-reliance as regards defence requirements was the ultimate result of such factors as withdrawal from the Commonwealth. Turmoil in some of Africa's newly independent states was also cause for concern. International anti-South African sentiments and efforts to overthrow the government began in the 1960s.<sup>88)</sup>

The USSR's strive towards world domination was still perceived as the major threat to world peace by the 1980s, especially as regards influence in the Third World. Potential Soviet control of natural resources in Southern Africa and the Middle East was of particular concern, as was the increasing conflict between the USSR and the US, and it was considered unlikely that South Africa would be able to remain neutral should there be large-scale international conflict. USSR President Brezhnev had already in 1977 stated the USSR's intent to control the strategic minerals located in the Southern African region and deny the West access to these minerals. Revolutionary warfare was utilised to establish Soviet influence in this region. The South African Defence Force was, however, perceived as having created a successful deterrent strategy.<sup>89)</sup>

It is clear from the above that South Africa was relatively well-endowed with the necessary tangible elements of national capability, at least sufficient for survival, especially as regards such aspects as natural resources and the ability to become self-sufficient in various fields. Certain elements, however, for example, a well-educated and technically skilled general population, were lacking and would have to be addressed. At some point, South Africa would thus need to move beyond mere survival and become increasingly competitive on international markets.

Although the preceding pages have studied tangible aspects of national capability, intangible elements should also be included in an analysis of strategic significance. These are such aspects as national morale and political leadership, which effect the nation's population and the ability of government to effectively implement domestic and foreign policies.

## **2. Non-tangible determinants of national capability**

As mentioned above, it is not only the physical aspects of a nation's capability that are important in the assessment of strategic significance. No matter how strong the technological capability or how abundant the resources, without intangible aspects, a nation will find it difficult to achieve strategic significance.

These factors are, however, notoriously difficult to measure and are based on public perceptions and opinions. It is vital that the public support the government's efforts and that the international community makes a correct assessment in this regard in order to avoid ineffective policies. Unlike the more static, tangible elements of national capability, the intangible aspects are generally subject to fluctuation and should be monitored on a regular basis.

## 2.1 National character and morale

As noted in the preceding chapter, national character consists of both intellectual and moral qualities and is reflected by all who act for a nation. It is reflected by the ability of nations to pursue different foreign policy objectives. Domestic public opinion and perceptions have an important impact on the formulation of foreign policy. Public opinion in South Africa during the 1980s, however, appeared to be more concerned with domestic problems than with foreign policy issues. Information obtained during a 1982 survey of the White South African population, indicated that the public was only well informed on foreign policy matters which were either extensively publicised or which were considered to be of direct concern.<sup>90)</sup>

National morale is formulated as public opinion. A nation can possess the essential natural resources, both tangible and intangible, for the establishment of a strong national capability, but these resources are insufficient without a positive morale amongst the citizens.

At the time of the 1982 survey, South Africans held conflicting opinions as regards an increase in defence expenditure. It should, however, be noted that 71,1 percent of the respondents were in agreement that times of war and internal unrest were in the future of South Africa.<sup>91)</sup> Other important perceptions of more than 70 percent of respondents were that a revolutionary war, as in Namibia, would eventually develop in South Africa; that Zimbabwe was a threat to the RSA's security; and that the South African Government was not exaggerating the communist threat. "Hardline" stances were also adopted by most respondents as regards support for military attacks on terrorist bases in neighbouring states; the banning of food exports to Black states harbouring so-called terrorists; the perception that South Africa could emerge victorious in the war against the South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO); and that South Africa should not negotiate directly with SWAPO. There were also differences between Afrikaans and English speakers as regards support for government policies, with the Afrikaans-speaking group consistently displaying greater support. This group also registered the greatest threat perceptions.<sup>92)</sup> Public threat perceptions are relevant in this regard in that if the public believes the threat to be real, government will find it easier to obtain support for foreign policy objectives aimed at counteracting such threats.

Morale is particularly influenced by economic conditions, political unrest and the degree of confidence that citizens have in the nation's leaders. South Africa featured badly in all three of these fields. The South African economy experienced a severe depression in the 1980s, which was accompanied by high interest

rates, a decrease in both output and investment, as well as substantial foreign debt. High unemployment rates resulted.<sup>93)</sup> The situation was further aggravated by intermittent strikes and stayaways and international corporations were hesitant to invest in a nation that was plagued by socio-economic unrest and an unstable workforce.

Another survey conducted in 1988 indicated a slightly more “defiant” attitude by White South Africans and a tougher stance on foreign, regional and domestic policy issues. This survey was, however, conducted after the introduction of a national state of emergency in 1986, which resulted in an additional emphasis on security concerns. The various language groups and party affiliations also caused conflict and division.<sup>94)</sup>

It should be noted that one of the reasons for restricting these surveys to the White South African population, was the fact that this population group played a central role in the formulation of foreign policy at the time. There was also a lack of a nationally representative Black sample of respondents. In 1988, South Africa was suffering the effects of disinvestment and sanctions, high inflation, and a drop in the value of the Rand. The Southern African region was also unstable.<sup>95)</sup> These factors all had a negative effect on national morale. In contrast to the earlier survey, fewer respondents agreed that a revolutionary war would develop in South Africa, although South Africa’s internal threat remained a concern. The communist threat was still a troubling issue and support continued for military attacks on terrorist/guerrilla bases in neighbouring states, although with less support than in the previous survey.<sup>96)</sup>

There was, however, less support for an increase in the defence budget. Many also believed that economic sanctions could have a damaging effect on the South African economy, although “hardliners” from the National and Conservative Parties were less intimidated. Slightly fewer respondents supported the granting of equal political rights to Blacks, although most respondents were not of the opinion that Black South Africans had good reason to take up arms against the government. Fewer respondents, in fact, wanted the government to negotiate directly with the ANC.<sup>97)</sup>

National morale in South Africa differed between the various political affiliations and language groups. Reference is made in particular to the parties on the left and right of the political spectrum and the differences in the level of government support between Afrikaans and English speakers. The former were more likely to support government foreign policy initiatives and were also more likely to believe in the “Total Onslaught” concept. The English-speakers tended to be slightly more moderate, although both groups were concerned about Soviet encroachment. Supporters of the more right-wing political parties were also more likely to support the government. Yet by the late-1980s, even the English-speaking, left-wing parties had hardened their positions in the face of internal unrest, regional instability and international condemnation. The South African Government thus received a higher level of support from a greater percentage of the White population than in previous years. International pressures had, for many citizens, thus merely resulted in greater support for the ruling government in their struggle against Soviet

expansionism, sanctions and defence of South Africa against a multi-fronted attack.

It was thus obvious that the overall level of national morale in South Africa was extremely low in all sectors. Political violence, low credibility of the security forces, and minority group fears all contributed to this low level. The South African Government was often criticised and the task ahead was considered challenging for even the most popular government. The general public regarded crime as the most serious problem; more serious, in fact, than inflation, health problems or even unemployment. In the mid-1980s, during a survey of data in this regard, it was discovered that murder was the crime most feared by respondents, followed by rape and assault. Crimes of violence were thus an important issue for most South Africans.

It should be noted at this point that individuals who feel unsafe in their environment experience stress, anxiety and a loss of productivity. South African citizens were no exception in this regard. Most respondents gave a low priority to the police, courts and imprisonment as effective crime prevention measures. The police were heavily criticised at this time due to the prevailing unrest and emergency situation. The community had thus lost faith in the ability of the police and state institutions to effectively combat crime. Emphasis was instead placed on community upliftment programmes, such as improved housing and recreational facilities, as well as community and individual security measures for crime prevention.<sup>98)</sup>

According to survey data collected in mid-1986, more than 80 percent of South African citizens anticipated living together in a form of political harmony. Although it was apparent that many issues would be open to consensus politics, various problems were preventing such consensus, including a lack of clarity about the meaning of terms, and disparity between the personal ambitions of political leaders and the interests of those they represented. At that stage, most township residents preferred the army to the police as regards the combatting of violence as the police force was negatively perceived. The perception was, in fact, that of “apartheid-supporting military police personnel in the peacekeeping role”. Preference, was however, given to the establishment of a “normal” police force to secure and maintain law and order.<sup>99)</sup>

Until such time as the economic situation improved and the internal violence abated, South African morale was likely to remain low. Although progress had been made towards a new negotiated *Constitution*, many obstacles and initial suspicions had to be accommodated. All of these conditions served to severely dampen morale, which in turn rendered the rest of South Africa’s natural resources almost useless until the problem was resolved and the level of national morale raised. National character reflected an emphasis on domestic affairs over foreign policy issues, although the public was generally aware of the dangers of an expansion of Soviet influence. International economic sanctions against the RSA, however, generally hardened the attitudes of those they affected against the international community. In fact, many White South Africans continued to support government foreign policy objectives and were eager to commence negotiations for a peaceful future for all.



## 2.2 Political organisation

As noted in the preceding chapter, a nation's power position is also linked to international and local perceptions of domestic failures and achievements. International condemnation regarding South Africa's internal apartheid policies was severe. The period from 1976 to 1982 witnessed not only a decrease in support for the concept of apartheid, but also saw an increasing Black challenge to White rule. There were also, however, attempts by the ruling class to politically accommodate a Black elite and political reform became an important issue for many South Africans who wanted co-operation and not conflict as regards political reform.<sup>100)</sup> The RSA underwent a process of democratisation as regards the political system in order to ensure equal rights and freedoms for all South Africans. The preamble to the 1983 *Constitution* declared the belief of the legislators that unity was absolutely vital to :-

- uphold Christian values and civilised norms, and to recognise and protect freedom of worship;
- safeguard the integrity and freedom of the country;
- uphold the independence of the judiciary and the equality of all before the law;
- maintain law and order;
- promote the happiness and spiritual and material welfare of all;
- respect and protect the human dignity, life, liberty and property of all;
- respect and protect the self-determination of all population groups; and
- promote private enterprise and effective competition.<sup>101)</sup>

Apart from the three Houses which constituted Parliament, the *Constitution* made provision for an executive President, a central Cabinet, a Ministers' Council for each House, and a President's Council. Legislation on general affairs was the duty of all three Houses of Parliament; while legislation that was perceived as being in the interest of only one group was handled by the appropriate House. The State President made the decision as to whether the issue was an own or general affair. Bills on general affairs had to be passed by all three Houses; while own affairs were those pertaining to the upholding, maintenance or furtherance of the identity and customs of each population group.<sup>102)</sup>

This process of democratisation was considered a turning point for South Africa in that it signified an acceptance of the inevitability of change in the country, where all citizens, no matter what their cultural identity or population group, would be treated equally and would receive the same benefits from the state. Decision-making became more open to consensus, with the result that citizens who had in the past felt excluded from the decision-making process, now perceived that their particular interests were being represented. This can be considered an important step in the diminishing of the unrest situation and the ultimate improvement in the economy as a result of increased local participation and international support for the changes taking place in South Africa. As mentioned above, many South Africans preferred co-operation as regards political reform and this *Constitution* could be considered a step in this direction.

### 2.3 Political leadership

In the period under discussion in this chapter, the National Party Government played a pivotal role and it is difficult to discuss this Party without studying the history of their leadership. The National Party dominated the South African political scene from 1948. Originally a political party for White, predominantly Afrikaans-speaking people, the National Party gradually underwent a process of change, especially as regards traditional race relations. These changes were predominant during the leadership of P.W. Botha and that of his successor, F.W. de Klerk.

The last “general” election (for Whites only) was held in May 1987 and was deemed to be an election of crucial importance for the future of South Africa. Five political parties and a number of independent candidates participated. It was the general assumption that Black South Africans and their status was the key issue and State President Botha stated that by calling the election, he was attempting to maintain a mandate from the White electorate to proceed with negotiations with the Black population. Yet the election was widely received as being “irrelevant” by Blacks in that only the White population was involved. A unique feature of the 1987 general election was that it transpired under a general state of emergency. The maintenance of law and order was therefore a prominent feature of the campaign.<sup>103)</sup>

The National Party entered the election at a time when the economy was characterised by a severe recession, with accompanying high levels of unemployment, disinvestment and sanctions. Circumstances were therefore not favourable, but the South African Government was undeterred and continued to press for a mandate that would direct negotiations towards power sharing with the Black population. Interestingly enough, except for the parties on the right of the political spectrum, all other parties were in favour of power sharing, albeit power sharing in their own respective definitions. An impressive electoral victory was achieved by the National Party and the result was a continuation of the move towards a more broadly representative party and away from the previous “volksparty”. The most unexpected event of the election was the fact that many English-speaking voters had given their support to the National Party. The National Party was now viewed as “reformist”, which made it more acceptable to those voters who wanted the implementation of reform in South Africa.<sup>104)</sup>

The fact that it was the first time that the issue of the future status of Blacks had been brought into the open, left no doubt that the May election marked the beginning of a new era in South Africa’s political history. In a nation with a diverse population, it is highly unlikely that a single political group will be able to achieve total support. South Africa was one such nation and the issue was further complicated by the fact that political parties were based on ethnic divisions.

As regards support for the leaders of South Africa, according to a poll conducted in April 1989, approximately one in five respondents had not voted in the previous South African general election. It was

already clear at this point that the reform process determined political allegiance. At that stage, 67 percent of respondents supported parties to the left of government, while the rest supported the National Party.<sup>105)</sup> It is to the credit of the leadership of this party that they managed to achieve support for reform, especially in light of such difficult circumstances.

As noted in the previous chapter, a responsible government should aim to influence public opinion as regards domestic and international policies. The fact that the South African Government had received support for their reform policies thus indicates the achievement of this principle. There had been a realisation that full potential of the state, another important aspect of political leadership, could not be attained without political reform. It was clear that in contrast to previous years of a more autocratic style of political leadership, an attempt was now being made to include a larger segment of the general population in the nation's decision-making process.

There is, however, another non-tangible element of national capability which should be discussed, namely, economic policy. As already noted, the political leadership of a nation must produce effective policies which will ultimately maximise overall potential for the relevant state. Although there are various aspects of concern as regards policy formulation, the most vital for general prosperity is that of economic policy, where capability and potential are combined.

#### 2.4 Economic policy

Manufacturing growth in South Africa resulted from increased domestic demand, import substitution, and export demand. The most significant structural change in this sector occurred during the late 1960s as part of the process of import-substituting industrialisation. The process of industrialisation involved an important role for foreign firms and technology, but the manufacturing sector was never integrated into the rest of the economic structure and only provided sophisticated goods for a minority of the population. The manufacturing sector was, in fact, heavily dependent on imports.<sup>106)</sup>

Overall, although the South African economy was considered one of the strongest on the African continent, various factors led to an undeniable deterioration in economic performance from the 1960s. As noted, this drop in performance continued throughout the 1970s and was particularly severe in the 1980s, where factors such as internal political unrest and ineffective government economic policies contributed to poor performance levels. There was also the additional negative effect of international economic sanctions against the RSA. Yet South Africa managed to maintain a relatively high level of industrialisation and technological development, where in the latter case, the aim was to increase the level of self-sufficiency.

South Africa's economic woes can be traced, in part, to the late 1970s when the government introduced a monetary policy which resulted in high interest rates and in effect, produced a recession. The policy decision

which led to this disastrous state of events was to restrict money supply and limit borrowing. The result was that from 1980 to 1985, bankruptcies increased by 500 percent and there were massive retrenchments in the workforce. There was also an increase in speculative activity, as well as an increase in mergers and takeovers. Monopolies were a basic feature of the South African economy and it was estimated that in 1983, seven companies controlled 80 percent of the value of the R90 billion shares listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Although the South African Government did not succeed in attempts to decrease expenditure, the result of such attempts was a redistribution of funds away from such areas as social welfare in favour of defence. This in turn changed the pattern of government demand for goods and services. Government economic policy continued to be interventionist, although the introduction of market-orientated policies was lauded in 1979 and there was a move away from the regulation of certain markets to a greater reliance on the private sector and market forces.<sup>107)</sup> South African economic policy during the period under discussion was thus in need of change if economic prosperity was to result.

### **3. Conclusion**

A country's national capability potential can be perceived as an important criterion as regards strategic significance. A study of South Africa's national capability in the period under discussion in this chapter has indicated an abundance of natural resources. The RSA was, in fact, relatively self-sufficient in many respects and could thus withstand the damaging effects of economic sanctions which were imposed by the international community as a result of South Africa's internal apartheid policies. Extensive mineral wealth and energy resources were vital in this regard and the RSA not only exported vast amounts of minerals, but also provided much of Africa's electricity. Compared to the rest of the continent, South Africa also possessed a relatively well-developed infrastructure, of which Africa made extensive use. This further influenced the country's strategic significance.

Although the South African economy originally displayed great potential and rapidly developed as regards industrial capacity and technological capability, there was a marked deterioration in growth performance during the 1970s and 1980s. This could partly be attributed to local conditions of political unrest and ineffective economic policies which resulted in a recession. As the country became increasingly isolated on the international front, a move was made towards self-sufficiency, especially as regards defence capabilities. South Africa began a phase of technological development in the face of what was perceived as possible attacks from all fronts. Much success was achieved in this regard and an increase in the defence budget was inevitable. These developments were thus in response to the international sanctions campaign applied against the RSA, with the arms and oil embargoes being the most notable. As noted above, South Africa managed to circumvent the former by developing a strong defence technology system, but the oil embargo caused more concern. The country was dependent on foreign sources of oil and although certain countries ignored the embargo, albeit in a secret fashion, oil became an expensive commodity for the RSA. Oil can thus be considered a vulnerability. Other more general sanctions had little effect on the South African

economy, which was already in a state of decline. In other words, they merely served to worsen an already-weakened economy.

Location is another important tangible element of national capability and South Africa is positioned at an advantageous point on the tip of the African continent, on one of the world's most important trade routes. This placed South Africa in a position to combat the expansion of Soviet influence and the spread of Marxism on the African continent. The strategic significance of the RSA was thus strongly linked to the country's national capability, especially as regards strategic location, extensive natural resources, well-developed infrastructure, technological capability, and an economy which, although it suffered a slump, was still relatively strong when compared with the rest of Africa.

The non-tangible aspects of national capability, however, cannot be discounted. The threat perception of South African citizens regarding the security of their country increased during the 1980s and even the "moderates" hardened their stance in the face of international sanctions and internal unrest. Among the ruling White population, there was thus considerable support for government foreign policy objectives. Members of other population groups, however, particularly Black South Africans, felt isolated from the political process and many supported the ANC in the "struggle for freedom". Yet there was a movement towards political co-operation. The South African society was also divided into various cultural and ethnic groups and the situation was further complicated by the multitude of languages spoken. Conflict was thus to be expected, but the situation deteriorated into one characterised by such factors as discrimination, political unrest, crime, and the resultant immigration of educated citizens. National morale was low and as already mentioned, an abundance of natural resources is insufficient for the execution of foreign and domestic policies if the majority of citizens do not support the government in power or the system that they represent. The National Party clung to its apartheid policies for several decades before a process of reform was initiated. An election was held in 1987 and the now "reformist" National Party swept to victory. The resultant *Constitution* stressed equality for all and marked a change in direction for South Africa.

Throughout the years of isolation, South Africa relied on her extensive natural resources, economic prowess and strategic location to survive in unfavourable circumstances. There can be no denying that had these factors not been applicable, South Africa would have been forced to relent to international pressures for internal change much sooner. South Africa's national capability thus had an important influence on the country's international relations, as expressed in various policy statements made through the years. It is these statements which form the bulk of a nation's ego perception, which refers to perceptions of own importance to the rest of the world. South Africa's ego perceptions were predominantly based on national capability and international support and/or condemnation. Ego perceptions in the pre- and immediate post-Cold War period will be discussed in later chapters.

As this study takes the form of a comparative analysis, it is necessary to examine conditions of national capability in the post-1989 period in order to ascertain whether there is a difference in this regard between the two periods. South Africa's national capability in the early 1990s will thus be discussed in the following chapter.

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### **CHAPTER 3: SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL CAPABILITY IN THE 1990-1993 PERIOD**

This chapter deals primarily with the immediate post-Cold War era and more specifically, the period extending from 1990 to 1993. During this period, South Africa not only faced a change in the external environment, but domestic changes within the RSA also had a profound influence on certain national capabilities. South Africa, however, continued to utilise all available resources and became an economic leader on the African continent. The years of isolation had, in fact, served to emphasise the importance of self-reliance and industry had been developed accordingly. Although there is no denying that perceptions regarding strategic significance are never static, it should be noted that South Africa's relatively strong national capability had a definite effect on ego and alter perceptions of strategic significance.

In this chapter, it is once again noted that South Africa's natural resources, in particular the country's extensive mineral and energy resources, continued to have an extensive influence on the RSA's national capability and resultant strategic significance. Energy resources were considered particularly valuable by certain countries in Africa as South Africa produced much of the electricity on the African continent. Mineral resources were also of considerable interest to various countries around the globe who relied on South Africa to a certain extent for the supply of these minerals. In general, South Africa was considered to be a strong industrial power, particularly in relation to other African countries, although internal problems such as labour strikes and ongoing political violence had a negative effect in this regard. The period under discussion in this chapter was, however, marked by low national morale, crime, high inflation, and increasing unemployment. These factors all affected perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance and will be discussed in relative detail. The more static elements of national capability, such as geographic location and topographical features, which have already been discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, will thus not be re-addressed in this chapter. A comparative analysis of the two periods under discussion will be presented in Chapter 7, although a brief comparison will be made regarding national capability at the end of this chapter.

#### **1. Physical determinants of national capability**

These are tangible resources and are thus relatively easy to measure. As already mentioned, these resources are subject to change and any such change will duly affect perceptions (both ego and alter) of strategic significance. As noted in the preceding chapter, South Africa is considered to be one of the most prosperous states on the African continent and this perception was originally almost exclusively based on the country's geo-strategic location and vast resources. Yet it must now be established whether these factors were sufficient to maintain South Africa's strategic significance in the post-Cold War era. Did changes in the local and international environment have an effect on perceptions of strategic significance? This and other relevant issues will be discussed below.

## 1.1 Natural resources

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a state with an abundance of natural resources is generally perceived as a potentially strong state. These states are often more self-sufficient than their less-endowed neighbours and can thus survive pressures such as international sanctions for longer periods. This was particularly relevant for South Africa as the country endured punitive international sanctions on many fronts. Natural resources are a vital aspect of national capability and as in the previous chapter, can roughly be divided into agricultural, mineral and energy resources.

### 1.1.1 Agricultural resources

In accordance with world standards, South Africa's natural resources for agriculture were considered poor. As already established, little of the RSA's surface is suitable for cultivation, especially when one considers the country's inadequate supply of water. South Africa is subject to both prolonged droughts and periodic floods, and irrigation farming was thus an essential component of the agricultural industry, with a large variety of crops cultivated under irrigation. The proportion of water resources used for irrigation was one of the highest in the world and agriculture was the largest consumer of surface water. The wide variety of climatic conditions did, however, permit the South African farmer to cultivate various crops, as well as rear cattle, sheep and goats. The contribution of agriculture to the South African economy was, however, eventually surpassed by that of mining and secondary industry.<sup>1)</sup> Yet agriculture remained of vital importance to the Southern African region and employed a substantial amount of people. In 1993, the gross value of agricultural products totalled R 26 894 million.<sup>2)</sup> The net income of South Africa's approximately 60 000 farmers increased from R 5 368 million in 1990/91 to R 7 380 million in 1991/92, and this increase in gross value was generally attributed to a rise in producer prices and an increase in production.<sup>3)</sup>

As a result of improved farm management and research, agricultural production increased dramatically. The RSA became virtually self-sufficient as regards major agricultural products and also exported several food products. In 1990, food exports totalled 9 percent (R 5 449 million) of South Africa's total exports. The agricultural industry employed more than a million people at the beginning of the decade.<sup>4)</sup>

Maize dominated the early 1990s as the most important South African crop, followed by wheat. Other products of importance included barley, sorghum and sunflower seeds. South Africa was also the world's tenth largest sugar producer and was internationally renown for superior quality fruit and wines. Deciduous fruit was grown primarily in parts of the Western and Eastern Cape and approximately 100 000 ha. was covered by vineyards. Tomatoes, cabbages and onions were considered important crops as regards gross income to the grower and were cultivated in various parts of the RSA. Cotton and tobacco were also produced. Rooibos tea, a South African tea beverage, generated a certain amount of interest abroad and was exported to approximately 135 countries. Ornamental plants were also produced for both local and

international markets. Important plant exports included roses, proteas and fynbos; the latter being supplied in the form of foliage, cut flowers and dried flowers. Livestock farming (cattle ranching, dairy and sheep farming) was found in most parts of South Africa.<sup>5)</sup>

By the early 1990s, the South African fishing industry employed approximately 22 000 people, with 90 percent of the catch taken from the cold waters off the West coast. The industry landed 715 000 tons of fish, shell-fish, guano etc. in 1992 off a coastline of approximately 3000 km. The total value of the catch for 1992 was estimated at R 1 180 million. Considering the value of the fishing industry, it is no surprise that South Africa followed a strict conservation policy in her fisheries zone, which constituted 200 nautical miles.<sup>6)</sup>

South Africa's limited natural forests were protected by a policy of protection as a result of their severe exploitation in the 19th century and by the early 1990s, state forest land covered an area of approximately 1,6 million ha. The RSA was, in fact, practically self-sufficient as regards timber requirements and only imported certain high quality paper, hardwood, and specialised timber products. Primary exports included rayon pulp, sawn timber, and newsprint, with the total annual value of such products estimated at R 2 000 million; while this industry employed approximately 120 000 individuals.<sup>7)</sup>

#### 1.1.2 Mineral resources

In the post-1989 period, the production of and demand for South Africa's minerals continued. The RSA was one of the world's largest mineral-producing countries and was also a primary exporter and supplier in this regard. Furthermore, as a leading supplier of the energy minerals coal and uranium, South Africa achieved a high level of self-sufficiency as regards energy and became an important exporter of these products. Energy and mineral exports were a valuable source of foreign exchange for South Africa and contributed a significant proportion to the GDP. Mining was a major industry in South Africa and created extensive employment opportunities. This industry was export-orientated and formed a vital sector of the South African economy.

As already noted, South Africa possessed a large portion of the world's reserves of a number of important minerals. Although lacking oil reserves, the RSA possessed an abundance of coal for the provision of power for industry. As no state can be regarded as self-sufficient as regards resources, trade in minerals is often necessary and this added to perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance. Although the expansion of the world population was expected to result in increasing demand for these minerals, there was, however, the possibility that the international community would lose interest in the RSA's expanse of mineral resources as alternative sources became available.



According to official estimates, South Africa possessed approximately 72 percent of the world's chrome ore reserves by the early-to-mid 1990s, as well as large reserves of andalusite and vanadium. In 1993, South Africa's mineral sales earned R 46 673 million, which represented approximately 9,7 per cent of GDP. Foreign sales of minerals (to more than 90 countries) during this same period, totalled 47,8 percent of total export earnings. Gold remained South Africa's primary generator of national income and the RSA was the world's largest gold producer (about 600 tons per annum). South Africa was also one of the largest exporters of bituminous (steam) coal and in 1993, approximately 51 million tons of this coal was exported at a value of more than R 4 400 million.<sup>6)</sup> Energy resources are further discussed below.

Rand value of minerals sold 1990-1993 and index of physical volume of production<sup>1</sup>

	1990	1993 <sup>2</sup>	1970-1993 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Value of minerals sold (R million)</b>			
<b>Total</b>	38 048	46 631	15,9%
<b>Gold</b>	18 994	23 169	15,6%
<b>Coal</b>	8 150	9 673	21,5%
<b>Other</b>	10 904	13 789	14,4%
<b>Index of physical volume of production 1990=100:</b>			
<b>Total, including gold</b>	100,0	101,7	-0,6%
<b>Total, excluding gold</b>	100,0	101,2	3,0%
<b>Gold</b>	100,0	102,2	-2,1%
<b>Coal</b>	100,0	103,8	3,4%

Source: RSA, Central Statistical Service, *RSA statistics in brief*, 1994, p.8.

<sup>1</sup> The former Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei are excluded

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary

<sup>3</sup> Compound growth rate

### 1.1.3 Energy resources

South Africa possessed an extremely large and advanced energy industry based primarily on coal and produced more than half of the electricity generated on the African continent. Approximately 149 427 million kWh were utilised in 1992, with the Electricity Supply Commission (Escom) supplying more than 97,9 percent of the electricity used in South Africa, at a price of 9,16c/kWh. Mines, industries and several municipalities which operated their own power stations, were responsible for the rest of the electricity. Industry and mining were the biggest electricity consumers. Although at the time only approximately 12 million (30 percent) of South Africans had electricity in their homes, Escom set a goal of 80 percent before

the turn of the century. Sasol was considered a global leader in the conversion of coal to oil and gas and the company manufactured chemicals, ammonia-based explosives and fertilisers. It also produced ethylene and polypropylene for the plastics industry.<sup>9)</sup>

In 1992, Escom provided electricity to approximately 4000 large users, such as mines and heavy industries, and to approximately 538 000 users who required less than 100 kW. The first group spent R 11,6 thousand million on electricity; while the second group, comprising urban domestic users, light industries and farm owners, spent more than R 1 thousand million. Escom used coal as a primary source of electricity generation and spread the resultant electricity through a national network consisting of over 230 000 km of power lines. Over a period of approximately five years, sales of electricity rose by an average of 2,4 percent a year. As already noted, hydro-electricity is not a viable proposition in South Africa as rain is seasonal and sporadic, with droughts a constant threat. As dams for hydro-electric power need to be as large as possible, this type of power is therefore not always economically viable for the RSA.<sup>10)</sup>

Particular emphasis was placed on coal and uranium as energy resources and it was also predicted that there would be a gradual movement towards the use of nuclear energy in the first half of the 21st century, as soon as available coal reserves were exhausted. There was also research into renewable energy sources which held great potential for South Africa. In the meantime, searches for crude oil continued to be undertaken during 1992 in an attempt to reduce dependency on imported crude oil.<sup>11)</sup> Uranium reserves were located throughout South Africa, but the uranium itself was mined primarily as a by-product of gold and even copper. In 1990, it was estimated that recoverable reserves, at least those that could be recovered at less than \$80 per kg, held 304 900 tons of uranium. The Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) was responsible for all facilities associated with the production of nuclear fuel, including plants for uranium enrichment and conversion.<sup>12)</sup>

The state exploration company, Soekor, spent billions searching for oil in an attempt to reduce import dependence. Yet after three decades all that had been discovered were relatively small gas deposits. Although there was a deposit with more potential, this was in Namibia and Namibian independence effectively ended any hopes South Africa had in this regard. South Africa, however, was in possession of a strategic stockpile of oil, which became the subject of much speculation. In April 1991, President F.W. de Klerk indicated that although sanctions had necessitated a strategic oil reserve, the improvement of international relations had resulted in a decision to reduce this reserve. The chairman of the Central Energy Fund, Danie Vorster, indicated that same year that the balance of payments would benefit by an amount of R1 billion should the strategic reserve be tapped. Imports would also be reduced. He would not comment on the location of the reserve or its size, but estimates of the supply at the time ranged from between six months to two years.<sup>13)</sup>

Mention has already been made of South Africa's lack of oil resources and the international sanctions campaign which attempted to prevent oil exports to the RSA. Yet many countries managed to circumvent the embargo and it was determined that from early 1979 to late 1993, most of South Africa's crude oil import needs were covered by oil deliveries from numerous tankers. The RSA's strategic location also played a role in this regard in that tankers stopped there for repairs and supplies, which made it more difficult to establish whether the tankers had stopped for these purposes or to deliver oil.<sup>14)</sup> The oil embargo did, however, affect South Africa financially and it has been estimated that measures to evade the embargo cost the South African Government \$2 billion a year for approximately ten years.<sup>15)</sup>

An increasing demand for oil products resulted in an expansion of the oil industry's capacity to refine crude oil and by the early 1990s, South Africa possessed four refineries for the processing of imported crude oil and refined petroleum products were exported to neighbouring countries.<sup>16)</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, oil was considered vital in the sanctions campaign as South Africa was considered dependent on imports in this regard. Although changes were taking place in the RSA during 1990, the ANC was firm in its resolve that "the oil embargo should remain". By late 1991, the ANC set the requirement for the establishment of a democratic government before the arms and oil embargos could be lifted and in early 1993, international allies were requested to adhere to these embargoes until democratic elections had taken place. When Norway lifted the remaining clauses on oil embargo legislation in accordance with UN decisions, it became apparent that the ANC would have preferred to wait until after the April 1994 democratic elections before such steps were taken.<sup>17)</sup> The US was the first country to lift its oil embargo, following the lifting of the *Anti-Apartheid Act* by President Bush on 10 July 1991. The Israeli Government followed shortly thereafter.<sup>18)</sup> The president of the UN General Assembly announced on 9 December 1993 that: "The embargo related to the supply of petroleum and petroleum products to South Africa and investments in the petroleum industry there is now lifted".<sup>19)</sup>

Synthetic fuels, converted from natural gas by Mossgas, were produced from 1992 and it was estimated that there would be sufficient reserves to keep Mossgas in production for another three decades.<sup>20)</sup> The Mossgas onshore plant near Mossel Bay achieved full operation in January 1993.<sup>21)</sup> Firewood remained the most common source of household heat energy in isolated sectors of the community, but local shortages were experienced and a negative environmental effect resulted. Planning was undertaken for a scheme that would include reforestation and agro-forestry and which could ultimately solve these problems.<sup>22)</sup>

South Africa thus possessed extensive mineral and energy resources and it was these resources that provided the RSA with valuable exports and reduced the requirement for certain imports. South Africa was basically self-sufficient as regards energy and minerals and this resulted in strong overall national capability, which in turn affected strategic significance. The post-Cold War era, however, resulted in alternative sources of strategic minerals for the rest of the world. On the other hand, South African resources became increasingly important for the rest of Africa, as the entire continent became marginalised. The export of energy and the

use of the country's modern transport system for goods transportation were particularly vital aspects, especially for the land-locked African nations who did not possess a sophisticated transport system of their own. South Africa's natural resources thus played an extensive role in the RSA's ability to withstand sanctions and prosper. Agricultural, mineral and energy resources are, however, not the only aspects of importance. As already mentioned, a country's population plays a vital role in an assessment of strategic significance. Details of South Africa's population and manpower are thus discussed below.

## 1.2 Population and manpower

As noted in the preceding chapter, South Africa has a diverse population, basically comprising a White community (of predominantly Dutch and British descent), a Black community with many ethnic divisions, and a Coloured community. One of the largest Indian communities outside of the Indian subcontinent is also located in the RSA. These four groups result in distinctive minorities and ethnic rivalries and the situation is compounded by the diversity of languages spoken. Ethnic diversity, a factor which has incited grave unrest in parts of Europe and indeed all across the globe, was thus prevalent in South Africa in the early 1990s.

### 1.2.1 Size and distribution

Estimates for the South African population in 1993 totalled 39 628 600 people. Of this total, Blacks represented the largest population group and constituted 30 055 600 people. Whites represented the second largest group, followed by Coloureds and Asians.<sup>23)</sup>

South African population figures in the 1991-93 period (mid-year estimates)<sup>1</sup>

	1991	1992	1993	1970-1993 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	31 224 000	31 917 000	32 589 000	2,32%
<b>Whites</b>	5 080 000	5 115 000	5 149 000	1,26%
<b>Coloureds</b>	3 302 000	3 352 000	3 402 000	1,97%
<b>Asians</b>	991 000	1 006 000	1 022 000	1,97%
<b>Blacks</b>	21 871 000	22 444 000	23 016 000	2,68%

Source: RSA, Central Statistical service, *RSA statistics in brief*, 1993, p.1.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes the Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei with an estimated population of 6 750 700 on 7 March 1991

<sup>2</sup> Compound growth rate

The number of immigrants to South Africa declined from the late 1980s and this can be partly attributed to negativity regarding the RSA's internal policies, as well as other conditions such as unemployment, crime and political violence. There was, however, a decrease in emigration by 1993, following increases in earlier years.<sup>24)</sup> This could in turn be linked to an improvement in local conditions, as well as changes to the domestic political environment.

### 1.2.2 Employment in South Africa

By 1993, 62,2 percent (20 269 000) of the South African population was not economically active. This left an economically active population of only 12 320 000.<sup>25)</sup> In 1985, the figures for the economically active population had been recorded as 10 134 000.<sup>26)</sup> Although the figures for 1993 were thus an improvement on those of previous years, there remained cause for concern. Unemployment was a problematic issue for many South Africans and in 1993, the unemployment rate was recorded as 29,0 percent. There was, in fact, a marked increase in unemployment for all population groups from 1991 to 1993.<sup>27)</sup> Unemployment was thus increasing in prominence in the South African community and was an issue that any new government would have to confront as it had an important effect on national morale, which will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter.

By the early- to mid-1990s, it was stated that not only did Africa have the highest population growth rate in the world (at 3,1 percent a year), but also had the dubious distinction of having the lowest average rate of economic development. Many Southern Africans viewed South Africa as the proverbial "land of milk and honey" and streamed into the country in search of employment. Not all of these people were necessarily considered to be illegal and more than 1,2 million migrant workers and commuters from neighbouring states were employed in South Africa at any one time.<sup>28)</sup>

### 1.2.3 Technical and educational levels

In the previous chapter, it was established that South Africa was experiencing a lack of skilled workers. By the early 1990s, there was renewed emphasis on the fact that without the applications of new technology, a net loss of employment would result from international competition. At that stage, South Africa was considered to fall into the category of countries with a decentralised science and technology (S&T) policy system "geared" towards sectorial demands. The socio-economic objectives of a country can be negatively affected by the lack of a coherent science policy, and the disparity between educational system products and the manpower actually required in the marketplace was an indication of this phenomenon. It was, however, recognised that technology was in effect competing for funding priority against important socio-economic concerns, such as unemployment and inflation. South Africa was one of the few countries that did not coordinate S&T at the executive level of government. This was considered an impediment to the optimum

application and exploitation of science and technology.<sup>29)</sup> The situation would obviously have to be rectified if the country was to improve the local technical skill level.

According to the 1991 census, only 1,3 percent of the South African population held a degree or higher level of education; whilst 2,4 percent possessed a diploma or certificate of some kind. A level of education from Grade 1 to Std 5 was achieved by 32,0 percent; whilst a further 33,6 percent received education from Std 6 to Std 10.<sup>30)</sup> The 1990 annual report of Read (Read, Educate, Develop) stated that approximately 73 percent of the South African population was illiterate. Both the South African Government and the private sector attempted to rectify this problem through adult education programmes aimed specifically at the promotion of literacy and numeracy among adults who had either received insufficient formal schooling or wished to improve their qualifications.<sup>31)</sup>

Examination results for Black students leaving school in 1990 were the worst ever. Approximately 233 411 Black students wrote their matric examinations that year and of these, 150 000 failed. Only 81 746 (36.4 percent) passed and only 17 397 achieved a university entrance. These figures reflected the problems of a lack of adequate resources, low morale amongst teachers and the 1980s theme of: "Liberation now, education later". It was predicted that by the year 2000, South Africa would have a minimum shortfall of 228 000 professional and technical workers if the situation was not rectified.<sup>32)</sup> Militant Blacks viewed the school system as an instrument for the continuation of apartheid. A reversal in this attitude was drastically required in order to rectify the situation, but this could not be achieved without an increase in expenditure as regards Black education. Expenditure on Black education thus had to be raised to a level comparable with that of White education.<sup>33)</sup>

By 1993, there were 4 130 596 pupils of all population groups receiving education from Std 5 to Std 10. This was a marked improvement from 1991, when 3 653 965 pupils attended these standards. When these figures are compared with those from 1970, where 922 198 pupils were recorded, the improvement shown is even greater. It should, however, be noted that the 1970 statistics did not include the former Republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. The number of teachers also improved from 106 872 in 1970 to 335 541 in 1993.<sup>34)</sup> Yet although there had been an improvement in education in general for all population groups in South Africa during the early 1990s, extensive problems remained. It was difficult for students to concentrate on their schooling during times of domestic conflict and teachers were not always up to standard. The statistics above provide an indication of the seriousness of the situation that the RSA was facing as regards the provision of a future educated workforce. Education thus remained one of South Africa's primary concerns.

Attention is now focused on the South African economy, which in the previous chapter was referred to as having weakened as a result of various factors, including the international sanctions campaign against the RSA.

### 1.3 Economic capability

As already explained, economic capability is based on such aspects as natural resources and industrial strength. In 1992, South African economic activity was concentrated in the “Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging” area, which accounted for approximately 40 per cent of the GDP. The result was the concentration of economic development in a few specific areas. Mining was one of the primary industries in this area, although the RSA had a diversified economy which emphasised agriculture, commerce, mining, and secondary industry, amongst others. Special attention was given to the development of secondary industry and the informal sector, the latter receiving attention for its job creation potential.<sup>35)</sup>

South Africa did not conform to the prescription that developing countries should concentrate on light, labour-intensive, industrial production. Natural resources and not labour constituted a primary source of industrial growth.<sup>36)</sup> By the early to mid-1990s, foreign trade constituted a much larger portion of the South African GNP than it did in other countries. This is termed an “open” economy and ultimately results in the economy being vulnerable to developments in the economies of important trade partners. In 1993, foreign trade constituted approximately 46,3 percent of GNP. South Africa was in a fairly good position to repay foreign debt, but also faced a soaring inflation rate.<sup>37)</sup> With the opening of a “global marketplace”, the country’s trade policies would have to be reconsidered in order to render them more consistent with those of the general international community.

South Africa thus remained reliant on the export of primary and intermediary commodities as a means of earning foreign exchange. Merchandise exports (excluding gold) accounted for 72,8 per cent of the RSA’s total exports in 1992 and this amounted to R48 810 million. Base metals, agricultural products, precious and semi-precious stones, and precious metals; as well as minerals, featured prominently in this regard. Gold exports also earned substantial foreign exchange. Capital goods, consumer goods, raw materials, and semi-manufactured goods accounted for most imports.<sup>38)</sup> The Southern Africa Customs Union between the Governments of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia, resulted in the free interchange of goods grown, produced or manufactured by these countries. South Africa also maintained formal trade relations with several other countries.<sup>39)</sup> Although real GDP declined from 1989 to 1992, there was an economic improvement in the second half of 1993, and an increase in real GDP of approximately one percent (compared to declines in previous years).<sup>40)</sup> South Africa’s 1993 GDP in Rand million (at 1990 market prices) was 270 361, which indicated a slight increase compared to that of the previous year, where statistics of 267 257 were recorded.<sup>41)</sup>

A more restrictive approach to monetary policy was adopted from 1988 as a result of the high inflation rate in South Africa. Yet the inflation rate in 1991 remained at a high 15,3 percent. This was believed to be the result of various factors, including the local drought, the international oil crisis of the time, and the implementation of value-added tax. This high rate dropped in the next few years (9,7 percent in 1993), but

the rate of inflation in South Africa remained higher than that of major trading partners. This had a negative effect on the balance of payments.<sup>42)</sup> In fact, during the 1971-1986 period, South Africa's inflation rate rose from approximately 5,75 percent to an astronomical 18,25 percent.<sup>43)</sup>

Du Toit and Falkena noted that various factors had an adverse effect on productivity growth in South Africa. These factors included the lack of high-level manpower and management skills, resulting from the already-mentioned poor and inappropriate education standards, increasing obsolete technology (primarily as a result of sanctions and the high cost of replacement), and the lack of awareness and knowledge regarding productivity standards. Political factors such as violence, sanctions, disinvestment, poor labour relations, and strikes; as well as regional conflict, were also noted. Instability often resulted in the unproductive utilisation of scarce resources. Cultural differences and social factors, for example, inadequate housing, transport, health, and social and physical security conditions, also had a negative effect on productivity growth.<sup>44)</sup>

Yet even with economic and fiscal problems and constraints, South Africa remained important to the rest of the Southern African region, especially considering that the RSA's economy was far stronger than the economies of neighbouring states. According to Harbeson and Rothchild, South Africa's share of economic activity in the region was approximately 75 percent in 1991, which was a substantial increase on the 65 percent achieved in 1960. Exports to South Africa from elsewhere in the region were, however, small as a result of differences in what is called "development profiles". This refers to the fact that South Africa imported primarily capital goods and manufactured products, while the other countries of the region were mainly exporting raw materials.<sup>45)</sup> If the RSA and her African counterparts wanted to increase trade, this situation would have to be addressed.

### 1.3.1 Industrial capacity

By the early 1990s, South Africa was considered to be a strong industrial power on the African continent and primary fields of investment included mining, metals, industrial products, and physical infrastructure. The Industrial Development and Investment Centre (IDIC) of the Department of Trade and Industry had the primary responsibility of promoting industrial development in South Africa, and various incentives were available to encourage industrialisation. The IDIC identified several factors which made South Africa an attractive investment opportunity. These included such aspects as relatively low energy costs; a developed financial sector; a market-driven economy; and a broad technological base. Other aspects were an abundance of minerals and metals; a strong physical infrastructure; available unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labour; and a strategic location which ensured easy access to major markets. Access to the markets of Southern and Central Africa was considered especially important.<sup>46)</sup>



According to Du Toit and Falkena, international competitiveness: "Is the extent to which conditions in countries are conducive or detrimental to the domestic and global competitiveness of economic sectors, industries and business enterprises in those countries". As already noted, the South African economy was characterised by certain strengths and weaknesses which had a substantial influence on international competitiveness. As regards financial aspects of the economy, a massive outflow of foreign capital since the mid-1980s resulted in a relatively low level of foreign reserves by the 1994/95 period. This had a negative influence on fixed investment. There was also a relatively small tax base for financing government expenditure. High unit labour costs were the result of low productivity in comparison to remuneration levels. In addition to all these factors, were substantial social needs regarding training and education, health services, and housing.<sup>47)</sup>

It was concluded that in order to improve South Africa's international competitiveness, certain measures would have to be undertaken. These included a reduction in the population growth rate; an increase in foreign investment and socio-political stability; and the encouragement of competition. There would also have to be an improvement in training and education standards; in productivity and motivation; and overall domestic economic performance. A reduction as regards protectionism was recommended.<sup>48)</sup>

The South African manufacturing industry accounted for 22,5 per cent of the GDP in 1992 and employed 1,4 million people. Consumer, intermediate and capital goods were produced and there was a noticeable increase in the average size of manufacturing establishments. Most of the necessary materials were available from local sources and dependence on foreign sources for industrial raw materials declined. In 1991, the value of manufactured exports totalled R22 610 million, while that of imported manufactured products totalled R40 597 million. In that same year, domestic demand for manufactured goods surpassed R196 000 million. The price of manufactured goods was also seen to rise in the 1980-92 period as a result of such factors as the devaluation of the Rand, the introduction of sales duties, and a rise in the cost of basic goods.<sup>49)</sup>

RSA foreign trade in Rand million

Imports:

	1990	1993 <sup>1</sup>	1970-1993 <sup>2</sup>
Food	1 504,5	3 865,1	17,1%
Inedible raw materials	1 763,4	2 878,7	11,3%
Chemicals	5 527,2	6 600,4	16,4%
Textiles	1 456,7	2 661,4	12,9%
Metals and metal products	2 154,3	2 610,2	12,0%
Machinery	13 455,9	17 169,3	14,4%
Motor vehicles	4 751,3	8 928,3	14,3%
All other manufactured goods	7 632,8	9 085,3	15,3%
Unclassified	5 878,9	5 274,6	18,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44 125,0</b>	<b>59 073,2</b>	<b>14,7%</b>

Exports (including re-exports):

	1990	1993 <sup>1</sup>	1970-1993 <sup>2</sup>
Food	3 866,1	5 419,4	13,4%
Metal ores	3 272,0	3 699,3	17,3%
Chemicals	2 174,0	3 373,6	18,9%
Diamonds, excluding industrial diamonds	5 374,8	10 137,4	21,7%
Metals and metal products	8 149,1	9 917,9	17,1%
Machinery and transport equipment	2 514,3	5 503,1	18,5%
Other	17 508,3	19 205,5	16,4%
<b>Total, excluding gold</b>	<b>42 858,6</b>	<b>57 256,2</b>	<b>17,1%</b>
<b>Gold: export value</b>	<b>18 069,9</b>	<b>22 226,2</b>	<b>15,3%</b>

Source: RSA, Central Statistical Service, *RSA statistics in brief*, 1994, p.12.

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary

<sup>2</sup> Compound growth rate

### 1.3.2 Technological capability

As noted in the previous chapter, South Africa became isolated on many fronts, including the technological field, as a result of the international sanctions campaign. It was especially in the field of military technology where the RSA was compelled to resort to own capability. South Africa also developed a space programme and launched various test rockets, the second launch taking place in late 1990. At that time, it was speculated that the first space launch could take place within as little as three years. South Africa also managed to export technology, including to the Soviet Union where South African businesses were contracted in a resettlement programme for victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.<sup>50)</sup>

Contrary to the period when survival was an issue and the emphasis had to be placed solely on military technology, by the early 1990s, South Africa was also focusing on a wider range of technologies and the need for an official technology policy. It was recognised that the private sector was a vital element in this regard, as infrastructure and manpower were insufficient if companies were not interested in developing and utilising new technology. The RSA was facing a new situation at the end of the Cold War era and international competition was a primary concern. Unfortunately, South Africa was also facing an uncertain future in the light of political negotiations towards a new political era. To further dampen enthusiasm, the gold price was under increasing pressure and as has been noted, gold was one of the RSA's most important economic features.<sup>51)</sup>

South Africa's policy of import replacement was partly blamed for the country's lack of technological development in that local companies copied foreign technology under licence, but were not internationally competitive and were able to survive without developing local products or original technology. It became an important issue for scientific activity to keep pace with the requirements of industry and emphasis was also placed on technology transfer. In 1992, the years of emphasis on military technology had clearly taken their toll and South Africa was spending a mere 0,3 percent of the world's research and development budget. Other reasons for the RSA's limited international economic role were the lack of competitive advantage and the fact that predominantly raw materials and not manufactured products were exported. There were also other negative effects of international isolation. In an attempt to rectify the situation, the South African Government planned to introduce an official technology policy. The aim of the policy was to ensure a focus on ingenious South African products which could be successfully exported. Expensive, high-risk innovations were therefore to be avoided. The African market was once again emphasised, especially as regards technology transfer. It was, however, noted that local political change had diminished the importance of technology development, although it was realised that technology was a weapon against poverty.<sup>52)</sup>

The primary difference between the period under discussion and the one preceding it was thus that the emphasis as regards technology development was now moving away from pure military equipment, to technologies that were more financially viable on international markets.

### 1.3.3 Communications infrastructure

It has already been established that South Africa possessed an advanced and modern transport system. Several Southern African countries, in fact, utilised the RSA's transport system to move their imports and exports. This indicates the importance of South Africa's transport infrastructure not only for the RSA's own economy, but also for the economies of other African states. Yet investment in South Africa's economic infrastructure continued its downward trend in the early 1990s, where a level of approximately 12 percent of total gross domestic fixed investment was reached. This figure can be compared with the approximate 28 percent of the early 1970s.<sup>53)</sup>

The RSA developed an extensive network of roads that linked far-lying urban areas and stretched from the Cape to the country's Northern borders. These roads were both well-constructed and well-travelled. In 1992, a total of 288 061 new vehicles were registered in South Africa. Although this indicated a decrease from the figures of previous years, the number of total vehicle registrations practically tripled from 1970 to 1992 to 6 339 605.<sup>54)</sup> This indicated increasing use of national roads, which in turn had to be continually improved to maintain pace with the increasing amount of vehicles on the road. Transnet was considered the national carrier and consisted of the national railway system (Spoornet), South African Airways (SAA), port support services (Portnet), an extensive road transport service (Autonet), and pipelines for the transportation of petroleum products (Petronet). Transnet was one of the largest business enterprises in the country, providing employment for some 160 000 people in December 1991 and possessing capital assets exceeding R35 000 million.<sup>55)</sup> SAA was the largest commercial airline in Africa and operated a complex system of national and international services.

Water supply and demand continued the upward trend in the period under discussion. In 1990, total demand reached 19 043 million m<sup>3</sup> and this was an increase on the figures from the previous decade. Total supply was 36 420 million m<sup>3</sup> and demand as a percentage of supply reached the 52,3 percent level. It can be noted that although demand had increased steadily over the years, the level of total supply had remained relatively stable. Although water supply was plentiful, the positive gap between supply and demand was closing, which indicated a possible problem in the future.<sup>56)</sup>

As regards the local railway system, electrical power was considered to be more economical and most traffic was pulled by electric locomotives. By the early 1990s, there were 2 243 electric locomotives in service and Transnet also possessed 1 407 diesel locomotives, as well as 20 narrow-gauge locomotives. The world-famous Blue Train regularly undertook the trip between Pretoria and Cape Town and became a popular

tourist attraction.<sup>57)</sup> As noted, the South Africa transport system also provided a trade link with the rest of the world for several land-locked countries in the region, including Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. Namibia and the Shaba province of the former Zaïre also made use of the RSA's transport system. It is particularly the extensive distances between South Africa's harbours and inland urban centres that necessitate such a well-developed transport system. During the period under discussion, there were also twelve major ports located along the coastline of the subcontinent, six of them in South Africa.<sup>58)</sup>

As already mentioned, Escom provided approximately half of the electricity generated on the African continent and electricity was thus a national export. Further progress was made during 1993 as regards the establishment of a Southern African power grid. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project was considered to be the largest water supply scheme ever undertaken in Africa. Lesotho would not only have a source of electricity as a result of the project, but would also obtain income generated through the transfer of its excess water to the RSA.<sup>59)</sup> Communications in South Africa also increased, including the number of telephones, newspapers and the amount of mail handled.<sup>60)</sup> South Africa thus possessed a complex communication network, which was vital for the transport of goods and materials. This network was also essential for keeping pace with developments in the rest of the world, particularly considering the RSA's relatively isolated position at the tip of the African continent.

It is clear that South Africa possessed a relatively strong economy in the years under discussion in this chapter, especially in relation to the rest of the African continent. In light of the increasing marginalisation of Africa, the economic benefits of good relations with South Africa became even more important. Changes in the international environment also affected the need for a strong military capability. As direct threats and challenges diminished, socio-economic problems began to surface and clamour not only for government attention, but also for government funding.

#### 1.4 Military capability

The fall of the former Soviet Union, as well as the policy statements of State President De Klerk on 2 February 1990, had a profound influence on the national security of South Africa. It was clear that the threat situation was perceived to be at a low level and that national funding priorities were to change. This change in priorities was reflected by a substantial decrease in the Defence Force budget. The Defence Force was also faced with the task of becoming credible, cost-effective and legitimate. The internal situation in the RSA in the early 1990s remained characterised by instability and achievement of the above-mentioned aim was thus difficult to attain. The international situation, however, had changed considerably. Africa was slowly becoming marginalised by the developed nations of the world in favour of developing Eastern European states, and the traditional determinants of South African strategic significance, including mineral reserves and the Cape Sea Route, had lost much of their significance as the world became increasingly

interdependent. There was also less emphasis on Soviet expansionism and thus on South Africa's significance as an anti-communist ally on the African continent.<sup>61)</sup>

The post-Cold War period and the diminished threat perceptions that followed, led to a decrease in importance for the military establishment. Whereas it was deemed necessary to build and maintain a strong military presence during the Cold War period, attention now turned to more domestic problems, such as the social upliftment of communities and education priorities. This new era was also accompanied by political and economic liberalisation in Africa, as well as a revival of ethnic/nationalist sentiment. The result was increasing instability on the continent. Yet this instability did not necessarily reduce the requirement for force reductions as regards the SADF.<sup>62)</sup>

The primary role of the SADF, according to the *Defence Force Review* of 1993, remained the countering of external threats; while the provision of assistance as regards internal stability would form a secondary role. This role would be prioritised at certain times, although not at the expense of the primary task. A third role would be the promotion of socio-economic development and the provision of other essential non-military services.<sup>63)</sup>

#### 1.4.1 An overview of the defence budget

In 1989, following the conflict in Angola and the implementation of the negotiated settlement plan, the SADF began a strategic re-evaluation and replanning process. Changes abroad, such as those in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were also taken into account, as was the changing situation in Southern Africa. These factors and the importance of a strong economy which ultimately necessitated a reduction in government spending, eventually resulted in a reduction in the 1990/1991 SADF budget request. The changes mentioned above made it possible to cancel, delay or postpone certain armaments projects, as well as reduce the initial military service period by half (to a year). It was also possible to reduce operating expenditure, although the retention of armaments-related technology was considered vital. Considering the importance of a strong economy, the concepts of cost-effectiveness and productivity would also be applicable to the SADF, although there remained an emphasis on the retention of flexible and balanced capabilities for projection as a regional force "with a credible deterrent and pro-active self-defence capability".<sup>64)</sup>

The 1990/91 budget represented a decline of RM 357 compared to the 1989/90 budget (RM 9 937). This figure represented 13,8 percent of the total state budget and 3,7 percent of the estimated GNP. Although this compared favourably with international figures in this regard, this was lower than the 15,4 percent and 4,2 percent of 1989/90.<sup>65)</sup> An amount of RM 9 187 was then voted for 1991/92, which represented a decrease of RM 884 compared to the previous year's vote. A comparison in real terms between the 1991/92 allocation and that of 1989/90 indicated a decrease of almost 30 percent. The defence budget for 1991/92

represented 11,0 percent of anticipated State expenditure and 3,0 percent of the estimated GDP. The SADF and Armscor conducted a re-evaluation process in accordance with changes to the South African threat profile and governmental spending priorities. One aspect of importance was that no provision was made in the defence budget for the expansion of troop deployment for the internal unrest situation. Additional funds would have to be requested if any large-scale assistance to the SA Police was to be effected. Although cognisance was taken of new social priorities for the State, it was noted that any further cuts to the defence budget could only be considered once the internal political situation had stabilised.<sup>66)</sup>

It was, however, becoming increasingly difficult to spend money on defence. As part of the structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and the World Bank, specific demands were made as regards reductions in military expenditure and the reallocation of resources for socio-economic requirements. It appeared that a conditionality of a maximum of 2 percent of GDP for the armed forces had been agreed upon.<sup>67)</sup>

#### 1.4.2 Manpower and armaments

The SADF was suffering a crisis of trust and legitimacy, as well as professionalism in the early 1990s. The idea to revive a Council of Defence (COD) in South Africa, which was first used with the establishment of the Union Defence Force, was tabled by the SADF during negotiations regarding the *Code of Conduct* for the SADF in terms of the National Peace Accord. According to Cilliers, the purpose of the COD should be: "To serve as an expert commission to investigate and report upon the role, tasks and composition of the armed forces...and associated strategic armaments industry in a post-settlement South Africa". It should also report to the multi-party sub-council of defence and to a multi-party parliamentary committee. At the time, South Africa was not facing a threat of military invasion from any of its neighbours, although the country's stability was influenced by that of the region. There was thus an emphasis on regional security.<sup>68)</sup>

In 1992, the SADF was composed of 105 000 full-time members and also faced the integration of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) armed forces and *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) soldiers into a future military force. At that stage, a large number of SADF soldiers were either already involved or earmarked for internal law-and-order tasks and it became apparent that the future SADF would have to have its role and tasks redefined and numbers reduced.<sup>69)</sup> Act No 132 of 1992 proposed to amend the *Defence Act*, No 44 of 1957 and this amendment resulted in weakened civilian and political control over the military, as the Chief of the SADF now possessed statutory powers as regards deployment. The Act also provided for the use of the SADF for law and order duties as part of its primary functions.<sup>70)</sup> The SA Police were, however, dependent on the SADF at the time in order to combat crime and political violence in South Africa. The system of White male conscription was likely to be discontinued and the entire National Service function was, in fact, under review. There was general agreement in political circles that the future military manpower procurement policy of the military would involve an increase in the volunteer component. This

would imply that strategic considerations would not be the only determinant of decisions as regards manpower supply.<sup>71)</sup>

The situation was, however, a sensitive one, especially considering the implications of manpower reductions, the integration of the various military forces, and the legitimacy crisis of the SADF. Extensive constitutional changes were likely in the RSA from early 1993 and in November of that same year, the SADF was approached by the Constitutional Development Services for proposals regarding defence-related issues to be addressed in the *Interim Constitution*.<sup>72)</sup>

South Africa's acquisition policy in the 1990s reflected the requirement for self-sufficiency, in that the emphasis was on the maximum utilisation of the RSA's industrial sector. Imports were restricted to those items which, for technological reasons, could not be manufactured in South Africa or which should not be manufactured due to economic reasons. The acquisition policy was aimed at the exploitation of the total industrial infrastructure of South Africa, while minimising the risk of high-technology, high-quality production and utilising the advantages of the private sector. The assembly of strategic weapons and ammunition was owned and controlled by Armscor manufacturing subsidiaries due to the sensitivity of such weaponry.<sup>73)</sup>

As already noted, the international arms embargo only managed a relatively small degree of success, as the RSA managed to import certain types of military technology. Components and component technologies were acquired from various international sources. There was an emphasis on high-technology items and technological processes as their transfer was easier to conceal than actual weapons transfers. They were also more difficult to define as strictly military goods and applications. Yet there is no denying that attempts to evade arms sanctions did have substantial financial implications for South Africa. Grundy noted in the early 1990s that although there had been a relative degree of improvement in certain technologies as a result of the turn to own capability, other technologies had deteriorated over time. The RSA was considered vulnerable in the areas of high-performance aircraft, helicopters, electronics and computers, and naval vessels. Yet progress had been made as regards ammunition, low-technology equipment, military vehicles, light aircraft, communications equipment, and small and medium weaponry. Success through research had also been achieved in the related fields of energy, materials, chemicals, automotive and commercial vehicles, and metals.<sup>74)</sup> The issue of trade with South Africa during the arms embargo is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

One aspect of technology where particular emphasis was placed was that of electronic warfare (EW). The Telecommunications and Electronic Warfare Directorate of the SADF was responsible for the overall management of the telecommunication and electronic warfare functions of the South African Defence Force. The South African Communication Security Agency was responsible for the provisioning of all communication security cryptographic material and equipment for all state departments in the RSA; while



the South African Telecommunications and Electrical Power Supply Authority was tasked with the co-ordination and limiting of all telecommunications and electrical power supply so as to provide for the most essential services during an emergency.<sup>75)</sup>

The SA Air Force was in possession of a modern command-and-control network and other high technology technical facilities were also available. These facilities were utilised for the repair and modification of equipment. They were also used for the design and manufacture of replacements, for spares and components should they not be available as a result of the arms embargo. It was considered vital for the SA Air Force to possess sufficient own capability for the repair and maintenance of operational airfields.<sup>76)</sup>

The manufacture of the sophisticated *Rooivalk* helicopter, which was eventually purchased by the South African Air Force, was one of the results of the RSA's military technology programme. Upgrade programmes for military equipment and weaponry also included maximum involvement of local manufacturers. This was perceived as vital not only for creating job opportunities within South Africa, but also for preventing the large outflow of capital from the country and for keeping the RSA competitive on international markets.<sup>77)</sup> Thus despite restrictions on the transfer of technology to South Africa, the RSA managed to either gain access to or to locally develop, the necessary technology for civilian and military use.

South Africa thus possessed an abundance of tangible resources, which contributed to the RSA's primary position on the African continent and to the country's overall position in the international community. South Africa was rich in strategic minerals, occupied an important strategic position on the Southern tip of the African continent, and possessed a relatively strong military capability. The country also had considerable economic potential. Yet a nation's population remains a vital contributor to perceptions of strategic significance. The size and distribution of a population, their education and unemployment levels, all play a role in this regard.

The opening of the global marketplace to former Eastern European countries resulted in increased trade with these countries and to a certain extent, South Africa lost a degree of strategic significance by 1993, especially as regards such aspects as the provision of strategic minerals which could now be obtained elsewhere. As communism was perceived as having lost its impact and support of the past, the position of South Africa as an anti-communist stronghold in Africa was no longer considered essential. Yet there could be no denying that the RSA was a valuable player, especially economically, on the African continent. In this regard, African states who were also experiencing post-Cold War marginalisation, were looking to South Africa for economic support and co-operation, especially in light of internal change towards democracy within the RSA. In the period under discussion in this chapter, it is thus clear that South Africa still possessed substantial natural resources and economic potential.

When a broad comparison is made between this period and the one ending in 1989, it is clear that the RSA remained practically self-sufficient as regards food production. There also continued to be a demand for South Africa's minerals, and energy exports were an additional source of national income. Foreign trade in general was vital to the South African economy. Contrary to the preceding period, there was an increase in GDP in 1993. This can be compared to the slump experienced in South Africa's growth performance in the 1960s, 1970s and again in the 1980s.

Yet tangible resources are insufficient in the formulation of a capability analysis unless they are combined with a range of non-tangible elements. These elements include aspects such as national morale and political leadership. In South Africa, it became difficult to perceive how uneducated, politically-motivated students would contribute to the economy when violence and crime were rife, and morale was low. The less tangible characteristics of a nation must thus be examined to determine how they affect strategic significance.

## **2. Non-tangible determinants of national capability**

The post-Cold War period and domestic changes in South Africa held certain implications for the country's non-tangible resources. A nation's overall morale and faith in its leaders also play an extensive and critical role as regards national capability. Without a positive level in these attributes, a nation's natural resources cannot be utilised to their full extent and a true position of strategic significance cannot be achieved. It has been established in the previous chapter that many South Africans were more interested in the resolution of internal problems than they were in international concerns and relations. There was, however, a certain degree of national defiance in the face of international sanctions. Although times were uncertain, many South Africans held the perception that the threat of military attack was minimal and therefore did not support an increase in defence expenditure. National morale was low as a result of such factors as international sanctions, minority group fears and political violence. Yet South Africa was on the road to political reform and a process of democratisation had begun. The question now is whether these intangible elements of national capability changed over the next few years until 1993.

### **2.1 National character and morale**

In the period under discussion, South Africans continued to turn increasingly towards local problems. There was even less interest in the international community than before, as the country slowly began to recover from the years of punitive sanctions. The possibility of a military attack was scarcely considered by the average person and as has been ascertained, the military budget was constantly shrinking. Social concerns now took centre stage. There was also the issue of a future government and how minority rights would be guaranteed. As already noted, major political changes in South Africa began with State President F.W. de Klerk's address to Parliament on 2 February 1990. What followed has been termed a negotiating process, which culminated in the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) in September 1993.

These events were viewed positively by many countries and international organisations and in response, any remaining restrictive measures were to be lifted in a phased manner. It was anticipated that should negotiations continue and elections be held in 1994, South Africa would eventually be able to resume full international relations. It was recognised that membership of international and multilateral economic organisations and institutions was vital to the economic welfare and development of the country.<sup>78)</sup>

The South African economy was not considered in a positive light by many citizens in 1991. An inflation rate of 15 percent was recorded that year, although unemployment was still considered a greater problem.<sup>79)</sup> After years of isolation and the negative effects of sanctions, South Africa was in dire need of international economic transactions and trade, but local conditions had a negative effect on international perceptions and investors were wary as regards investment opportunities in the RSA. Frequent strikes crippled many businesses, which were forced to close down. This in turn increased the level of unemployment and welfare organisations struggled to cope with the increasing influx of poverty-stricken people.

According to a survey undertaken in the early 1990s, the high level of unemployment, lack of adequate housing, poverty, continuing violence, and other political problems were listed as socio-economic priorities by many citizens. The two major concerns named, however, were “racial attacks” and “violence”. Although the issue of survival was of grave concern, for Whites, Asians and Coloureds, this primarily revolved around their positions and rights in a future South Africa; while Blacks linked survival to threats to their lives.<sup>80)</sup> It was also apparent that conflict could result among the various groups as regards socio-economic resources. Three policy issues, namely, legislated affirmative action; Black claims on White land; and higher taxes on Whites to fund additional welfare projects were noted. South Africa’s political culture was also recognised as being uneven.<sup>81)</sup>

One significant trend towards the latter half of 1991, was that few Africans were positive about a peaceful future in South Africa and more than half of the African respondents in urban areas felt unsafe. This percentage was much higher than for the other population groups (Asians 34 percent, Whites 29 percent and Coloureds 18 percent), as these groups showed a decline in feelings of unsafety. Yet a slight majority of respondents believed that there was enough mutual goodwill to ensure a peaceful future for South Africa. Only 11 percent of respondents were considering emigrating towards the latter half of 1991. As regards cultural identity, many indicated that they perceived themselves to be South Africans first and members of a cultural group second. This was contrary to the popular perception that many citizens were closely linked to their cultural identity.<sup>82)</sup>

It should be noted that although much of the violence in the country at the time appeared to be politically motivated, there was also an increase in the level of criminal violence. The majority of respondents were, in fact, of the opinion that violence was not politically justified. There could be no denying that South Africa was in the process of rapid political change and many believed that civil war was indeed a possibility. The

South African State President had also emphasised in Parliament that civil war was likely if the increasing violence was not tempered.<sup>83)</sup> These so-called rumblings of civil war had a negative effect on the economy as investors became increasingly sceptical as regards the safety of their investments.

Crime in South Africa rose to such high levels in 1992 that for many citizens, a negotiated settlement was not the only concern. The SA Police recorded a total of 1,7 million serious offences for 1991. The first four months of 1992 witnessed a 6 percent increase in serious crime compared to the same period for 1991. Murder had increased by 39 percent, robbery by 35 percent and rape by 15 percent over a five year period. The perception of crime among ordinary citizens indicated that 52 percent believed it highly probable or probable that they would be victims of serious crime within twelve months. These crime levels had a negative impact on the quality of life of individuals and according to a 1992 survey, approximately 50 percent indicated that they had changed their activities or behaviour as a result of a fear of crime. As many as 32 percent reported that this fear, in fact, affected their enjoyment of life to a "great extent".<sup>84)</sup>

South Africa's voters were recorded as confused and inconsistent. By April 1992, however, there was less support for radical political protest and complete political power. There was also substantial support for ethnic self-determination and devolution. Yet it was clear that the greatest areas for conflict would revolve around such issues as land redistribution and racial quotas in employment.<sup>85)</sup>

In 1993, violence and crime merely continued to spiral upwards, partly as a result of rising unemployment, with murder and armed robberies everyday occurrences. Large quantities of weapons were smuggled across the South African border and later used in various criminal acts. The SA Police were powerless and policemen and women became the targets of many brutal attacks. Originally viewed with great suspicion and distrust by the Black population, efforts were made to improve the image of the SA Police from enforcer of apartheid laws, to an emphasis on service and community policing. Yet the SA Police were still not perceived as legitimate by Black communities. This not only impeded police work, but had a negative effect on national morale. SA Police members were accused of involvement in and the instigation of political violence. Criminals took advantage of this political illegitimacy by preventing proper investigations, removing exhibits and even attacking policemen. A complete change of the SA Police thus became necessary in order to make it an apolitical institution.<sup>86)</sup>

Unrest in the Black communities was particularly rife between ANC and Inkatha supporters. Violence increased to such a level that even funeral processions of opposing political parties were attacked. Black males living in hostel arrangements were considered an instigating factor in this regard and the South African Government was criticised for its lack of control of the volatile situation. Stayaways and protest marches often resulted in chaos and the loss of life. Intimidation was common and those who attempted to go to work were threatened. Property was also often destroyed. Black policemen and women living in these areas were particularly vulnerable.

According to the Institute of Race Relations, political violence claimed as many as 17 260 lives in nine years and all indications were that this high level of violence was likely to increase. Prior to March 1990, there had never been more than 300 politically-related deaths in one month. After this date, however, such deaths increased dramatically. As already mentioned, policemen were prime targets in certain areas and 1 029 on-duty policemen were killed from the end of June 1983 to October 1993.<sup>87)</sup>

Another issue that had a negative effect on national morale was that of minority group rights. The Black majority was now set to take power from the White minority and a certain degree of fear and unease was to be expected. A future South African Government would need to allay the fears of the country's minority groups, who felt that their existence was being threatened. Experience has shown that a group which perceives itself as being excluded quickly becomes a source of social instability, and minority groups should therefore not be ignored. A spokesman for the Institute of Race Relations believed the central problem in South Africa was the reconciliation of the legitimate rights of the majority with the fears of minorities. Adding to the scenario was the fact that ANC credibility amongst the White population was generally low and any assurances made by party leaders as regards future minority rights were not taken as guarantees. A primary fear of minority groups (including Whites, Indians and Coloureds) was that the standard of education in South Africa would drop considerably after the Black majority came to power. There was also the fear that a landslide victory for the ANC would increase the chances of the new government ignoring any previous "guarantees" of power sharing and overall minority rights.<sup>88)</sup>

The level of crime in South Africa had thus become unacceptably high and this had a significant effect on national morale. Political change was pushed into second place as citizens admitted that crime had indeed altered their quality of life. It became clear that reducing the level of crime would become one of the most important issues that both the government at the time and the future government would have to address. Yet on a more positive note, many South Africans were receptive to the idea of a better future for all. The average citizen wanted an end to the rampant violence and crime, and realised the necessity of a stable internal situation for a successful economy.

National morale in South Africa thus continued to be low in the period under discussion in this chapter, particularly as a result of the on-going violence and crime in the country. The violence had such an effect on the average person, that although many South Africans were in favour of a negotiated settlement, the importance of a political settlement began to slip down the priority list. The importance of non-tangible determinants of national capability should thus not be underestimated as they indeed have an influence on perceptions of strategic significance. An abundance of natural resources will be insufficient if the population and its leadership are either unwilling or unable to utilise them.

## 2.2 Political organisation

In the years under discussion in this chapter, South Africa experienced profound political change which placed the country even further along the road to democracy. It was during this period that a date was set for a general election and many citizens began to express concern as to who would run the South Africa of the future and how the government of the day was going to handle the transition. In a survey conducted in early 1991, 60,1 percent of respondents were in favour of a unitary state, while 21,2 percent were against and 18,7 percent were undecided. In most of the surveys conducted on various issues, it was the high level of undecided respondents which caused concern. More than 43 percent of Whites were opposed to a unitary state, while almost all Blacks were in favour.<sup>89)</sup>

The majority of respondents in 1991, however, supported the incorporation of Black leaders into government. There was also agreement that mass political violence would slow the process of democratisation. By April 1991, 55 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that life in the new South Africa would be an improvement on current conditions.<sup>90)</sup> Yet there was no denying the general uncertainty about the political future of the country.

The reform process, however, was not without conflict. There were people on the left and right of the political spectrum who criticised De Klerk's "illegitimate" government. The rightwing was convinced that the National Party was now removed from its White support base as a result of liaison with the "enemy" ANC-SACP alliance.<sup>91)</sup>

The *National Peace Accord* was signed by various political parties and organisations on 14 September 1991. The aims of the *Peace Accord* were to assist in the restructuring of communities, and to bring about peace and prosperity in the country. Other aims included the establishment of a multi-party democracy. The *Accord* accepted the principles of freedom of speech and expression; freedom of association; freedom of movement; peaceful gatherings and peaceful political activity; as well as the principles of freedom of conscience and religion.<sup>92)</sup>

Multiparty talks were held in South Africa in December 1991 in the form of CODESA I (Convention for a Democratic South Africa). CODESA II followed, but negotiations ended in June of the following year when the parties continued to disagree about certain fundamental issues, such as the majorities required to set the powers of the regions. The ANC, with Nelson Mandela as its president, suspended talks with the South African Government as a result of the Boipatong incident on 17 June when 39 lives were lost. Demands were set regarding aspects such as the release of political prisoners if negotiations were to continue. Mass action was also planned. In support of the ANC, nine other parties withdrew from CODESA. Eventually, in late September, representatives of both the ANC and the South African Government managed to agree on a *Record of Understanding*, which made provision for an elected

constitution-making body for the drafting and adoption of a new constitution. This body would also act as an interim government of national unity.<sup>93)</sup>

By late 1992, multi-party negotiations, which were intended to eventually result in an interim government for South Africa, were in doubt as a result of allegations of destabilisation by South African intelligence services. Chief Buthelezi and the Inkatha Freedom Party were distanced from the negotiations until reassurances were given regarding such aspects as regional powers and a federal constitution. The ANC also insisted on a date for elections for a transitional government prior to the commencement of multi-party negotiations. These and other problems served to heighten the general level of distrust and threaten the continuation of negotiations. There was also a tendency among the parties to take positions which would delay negotiations even further. This was perceived as an indication that not all participants were interested in a joint government. Yet according to a 1992 survey, between 98 and 100 percent of respondents were in favour of negotiations. The situation in 1992 was thus characterised by a general desire for negotiations, but resistance by many to the idea of an interim government. The concept of an interim government was especially unpopular among Whites and Coloureds.<sup>94)</sup>

Violence was a prominent issue in the minds of many South Africans during the early 1990s and citizens were unhappy with what was perceived as unsuccessful government attempts to reduce political violence. In fact, the two most significant factors retarding the negotiation process were this high level of violence, as well as the ANC's demand that real negotiations be preceded by a general one-man-one-vote election based on a common voter's roll. There was, however, consensus among all population groups that the government of the day should continue in its role until the first election under a new constitution had taken place. The South African Government in the meantime continued to move away from its apartheid policies, including the *Land Acts* of 1913 and 1936, and the *Population Registration Act* of 1950. The repeal of such legislation and the release of political prisoners were considered prerequisites by the international community for the lifting of sanctions. According to a 1991 survey, most South Africans were in favour of the lifting of sanctions.<sup>95)</sup>

There were thus various positive attempts made by both the South African Government and the country's citizens towards reconciliation. Although the structure of a future government was still under debate, many agreed that change was necessary and irreversible. Negotiations with all role-players eventually led to the setting of a date for a general election, namely, 26 to 28 April 1994, and the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993), was adopted on 22 December 1993.<sup>96)</sup>

The *Constitution* states the following in the preamble.<sup>97)</sup>

“- Whereas there is a need to create a new order in which all South Africans will be entitled to a common South African citizenship in a sovereign and democratic constitutional state in which there

is equality between men and woman and people of all races so that citizens shall be able to enjoy and exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms;

- and whereas in order to secure the achievement of this goal, elected representatives of all the people of South Africa should be mandated to adopt a new *Constitution* in accordance with a solemn pact recorded as Constitutional Principles;
- and whereas it is necessary for such purposes that provision should be made for the promotion of national unity, and the restructuring and continued governance of South Africa while an elected Constitutional Assembly draws up a final *Constitution*.”

This *Constitution* would come into effect on 27 April 1994 and would make provision for, amongst other things, a President; two Deputy Presidents; and a multi-party Cabinet. Authorities were also established on the provincial level.<sup>98)</sup>

In the period under discussion in this chapter, there was thus increasing emphasis on negotiation and reconciliation. The rising levels of crime and violence in the country had succeeded in lowering morale across all population groups and this further motivated support for the peace process. The new *Constitution* can be considered an important element in this process in that it stressed national unity.

### 2.3 Political leadership

President F.W. de Klerk’s speech in early February 1990 was considered a landmark for South Africa and resulted in a high level of local popularity and support (74 percent agreed with the overall content of the speech) for De Klerk. Afrikaans-speaking Whites remained the most conservative of all the groups, especially as regards support for socio-political democratisation. According to a survey conducted in the early 1990s among a racially-mixed group of South Africans, Nelson Mandela and De Klerk were the two most acceptable persons to lead the country, although De Klerk’s support base was broader.<sup>99)</sup>

Approximately 43 percent of the sample approached in the second quarter of 1991 preferred De Klerk as national leader, compared to the 18 percent who supported Mandela. It should, however, be noted that this support was divided into population groups, ie. primarily Black support for Mandela; White, Coloured, Asian and Black support for De Klerk. Yet 39 percent of all groups refused to commit themselves politically, thus indicating a high level of political uncertainty and confidence.<sup>100)</sup> As regards political party support, most Whites in the sample supported the National Party; while Black respondents remained primarily aligned to the ANC.<sup>101)</sup>



By mid-1992, Nelson Mandela was supported by 40 percent of respondents; while President de Klerk and Dr. Buthelezi received 25 percent and 9 percent respectively. The “Don’t Know” category was still relatively high and stood at 17 percent. Support for Mandela amongst the White population group was limited to 1 percent; while Black support for De Klerk in turn dropped to 8 percent. Support for Dr. Buthelezi remained centralised in KwaZulu (Natal), and Dr. Treurnicht’s (Conservative Party) 20 percent of White support was generally confined to Afrikaans-speakers. When the general support patterns for 1992 are studied, it is clear that ANC support dropped from a high of 52 percent in February to 37 percent in April; although by July this had increased to the 40 percent mentioned above.<sup>102)</sup>

Interestingly enough, none of the other parties showed any major shifts in support. Generally, according to three surveys conducted in 1992, the ANC had the support of 65 percent of Black South Africans; 6 percent of Coloured; 7 percent of Asians; and 1 percent of Whites. This gave the ANC an overall support base of 48 percent. The NP was in turn supported by 66 percent of Coloured; 58 percent of Asian; 54 percent of White; and 4 percent of Black South Africans. This provided 20 percent of the total support. Support for the Inkatha Freedom Party was estimated to be approximately 10 percent of the total support. This support was limited to 35 percent of all Zulu-speakers (13 percent of Black South Africans) and 1 percent of White South Africans. Support for the Conservative Party was also limited to between 2 and 4 percent of the country’s total support and more specifically, to approximately 26 percent of White support. Approximately 12 percent of the population remained undecided or silent as regards their voting preference.<sup>103)</sup> It was thus clear that the ANC and the National Party had the most support and this can partly be attributed to the leadership skills displayed by De Klerk and Mandela.

In 1993, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to South African President F. W. de Klerk and ANC President Nelson Mandela, as international recognition of the peace process in South Africa. South Africans also participated in a National Peace Day on 2 September 1993, where millions prayed for an end to the violence that had claimed 10 000 lives in three years.<sup>104)</sup> Mention has been made in Chapter 1 of this study of the importance of good leadership and the level of support held by De Klerk and Mandela is an indication of their popularity. The political leadership of a country should be able to harness support for government objectives and both these leaders managed to effect considerable political change in a relatively peaceful manner. They emphasised co-operation over conflict in the reform process, something that was vital in a politically volatile society.

#### 2.4 Economic policy

South Africa possessed the potential for a strong economy, with an abundance of raw materials, strategically-placed ports, a large workforce, and technologically-advanced equipment. Unfortunately, on-going violence and employee strikes occurred on a regular basis which resulted in caution by foreign

investors, as well as political uncertainty and poor productivity. Until these problems were resolved, South Africa could not claim a place amongst the world's top economies.

In early 1990, the South African economy was primarily based on the principles of a free-market economy, private enterprise and ownership. The South African Government, however, became an entrepreneur on several occasions and various conferences were held in an attempt to foster co-operation between public and private sectors. The primary function of the State was to provide the necessary services (such as infrastructure) and to maintain order, in an attempt to facilitate the production of goods and services by private enterprise. The South African Government later reduced its role in the economy and remained committed to the idea of a market-orientated system. This resulted in the privatisation of several companies and industries.<sup>105)</sup>

The National Economic Forum was initiated in 1992 by trade union and employer bodies. It was later also joined by the South African Government. The primary aim of this forum was to resolve various socio-economic issues and other economic problems.<sup>106)</sup> Despite the weak performance of the South African economy since 1975, factors such as a well-developed physical and financial infrastructure, functioning market economy, relatively strong business community, South Africa's position in the region, and immense tourism potential, all signalled the potential for improvement in the economy.<sup>107)</sup>

The low price of gold, decline in domestic and foreign investment, and increased spending on unproductive schemes of social engineering or uneconomic ventures, were listed as causes of poor economic performance. Inflation reached double digit figures as early as 1973, job creation was weak and unemployment was on the increase. The economy also faced two major structural changes, namely, a realignment from mining to manufacturing as the major export earner; and a reallocation of resources from defence to socio-economic upliftment. Yet there was a certain degree of optimism for the future of the South African economy and the country appeared poised to take advantage of new trade and investment opportunities in Africa, Asia and the US.<sup>108)</sup>

According to Du Toit and Falkena, a combination of various factors would be required to increase the potential economic growth rate of South Africa. These factors included an improvement in the country's terms of trade; the expansion of export-orientated policy measures; and increased efficiency of production processes which would depend on technological, human and organisational development. Also mentioned were an increase in domestic saving and investment; a net inflow of foreign capital; and an increase in the size of the skilled labour force. The population growth rate would also have to be reduced.<sup>109)</sup>

In the first quarter of 1993, the Central Economic Advisory Service released a document titled *The Restructuring of the South African Economy: a Normative Model Approach*. Although there had been

numerous Economic Development Programmes initiated since the 1960s, the new model focused on resolving the structural problems that had gradually developed in the South African economy.<sup>110)</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

As one of the strongest and most stable countries on the African continent, emphasis has been placed on the future of South Africa as a regional partner. In later years, pressure would be placed on the RSA not only to uplift the rest of the region, but also to become involved in what was to be known as international peacekeeping. The marginalisation of Africa left the continent in a dangerous position, without allies and more importantly, financial support. South Africa gradually began to feature as a potential ally and saviour for the rest of the continent and old conflicts were pushed into the background to make way for economic concerns. The lifting of the oil embargo was also perceived as a sign of South Africa's re-acceptance into the world community. While previous years had seen an emphasis on survival of the state and government, attention could now be focused on increased economic prosperity at local, regional and international levels.

As noted, in comparison to the previous period discussed, the value of the RSA's physical resources, in particular the country's minerals, began to diminish in importance for the rest of the world as new routes and alternative markets for these resources opened. Although South Africa's economy remained relatively strong, factors such as continuing high inflation rates and poor trade policies in relation to international trading partners, weakened the South African economy on a global scale. This situation would have to be rectified by bringing South Africa in line with international standards. There were also other problems such as political factors, a lack of management skills, as well as a lack of the appropriate education standards, which further worsened the situation and had a negative effect on productivity growth in the country.

South Africa's national capability in general, however, displayed a certain increase in the 1990-1993 period, although the aspects mentioned above, as well as others such as unemployment and a decrease in immigrants, can be viewed as negative factors. Productivity growth was also negatively affected by additional factors such as crime, instability and socio-economic concerns. Following the recession during the 1980s, the South African economy was thus slow to recover, although there was an improvement by late 1993.

To improve South Africa's international competitiveness certain measures, such as a lowering of the population growth rate and an increase in foreign investment, would have to be undertaken. Yet the country still possessed the most modern transportation and communication system in Africa, a fact which did not escape the attention of the rest of the continent. This alone made South Africa an important ally, especially in the face of increasing marginalisation. Africa needed certain imports which South Africa could supply and also required transport routes for export and import purposes.

As regards the RSA's impressive defence capability, which had been established and maintained in previous years as a result of the arms embargo, this would have to take the proverbial "back-seat" for a while, as the external threat diminished and socio-economic issues began to surface. It was clear that certain government funding would be re-directed from defence to these socio-economic concerns. The defence budget decreased as a result. The defence establishment was also faced with internal transformation and a distinct lack of legitimacy. Ultimately, the emphasis moved to regional security as the importance of stability in the region became clear. South Africa's relatively strong economy, however, remained the country's most important hope for international and regional recognition. Yet until the RSA managed to curb internal violence and political conflict, an abundance of natural resources would be insufficient for a successful economy, and international investors would continue to be hesitant until this situation was rectified.

According to an article written in the early 1990s, South Africa would, however, continue to retain much of her strategic significance as a result of a relatively strong national capability; despite changes in the international environment and the end of the Cold War. Emphasis was still placed on the RSA's strategic location, where the Cape of Good Hope provides a transit route for oil tankers on their way from the Persian Gulf to the West. Mention was also made of South Africa's Indian Ocean ports and the country's abundance of minerals which are used by the industries of both Europe and the US.<sup>111)</sup>

Within the international system lie regional sub-systems and it is here that minor actors in the former become key players in the latter. South Africa is a vital regional state as regards the rest of Africa and her importance in this sub-system cannot be underestimated. All states are subjected to international pressures and the success that nations achieve in resisting these pressures depends on their respective positions of strategic significance to other members of the system. External pressures relate directly to alter perceptions of strategic importance. These perceptions are manifested through trade, investment, and diplomatic relations, as well as statements and declarations. In the past few decades, South Africa has had to face an extremely negative international community as a direct result of internal policies. This in turn had an effect on both ego and alter perceptions of strategic importance. No nation is immune to international pressures, but the more favourable the perception of strategic significance, the greater the ability to withstand these negative pressures. It is thus necessary to study ego and alter perceptions pertaining to South Africa's strategic significance in the periods under discussion in this study. This will be undertaken in the following three chapters.

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#### **CHAPTER 4: SOUTH AFRICA'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE IN TERMS OF EGO PERCEPTIONS IN THE PRE-1990 PERIOD**

As has been noted, the three components of strategic significance, namely, national capability, ego perceptions, and alter perceptions, interact with each other. The previous chapters have provided information regarding South Africa's national capability. Attention is thus now focused on the ego perceptions which were based on the RSA's national capability in the timeframe under discussion.

This chapter covers the period from World War II to approximately 1989, when State President P.W. Botha ended his term of office. The Second World War and the era immediately thereafter has been selected as a starting point as South Africa played a comparatively minor role in world affairs in earlier years. This was primarily the result of colonial ties with Britain. It was only with the onset of the Second World War that South Africa really entered the international arena and became an independent world player.

Initially a colonial power and then progressing to a sovereign nation, the RSA was alleged to have followed an "outward" policy of persuasion, threat and subversion as regards neighbouring states. Relations with the rest of the world varied, but condemnation was particularly strong on the issues of Namibia (formerly South West Africa) and South Africa's apartheid policies. The result of such condemnation was a period of international isolation which spanned the better part of four decades. This chapter will place particular emphasis on ego perceptions of strategic significance as regards South Africa's geo-strategic position, supply of strategic minerals, regional and economic prowess, and position as a Western ally.

Strategic significance is affected by ego perceptions when both leaders and the public or a relevant segment thereof, agree on the state's importance to the international community. These perceptions form the basis of the state's external policies. It is vital that ego perceptions are neither over nor underestimated, as this can lead to negative consequences as regards national strategy. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that a realistic ego perception is formulated. This will in turn ensure the formulation of a realistic national strategy. Ego perceptions are not, however, stagnant and any changes in this regard can be accompanied by resultant changes in strategic significance.

A state ascribes its role perception to the perceived importance of its commitment to regional and global interests and thus its external relations. Such role perception is largely dependent on the availability of resources to fulfil and perform the desired role. It is here that national capability and the ability to mobilise the necessary resources are of vital importance. It thus stands to reason that a stronger state, with an accompanying strong national capability, will have more commitments abroad than a smaller, less powerful state.

Many states that operate in a regional or system-wide context perceive themselves as playing a specific role. Large states can play more than one role simultaneously, while smaller states are likely to retain a single role. Throughout history, the three major orientations of isolation, coalition formation, and nonalignment have appeared repeatedly. Basically, all three relate in some way to the making or avoidance of external commitments. National roles, such as those mentioned above, provide guidelines for action and also reflect the objectives of governments on a regional and global level. It should, however, be remembered that in certain conflict situations, actions taken can contradict a nation's typical role conception in an attempt to take advantage of a certain situation.<sup>1)</sup> The availability of necessary resources will also influence such a decision and it would appear that the more active a state is in the international arena, the more role conceptions it will develop.

A brief historical description of South Africa's role during the Second World War is now offered as it provides an indication of the RSA's strategic significance at the time.

### **1. World War II and South Africa's international status in the immediate aftermath**

The Second World War was fought between the years 1939 and 1945, and involved a battle between the Axis Powers of Japan, Italy and Germany, and the Allied Powers which consisted of the US, Russia, France, Britain and their collective allies. This devastating war was fought primarily in Europe, North Africa, the Far East, and the Pacific and began as a result of Hitler's territorial aggression.<sup>2)</sup>

September 1939 brought with it a time of decision for the Union of South Africa as regards a wartime position. General Hertzog was of the opinion that the Union should remain neutral and continue with current international relations as if a war was not being fought. He based this opinion on three arguments, namely:-

- a) A declaration of war would subject the Afrikaner nation to a shock that would last for many years;
- b) The war did not involve the Union; and
- c) Germany was merely attempting to rectify the injustices committed at Versailles.<sup>3)</sup>

General Smuts offered a counter-proposal and wanted to end relations with Germany, insisting that the Union refuse to maintain an attitude of neutrality, thereby siding with Britain. He did not, however, want to send fighting forces overseas, although he stressed that Germany must be prohibited from reclaiming South West Africa with military force in the future. Following a majority vote in the "Volksraad", the Union officially gave their support to Britain in the war against Germany.<sup>4)</sup> Although the use of aircraft in the Second World War made enemy territories more accessible, the Union of South Africa was left relatively unaffected by enemy attacks. This was partly due to geographical position, as well as the fact that the Allies had "control of the seas". German submarines did, however, manage to sink several ships along the South African coast. Yet the route around the Cape was still perceived as being one of the safest during the war.

It was thus during this war that the Union took on greater responsibility as regards the protection of the sea route around the Cape. The South African Air Force even searched for enemy submarines and guided Allied ships to harbours of safety.<sup>5)</sup>

The Union also made a large contribution as regards the provision of canons, aircraft and armoured vehicles - the result of a strong national iron and steel industry. Allied ships could be repaired in the Union's harbours and the Union also sent troops into battle. South Africa became a primary supplier of food resources to Allied convoys that converged in the harbours to obtain food for the soldiers aboard, as well as for those on the warfront and certain civilian populations. Another contribution made by the Union was that of Smuts acting as an advisor to the British Government during the war.<sup>6)</sup> It is thus clear that the Union of South Africa contributed to overall Allied strength during the Second World War.

The end of the War brought a certain amount of optimism to the South African Government, which was convinced that their support during the war years had led to prestige and honour in the international community. The war had even proved favourable for the Union in that few physical hardships had been suffered and that South Africa now possessed an increased manufacturing industry due to the decreased availability of imported goods.<sup>7)</sup> Smuts dominated South Africa's foreign policy during his premiership and held enormous prestige abroad. His focus was directed at the international system as a whole and he was concerned with such issues as the rebuilding of Europe and the structure of the United Nations. Smuts was committed to the ideal of an international organisation and was involved in the drawing up of the first draft of the aims contained in the preamble to the Charter. His greatest hope was that the British Commonwealth would continue to grow in strength and support the United Nations. Smuts was convinced that the Commonwealth could become the third "Great Power" between the Soviet Union and the US.<sup>8)</sup>

Smuts believed that an emphasis on independence of action within the Commonwealth could lead to a reconciliation between the Boers and the British. He also had aspirations for increased South African influence in Africa as a result of Commonwealth membership, but was later forced away from his previous plans into a position where it became necessary to defend his country's internal racial policies. The leaders who followed Smuts thus all found themselves as defenders of the White society and overseas aspirations were temporarily forgotten.<sup>9)</sup> In fact, by the late 1940s/early 1950s, it became obvious that the Union could no longer rely solely on Britain for protection, as the latter had lost control of the seas. The Union would have to take responsibility for her own protection and survival on land, sea and in the air.<sup>10)</sup>

Attention is now focused on the key elements of South Africa's national capability and resultant ego perceptions of strategic significance. It is these elements which not only enabled South Africa to conduct various roles on the international stage, but were also the source of ego perceptions of strategic significance.

## 2. Ego perceptions based on South Africa's national capability

The strategic significance of the RSA has been reflected in changing role perceptions. These role perceptions and perceptions of strategic significance have been asserted and emphasised by various South African leaders and spokesmen, based on elements of national capability.

Three factors counted in South Africa's favour as regards strategic significance:-

- a) No state could deny South Africa's important strategic position at the Southern tip of Africa. Parts of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans can be completely controlled from the Cape and nations realised the importance of favourable relations with those in such a strategic position, especially in times of war.
- b) South Africa was also the strongest military power in Africa and was thus a key player in the battle against communist aspirations on the continent. The RSA possessed the most professional and well-equipped army and would serve as a base for armed forces in wartime. National heavy industries would be responsible for the provision of weapons and military vehicles, foodstuffs, and medical support.<sup>11)</sup> As the White buffer-states which guarded South Africa's Northern borders gradually collapsed, the RSA eventually became the last state on the African continent to be under White minority rule. The perceived Soviet threat revolved around such possibilities as the USSR gaining access to ports in Angola, Mozambique and other African states. This would have placed the Soviets in a position to harass and limit Western shipping.<sup>12)</sup>
- c) South Africa's economic wealth remained of vital importance to the international community, especially the country's rich gold deposits. The RSA also possessed coal, steel and various other important minerals, including uranium.<sup>13)</sup>

In a 1980 South African Parliamentary session, it was noted that as the African continent was the middleman between superpower conflict, South Africa, being a part of this continent, had been awarded a certain degree of importance. The reasons for this importance were stated as not only the RSA's mineral wealth, but also the relatively strong industrial sector, infrastructure, level of technological development, and the fact that South Africa was considered the only real "power" in Africa. It was even noted that the US had come to the conclusion that the defence of Western Europe depended, to a certain extent, on South Africa.<sup>14)</sup>

In a previous Parliamentary session it had been stated that the question was not how important the world was for South Africa, but rather how important South Africa was for the defence of Western democracy and for the maintenance of a stable Southern African region. It was noted that together with close neighbours in Southern Africa, South Africa held the key to the security of the Western World against

Marxist threats.<sup>15)</sup> It was also noted that South Africa had become more self-assured, partly as a result of the realisation of the factors noted above.<sup>16)</sup>

South Africa's primary focus during the apartheid and Cold War era was thus on South Africa's importance as not only an anti-communist stalwart for the West, with military power and facilities which could be utilised both in peace and wartime; but also as a supplier of strategic minerals and a valuable economic player in the Southern African region. The aspects of South Africa's national capability which had a particular influence on ego perceptions of strategic significance are discussed below.

## 2.1 Geographical location

The sea-lanes around the Cape of Good Hope have traditionally been a "bone of contention" in terms of sea control. Although the Cape Route itself is hazardous, it would be far more dangerous for ships to attempt to sail further South. This would be the ultimate scenario if the South African Government restricted waterborne traffic. From a political perspective, this gave South Africa an added advantage, especially as regards the growth of Western imports of energy.<sup>17)</sup> Much of Western Europe's oil supply in the period under discussion travelled the route around the Cape, as did a large portion of US oil imports. It was therefore vitally important for the West to prevent a pro-Soviet regime in South Africa that could impose a blockade.<sup>18)</sup>

The South African Minister of Defence in 1956, F.C. Erasmus, emphasised the importance of protecting Africa and the Cape Sea Route in particular. He noted that the demand for oil by Western nations would ultimately increase and that the Suez Canal would not be able to cope with this increased demand. It was thus vital to keep the Cape Sea Route open, in spite of enemy attempts to take control of this route and sink oil tankers.<sup>19)</sup>

In fact, from as early as the mid-1960s, an increasing amount of imports to the US and Western Europe travelled around the Cape Sea Route. This was generally as a result of such factors as the expansion of world trade, as well as the specific consequences of the closure of the Suez Canal in 1967. Even before its closure, it was becoming obvious that many oil supertankers were too large for the Suez Canal and that the only other option was therefore to use the Cape Route. Southern Africa also had a key role to play as regards the necessary surveillance for European security interests and was thus important to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) lines of communications. The fact that the USSR was active in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, as well as in Southern Africa, made the possibility of a future threat to the Cape even more realistic.<sup>20)</sup>

Prime Minister Vorster also emphasised the importance of the Cape Sea Route during the 1970s, as evidenced by the following statement when he voiced the opinion that the US was the leader and protector



of the free world and thus had a role to play in the protection of the Cape Sea Route: “We want to safeguard the Cape Sea Route because ultimately the Cape Sea Route is of more importance to the free world than to South Africa”.<sup>21)</sup>

The South African Government consistently emphasised the RSA’s geo-strategic position, for example, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, R.F. (Pik) Botha, stated the following in 1979:

“South Africa’s strategic position in the world cannot be denied. Occupying the Southern-most part in the African continent its strategic location is immediately evident, a sentinel to the world’s most important canal. Indeed it is no exaggeration to state that the closing of this gateway, mid-way between the two oceans, would have a devastating effect on the side against whom the closing is directed. We find ourselves midway between the East and the West, geographically speaking. This geographical factor might in the future assume greater significance. Our shores are washed by both the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans. It is as if we are destined either to brave the stormy seas of both oceans or to enjoy the tranquillity of our shores divorced from both. Thus far we have been a target for many and diverse forces. We have attracted stormy weather. However, we have no intention of remaining a target. We have the will and the desire and the technical skills and the resources to set up targets of our own, new objectives to be achieved. These targets would include the achievement of peace and stability in the whole of Southern Africa, the re-enforcement of mutual trust among the leaders and nations of our region and the establishment of a sub-continental solidarity which could form the basis for close co-operation in all the important spheres of life. We will have to give serious consideration to the desirability of adopting a neutral position in international affairs, a neutral position in the struggle between East and West. Our sole commitment ought to be towards the security and advancement of our own Southern African region. Southern Africa could steer a new course of its own midway between East and West. I believe that such a course could initiate a new era for the subcontinent, a new era of prosperity and greater understanding among our various peoples”.<sup>22)</sup>

Botha was responding to years of international pressure aimed at instilling reform as regards South Africa’s domestic apartheid policies. The UN General Assembly passed numerous resolutions condemning apartheid, but the South African Government insisted on non-interference in domestic affairs and thus ignored these resolutions. Attempts were made to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on South Africa, but the US and Britain initially refused to consider such pressure. These efforts will be discussed at a later stage. It was thus from as early as the 1940s that South Africa realised she could no longer rely on complete support from the former colonial power and other traditional allies.

Interestingly enough, P.W. Botha had in 1980, noted that international councils were not acknowledging the importance of South Africa’s strategic position. He made particular mention of the Cape Sea Route and stressed that although the military leaders of the West and indeed the Free World, were aware of South Africa’s strategic position and important situation, the politicians had been silent on this matter.<sup>23)</sup>

South Africa's position as the guardian of the Cape Route was reinforced by the fact that by the 1980s, some 25 000 merchant ships passed along this stretch of coast, carrying approximately 80 percent of NATO oil requirements and about 70 percent of mineral requirements. At one point, South Africa did propose the establishment of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation with such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, but this met with little response. Then there was the heavily relied-on issue of Soviet expansionism in Southern Africa, which waned in the 1980s and is noted below. The US State Department, however, issued a report in the mid-1980s stating that the Cape sea-lanes were under "minimal threat" and that the collaboration of the South African Government would not "significantly increase" the US ability to protect them.<sup>24)</sup>

In 1982, P.W. Botha made the following statement regarding South Africa's strategic significance: "South Africa is drawn into international politics simply because it is important. It is important to America, it is important to Russia, it is important to the European Economic Community".<sup>25)</sup> He continued to emphasise South Africa's role in the region in the following political statements: "We are not an island. We are firstly part of a large continent..." and "We are an African state and we have interests in Africa".<sup>26)</sup> This issue is discussed in further detail at a later part of this chapter. Botha also emphasised South Africa's strategic geographical position by stating: "It is important to Southern Africa as a trade partner, as a transport partner and it is important on the most important route round the Cape. The most important route on the globe. And it is important because of its strategic minerals... There is an interdependence between nations as far as transport and trade are concerned".<sup>27)</sup> Botha was thus, by the early-1980s, focused on South Africa's geo-strategic location and regional strength. He also continued to stress the right to self-determination and was determined that the RSA would not succumb to the disinvestment campaign.

An important part of South Africa's geo-strategic importance was the anti-communist ideology held by the nation's leaders and this is discussed below.

## 2.2 Anti-communist stalwart

By the late 1940s, Dr Malan had assured his electoral supporters that South Africa would not remain neutral if a war resulted from Russian aggression and would support the anti-communist countries. Yet after Britain's refusal to supply the RSA with arms, doubts were expressed as to the continued necessity of South Africa's unconditional support of the West.<sup>28)</sup>

By the mid-1950s, South Africa's strategic significance, particularly as regards communism, was noted by a member of the South African Parliament who emphasised that, from a strategic viewpoint, South Africa held a very important place in the world. Mention was also made of Africa's role as the key continent in the relationship between East and West.<sup>29)</sup> In 1956, Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom, referred to the communist threat that could consume the entire African continent and also noted the importance of a

combined effort to fight the common enemy. He stressed that the whole idea of co-operation and discussions between South Africa, Britain, France, Portugal and America would be in the event of a possible world war, where the South African coastline would be of value to everyone.<sup>30)</sup> In a 1961 South African Parliamentary session, South Africa's strategic significance in the struggle against communism was again noted, when it was stressed that the RSA was the base from which the Western World could attempt to regain what it had lost. South Africa would possess the only warm water route between the Eastern democracies and the West and it was emphasised that communism would be able to cut the West off from its Eastern democracies within 24 hours.<sup>31)</sup> When the UN General Assembly passed a resolution in 1961 condemning South Africa, the South African Foreign Minister, Eric Louw, threatened to retaliate against any sanctions. He is quoted as saying: "Punitive action works both ways," and mentioned withholding the use of South African harbours as an example.<sup>32)</sup>

P.W. Botha made several references to the assumption by the West that South Africa would automatically serve as an ally during a conflict situation. This was a particularly sensitive issue in light of international attempts to isolate the South Africa as a result of the country's domestic apartheid policies: "Perhaps we have tried too hard to assure the West of our support. Perhaps we should consider not letting our availability be taken for granted quite so much". He also made reference to the RSA's future neutrality when he stated: "South Africa will never fight for the West on its battlefields again. South Africa will in future be neutral. For as long as I am Minister of Defence, I will not allow the sons of South Africa to die for a West who has rejected South Africa and has completely abandoned her".<sup>33)</sup> Prime Minister Vorster was, however, aware of his country's increasing isolation and had stated that South Africa would be ready to face a communist attack alone as "certain countries who profess to be anti-communist will even refuse to sell arms to South Africa to beat off the attack".<sup>34)</sup>

State President Botha reiterated this position of neutrality in 1988, stating that South Africa was not an automatic ally of any major power and that these powers should not assume that in a great upheaval South Africa would automatically side with one of them: "For the sake of our own interests, we shall co-operate with any country that shares common interests with us. But our priority lies in Africa".<sup>35)</sup>

Soviet involvement in Angola only served to further convince the South African Government that they were facing a "Total Onslaught". As far back as 1978, P.W. Botha had stated that: "The ultimate aim of the Soviet Union and its allies is to overthrow the present body politic in South Africa and to replace it with a Marxist-orientated form of government to further the objectives of the USSR".<sup>36)</sup>

P.W. Botha emphasised the writings of a well-known strategist during a February 1980 South African Parliamentary session: "The danger for the West lies in the capture of an industrial base, the Republic of South Africa, which could finance the construction and imposition of Marxism/Leninism in its most oppressive form throughout Africa". Botha stated that the British Prime Minister believed that the RSA was

on the Soviet Union's priority list and referred to an interview with a member of the Russian Politburo, who admitted that it had been stated that the elimination of Western influence in Southern Africa was the major objective of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>37)</sup> A few months later, the South African Foreign Affairs Minister stated that if Russia was not stopped it would dominate the world. He emphasised that Russia had the technological knowledge to enslave the entire world once it had been subjugated by force.<sup>38)</sup>

The early 1980s thus witnessed an increasing preoccupation with the perceived communist threat. P.W. Botha referred to the strong military position of the Soviet Union, whose aim was the application of a "global strategy". He emphasised the value of South Africa for the West in this regard and stated that the RSA was, economically and strategically, a vital point for the West. Should Marxism take control of South Africa, however, it could become the point from whence a stranglehold could be applied on the West.<sup>39)</sup>

Other members of the South African Parliament also noted South Africa's strategic significance by emphasising South Africa's role as the most important country in such a cardinal part of the globe. It was emphasised that the Soviet Union would do everything in its power to destabilise Southern Africa so that it could deny the West access to strategic assets. The West was in turn interested in a stable South Africa because it did not want the Soviet Union to achieve its goals. South Africa had an important role to play in this situation, namely, to maintain and restore stability on the sub-continent.<sup>40)</sup> South Africa's strategic position as regards the maintenance of international stability for the democratic West and for Southern Africa in general, was thus noted and Southern Africa was considered to hold extensive strategic importance for the West, for Europe and for the US.<sup>41)</sup> The South African Minister of Defence, Magnus Malan, also emphasised the communist threat, noting that the Russian policy of expansionism was a threat to the entire region and that interest in South Africa in this regard was bound to increase.<sup>42)</sup> It was announced in 1986 by the Director of the Africa Institute of South Africa, Dr Erich Leistner, that "all out" armed internal conflict in South Africa would lead to Marxist-Leninist dictatorship in the RSA and then to the rest of the Southern African region.<sup>43)</sup>

As is evident from the statements above, South Africa was perceived, at least by local politicians and statesmen, as being vitally important in the battle against communist expansionism. It was anticipated that the RSA's key geographical position and ideological preference would be considered valuable by the international community. Yet towards the late 1980s, as the Cold War drew to a close, P.W. Botha tentatively acknowledged Soviet attempts at reconstruction when he stated that according to *Pravda*, Gorbachev had indicated that the Soviet Union was willing to make a constructive contribution towards solving the problems of Southern Africa. Botha stressed that any contribution in terms of economic aid, upliftment and development in the region would be welcomed, but should the USSR under the leadership of Gorbachev, continue to exploit Southern Africa as an area for the export of weapons and revolution, its relevance in the search for peaceful solutions would further decrease.<sup>44)</sup> Ego perceptions of strategic significance thus revolved around South Africa's importance in the battle against communism, where it was

repeatedly stressed during the period under discussion in this chapter that should the RSA fall into communist hands, the rest of the region would follow. This would undoubtedly have a significant impact on Western strategic interests in the area.

### 2.3 Military capability

As noted above, South Africa played a valuable role during the Second World War as regards the provision of facilities for Allied forces. The RSA possessed the following advantages in this regard:- (1) modern airfields for the launching and landing of patrolling aircraft; (2) the necessary command and communications systems; (3) a fully developed naval base, namely Simonstown, the only one in Southern Africa; (4) the only maritime defence forces in Southern Africa; and (5) several other large, developed harbours which could be utilised for shelter, repairs and refuelling.<sup>45)</sup>

Mention of South Africa's military power cannot be made without noting the importance of Simonstown, initially a small seaside resort close to Cape Town. It was here that the British built a dockyard on the sea route to India.<sup>46)</sup> In fact, Simonstown served as a base for the British Navy from the early 1800s and played an especially important role as an Allied naval base during the First and Second World Wars following the closure of the Suez Canal. This role contributed to South Africa's strategic significance in general. The *Simonstown Agreement* of 1955 resulted in an agreement for the handover of the base to South Africa, although Britain would retain certain privileges. The base officially became the property of the SA Navy on 1 April 1957.<sup>47)</sup> The *Agreement* was, however, terminated in 1972 by mutual agreement.<sup>48)</sup> Simonstown offered valuable facilities, such as a graving dock capable of taking two frigates; extensive dockyard facilities; air communication; and the required industry.<sup>49)</sup>

P.W. Botha emphasised the importance of the strategic location of the RSA in this regard, when he noted that in a global war, South Africa would be important in respect of the protection and/or interdiction of shipping, as a base for maritime operations, as an air base, for logistic support, and as a communications and repair base. In a localised conflict, the RSA was also of inestimable importance, even if merely used as an observation post.<sup>50)</sup>

Botha referred to the importance of both Simonstown and the strategic significance of the RSA during 1980 South African Parliamentary sessions and noted that most military leaders in the international community were well aware of this fact.<sup>51)</sup> He emphasised that the West would struggle without a stable South Africa, especially considering the RSA's industrial potential, modern harbours, including Simonstown in its modernised form, and military power.<sup>52)</sup>

It was noted in 1983 by the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Fisheries, J.W.E. Wiley, that recent international events had re-emphasised the serious threat of Russian submarines for Western nations.

In this regard, the cancellation of the Simonstown Agreement had resulted in a more self-sufficient Navy that had made tremendous technological progress.<sup>53)</sup> A level of self-sufficiency was also achieved as regards military technology in general, predominantly as a result of the international arms embargo against South Africa. In fact, of all the sanctions applied by the international community against the RSA, the arms embargo was hoped to have enough of an impact on the South African Government to result in political change.

There is, however, the perception that an arms embargo served as a compromise for several Western powers who resisted mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa.<sup>54)</sup> The trade in armaments to and from the RSA continued, however, and there was thus substantial debate as to whether the arms embargo against South Africa was, in fact, effective.

Defence Minister Botha had already in the early 1970s claimed that South Africa was almost self-sufficient as regards arms procurement and that the country did not require any armaments from the outside world for its internal defence.<sup>55)</sup> The South African perception of self-sufficiency in armaments production is reflected in the 1977 *Defence White Paper*, where it is stated that: "The RSA is fully self-sufficient in respect of armaments required for its internal protection. Although the same cannot be said in all respects as regards a conventional external threat... the RSA ensures its safety by negotiating licences for more sophisticated and expensive equipment".<sup>56)</sup>

Prime Minister Botha announced in late 1980 that: "If sanctions in one form or another are applied against us, we shall fight them tooth and nail... We have experience in fighting sanctions. An arms embargo was applied against us for a number of years, and I happened to be in the thick of that fight. We not only withstood it, but we are now in a position where we are exporting arms of sophisticated types".<sup>57)</sup> The South African Government was thus confident that the country's national capability would be strong enough to withstand international sanctions and this realisation had an important impact on ego perceptions of strategic significance. International sanctions against South Africa had little effect other than to ensure increasing resistance by the South African Government. The Armscor chairman, in fact, stated in 1983 that 74 percent of all war material was being produced within the RSA and admitted that the rest was being acquired in a clandestine manner.<sup>58)</sup> By 1985, Defence Minister Malan declared that: "We are entirely self-sufficient insofar as conception, design and development are concerned".<sup>59)</sup>

There can thus be no denying that the arms embargo resulted in the expansion of South Africa's domestic arms industry in anticipation of being denied access to traditional suppliers. In 1981-82, South Africa's arms exports were valued at \$23 million and by 1984, most of the RSA's military budget was spent on local arms production. A successful arms embargo also depends on the co-operation of all parties concerned, but South Africa managed to locate alternative suppliers of production licences, including Italy and France. South Africa purchased foreign licences for arms production from as early as 1960 and then gradually

transformed herself from arms importer to arms producer and eventually, arms exporter. This is referred to as the military industrialisation process.<sup>60)</sup>

As regards nuclear weapons, the decision to develop these weapons was made in 1974 and the requirement was intensified following the deployment of Cuban forces in Angola a year later. The perception was that in the event of threats to the RSA, the South African Government would provide details of the country's nuclear capability to Western nuclear powers and request them to intercede with the Soviet Union on their behalf in order to prevent an attack.<sup>61)</sup>

In 1977, the South African Information Minister made an ominous reference to the potential use of nuclear technology by declaring that: "Let me just say that if we are attacked, no rules apply at all if it comes to a question of our existence. We will use all means at our disposal, whatever they may be. It is true that we have just completed our own pilot plant that uses very advanced technology, and that we have major uranium resources". Yet the UN General Assembly concluded in 1980 that many analysts were convinced that the South African Government would rely on the psychological aspect of a nuclear threat and would thus resist the testing or deploying of such weapons. The South African Government then announced in 1984, that nuclear technology and material would only be exported to recipients who guaranteed placing such items under IAEA safeguards. Nuclear interests would also be administered in line with the principles of the *Non-Proliferation Treaty* and the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. It should also be noted that South Africa had, in fact, signed the *Partial Test Ban Treaty* of 1963, which prohibits nuclear tests in the atmosphere. By September 1987, Prime Minister Botha declared that the South African Government was prepared to discuss signing the NPT, which would result in IAEA inspections of nuclear facilities.<sup>62)</sup>

The South African Government thus appeared to be relatively confident as regards the RSA's military capability, especially as the international arms embargo had resulted in the stimulation of an extensive local arms industry. This further enhanced ego perceptions of strategic significance.

#### 2.4 Strategic mineral reserves

The political manipulation of prices or access to minerals within South Africa would have created serious problems for Western economies. The minerals in question were gold, diamonds, chrome, manganese, platinum, and lithium.<sup>63)</sup> Four minerals, however, were considered critical to the West's defence and industrial capacity, namely, chromium, manganese, vanadium, and the platinum-group metals. The regular supply of these essential minerals was frequently cited as sufficient justification for the maintenance of amicable relations with the South African Government. Although the mineral needs of the various Western states were different, they were each dependent on secure mineral sources outside their borders. The hardships of a complete disruption of mineral exports and imports could be minimised, however, by stockpiling and substitution development.<sup>64)</sup>

South African politicians emphasised the importance of the RSA's national resources and it was noted that these resources had long been made available to the US and the rest of the Western world through a process of honest international trading.<sup>65)</sup> South Africa found herself in a situation where resources were becoming scarce and where strategic resources held a new position in the world as a result. The belief was that the availability of certain minerals determined whether goals on a national and international level could be attained. South Africa had an important role to play in the provision of minerals and energy and this had become increasingly accepted by leading international figures who realised South Africa's importance for the West, particularly as South Africa was the primary goal of Russian imperialists in Africa. It was emphasised that whoever controlled the world's strategic resources could determine the global balance of power.<sup>66)</sup> A pro-Soviet regime in South Africa was thus to be avoided at all costs.

In May 1980, P.W. Botha once again referred to the danger of communism for the West's mineral supplies, especially if the RSA was defeated in this regard. He stressed that the West would pay a greater price than South Africa, in spite of the hope that another arrangement could be made as regards the minerals that South Africa provided.<sup>67)</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information, Mr R.F. Botha, was also convinced of the RSA's strategic significance in this regard and emphasised that control over South Africa's natural and mineral resources, in conjunction with the RSA's geographical position, would tremendously improve the position of the Soviet Union against the rest of the world".<sup>68)</sup>

The 1984 *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply* states that: "One of the major considerations of Soviet strategy with regard to Southern Africa is the control of the subcontinent's riches in strategic minerals and the denial of these to the West... Several world-wide and regional organisations, of which the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity are the most important, also lend themselves to furthering USSR objectives in Southern Africa by joining in the propaganda onslaught against the RSA".<sup>69)</sup> South Africa was thus perceived as the protector of Western interests in the region. Prime Minister Botha noted this in 1980, when he stated the following: "Russia has its eye on Southern Africa, for if it can gain control of our mineral resources, it will in some cases control the strategic minerals of the whole world since it already controls a good deal of it".<sup>70)</sup> He also noted a few years later that this nation was intent on controlling the supply of oil from the Middle East and minerals from South Africa to the West, so that it could dominate the West and force it to surrender.<sup>71)</sup>

In 1986, the South African Minister of Manpower even went so far as to suggest the establishment of a South Africa-Soviet Union precious metal cartel. Yet it was noted that it was perhaps more the price of South African minerals that was the attraction for the West as it was possible to find alternative suppliers. The US, however, considered certain strategic minerals important enough to exclude them from the *Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA)*.<sup>72)</sup> This will be discussed at a later stage. By 1987, General Malan continued to stress the intentions of the Russians to control the sea route around the Cape and prevent Western access to South Africa's minerals.<sup>73)</sup>



There is thus no denying the strategic importance of South Africa to the US and indeed the West, not only because the RSA possessed key minerals which were of great importance to the economies of many industrial nations, but also because the USSR was the only other major world producer of these critical minerals. Considering that America's allies in Western Europe and Japan were even more dependent on imported raw materials from South Africa, there was great concern during the Cold War years that these states would become dependent on the Soviet Union if South African supplies were cut. There was also concern that the USSR and the RSA could manipulate mineral prices if a pro-Soviet regime emerged in South Africa.<sup>74)</sup>

The South African Government took full advantage of this perception of strategic importance, especially as regards strategic mineral resources, as is evident from the above-noted statements during the period under discussion; and threatened to embargo the West in response to sanctions as a result.<sup>75)</sup>

## 2.5 Importance to the Southern African region

During much of the era prior to and during the Cold War, South Africa emphasised the country's importance to the African continent in general and for the Southern African region in particular. This is evident in many of the statements noted above. Attention is now firstly directed to ego perceptions in this regard, followed by a discussion of the economic prowess of the RSA in the region, which ultimately resulted in a situation of dependence for many African nations.

Southern Africa consists of ten states, namely, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia (South West Africa), South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Nine of these became independent between 1964 and 1990. Mention is also often made of the so-called Frontline States (FLS) which comprised Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. During the 1970s, the regional environment for South Africa turned increasingly negative, especially following the collapse of Portuguese rule and the independence of Angola and Mozambique.<sup>76)</sup> In the decade that followed, the fact that South Africa formed part of the African continent and was considered vital to the economic success of the Southern African region, was expressed time and time again. Attempts were also made by South Africa to find peaceful solutions to conflicts in Angola and to resolve the South West Africa/Namibia question in order to encourage peace in the region and promote a positive image internationally.<sup>77)</sup> These issues will be discussed at a later stage. Attention is now focused on the role perceptions of South Africa in the region which flowed from the specific elements of national capability noted above.

### 2.5.1 Economic role

During the Cold War years, South Africa collaborated with the Western powers in a conscious effort to contain communism. A period of isolation then followed as a direct result of South Africa's internal

apartheid policies. In an attempt to break through this barrier of isolation, South Africa's foreign policy was directed in an outward movement. A new policy towards the rest of independent Black Africa was in fact initiated from approximately the mid-1960s.<sup>78)</sup> South Africa offered aid of both a technical and general nature to African states and in the early 1960s, Dr. Verwoerd had already proposed a Commonwealth between neighbours at the Southern tip of Africa. This would become a multi-racial common market or free trade zone without political domination by any single member.<sup>79)</sup> Although this plan never came to fruition, attempts at closer ties with the so-called buffer states continued to be made throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>80)</sup>

The primary aim of this new "outward" policy was the economic penetration of Southern Africa and the creation of a regional system. By using the country's abundant economic resources, South Africa hoped to induce political co-operation with Africa. This "outward" policy of South Africa was not merely an economic policy, but was also an attempt to improve international status and position. The South African Government hoped that other states would be positively influenced and that this would foster further economic (and thus political) co-operation. As South Africa was the most highly industrialised country on the African continent, it was possible to assist other states with advice and technology in various fields, ranging from medical issues to the iron and steel industry. Emphasis was placed on the provision of water supplies and plans for a hydro-electric scheme were discussed with Lesotho. South Africa claimed to be promoting the interests of the West by this policy of co-operation and by becoming a link between the Western nations and Africa South of the Sahara.<sup>81)</sup>

South Africa had a close interest in the British territories of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland and there were strong economic links between these territories and the RSA. These small countries had little hope of isolating themselves from a country which almost completely surrounded them; supplied them with a market for their produce; provided labour opportunities for their citizens; and allowed them access to South Africa's superior infrastructure. Bechuanaland and Basutoland gained independence in the mid-1960s and became the independent states of Botswana and Lesotho respectively. Relations between these states and South Africa continued to be friendly and Prime Minister Vorster indicated his willingness to increase contacts with other African states.<sup>82)</sup> Swaziland gained independence in 1968 and also continued cordial relations with South Africa. The friendly atmosphere between South Africa and these three states would serve as a moderating influence at the UN, in the OAU and in the British Commonwealth as regards criticism directed at South Africa and pressures for sanctions.<sup>83)</sup>

A trade pact had been signed in March 1967 between South Africa and Malawi and this was viewed as a dramatic landmark of the "outward" policy. It was also agreed to exchange diplomatic representatives. These developments were largely due to the insight of Dr. Kamuzu Banda, who realised the futility of an economic boycott against South Africa. Dr. Banda's attitude of economic realism thus reinforced the traditional South African belief that economic self-interest would conquer ideological ideals.<sup>84)</sup> In December

1969, a new customs agreement was signed between South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana, which indicated closer economic links and co-operation between these states.<sup>85)</sup>

Prime Minister Vorster declared that although South Africa was motivated by a degree of self-interest, it was not this alone which had resulted in the “outward” policy. South Africa, as a highly industrialised and wealthy state, felt deep concern for her poorer neighbours and developed a sense of responsibility in this regard. The “outward” policy had as its basis, “tolerance and mutual respect, the recognition of the sovereign independence of all states, and non-interference in each other’s domestic affairs”. This was an obvious attempt to avoid external criticism of internal arrangements. The South African Government emphasised that military forces would operate in neighbouring states only at the request of that particular government and retaliation would only occur in times of necessity.<sup>86)</sup> Yet this “outward” policy did afford South Africa a degree of elementary recognition in the world community, especially as a regional power.

The RSA’s leaders appeared determined to foster peace on the sub-continent in an attempt to prevent instability in the region. An example of this is Prime Minister B.J. Vorster’s opening Parliamentary address on 31 January 1975, which referred to his government’s intent to end the violence in Rhodesia. Vorster stated that South Africa would continue to do everything possible, without interfering in any country’s domestic affairs and without attempting to prescribe to anyone, to bring the parties together and to promote understanding of each other’s problems.<sup>87)</sup>

Prime Minister Vorster had noted South Africa’s role in Africa, stating that: “As we are a part of Africa and because we know Africa and its circumstances, we do indeed have a role to play in the development of the continent...we are prepared from time to time to offer such technical and financial help as we can. We have done it in the past. It is our policy and we are prepared to continue with it”. The importance of non-interference in domestic affairs was also emphasised: “Agreement in respect of one another’s internal policies...is certainly not a requirement or a condition for discussions and co-operation with other countries...The South African Government will not allow itself to be dictated to in respect of its domestic policy, just as we do not wish to dictate to other countries what their domestic policy should be”. As Foreign Minister, Dr Muller also referred to the sovereign independence of states by stating that: “The way to peace lies through detente, the recognition of the principles of sovereignty, equality, non-interference and mutual respect”.<sup>88)</sup>

Although certain successes were achieved with the “outward” policy, for example, the above-mentioned establishment of formal diplomatic relations with Malawi in 1968, followed by an exchange of state visits in the early 1970s; the OAU managed to block the continuation of this policy by means of a 1971 resolution. Yet six OAU members, namely, Gabon, Mauritania, Lesotho, Malawi, Ivory Coast, and Madagascar voted against the motion; while Niger, Swaziland, Dahomey, Togo, and Upper Volta abstained. With the collapse of Portuguese colonialism and the resultant independence of Mozambique and Angola in the mid-1970s,

Vorster moved towards a new policy of “detente”, which was vaguely defined as the formulation of a Southern African “constellation of completely independent states” to form a “strong bloc” and “present a united front against common enemies”.<sup>89)</sup>

By 1976, the importance of stability and economic prosperity in the Southern African region was once again on the agenda, when R.F. Botha stated at the UN that: “We in South Africa appreciate that the prosperity of our neighbours is also in our interests. Their security is our security”.<sup>90)</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr H. Muller, also stated that South Africa’s objective was, in fact, to avoid military confrontation. The RSA wanted peace in Africa, peace which promoted development.<sup>91)</sup> In this same sentiment of regional co-operation and interdependence, Prime Minister Botha made a New Years appeal in 1980 to South Africa’s neighbouring states to join the proposed Constellation of States and is quoted as saying that while “we are prepared to strive for such peace, we are also prepared to fight for that peace and protect it”.<sup>92)</sup>

The international outrage at the Soweto uprising, however, effectively threw South Africa’s regional and international policies into disarray. In the *Defence White Papers* of the 1970s, mention was made of a “Total Strategy” where economic, political, socio-economic, and military resources would be utilised in order to defend and advance South African interests at all levels.

### 2.5.2 Strategic role

The concept of “Total Strategy” was first introduced in the 1973 *White Paper on Defence* and was covered in increasing detail in the 1975 and 1977 *White Papers*. The “Total Onslaught” against South Africa was described as “communist inspired”, but included forces from the ANC, SWAPO, the UN, the OAU, and the West. The aim of these forces was the overthrow of the current constitutional order and the establishment of a “communist-oriented, Black government”.<sup>93)</sup> The concept of this strategy was thus developed as a counter-attack strategy. “Total Strategy” was defined in 1977 as: “The comprehensive plan to utilise all the means available to a state according to an integrated pattern in order to achieve the national aims within the framework of the specific policies”.<sup>94)</sup> Attention was increasingly focused on the perception that should an ANC government come to power in South Africa, communism would have a firm hold on the region. As already noted, there was also the perception that a Soviet Union-Southern African alliance would control an extensive amount of the world’s strategic minerals.

P.W. Botha became the South African leader in September 1978 and the “Total Strategy” was adopted as official state policy. The idea of a constellation of states was once again emphasised in an attempt to construct a regional alliance to battle the “Marxist Onslaught”. The idea was to achieve “regional solutions to regional problems”. One objective was to ensure that neighbouring states were not utilised as launching pads for guerilla or terrorist attacks on South Africa. Another was to ensure that the Soviet-Bloc powers did not gain either a political or a military “foothold” in Southern Africa. South Africa also wanted to

maintain and strengthen existing economic ties within the region and demanded that these states resist calls for mandatory trade sanctions against the RSA. Black Southern African states were, in fact, to limit criticism of South Africa's domestic policy. The so-called 12 point plan detailed specific policies regarding the planned utilisation of all available means in this regard. Methods of economic coercion were also noted, including the limiting or prohibiting the use of South Africa's railway and harbour facilities for the export of goods originating in the Black states; and the regulation of access to and movement through the RSA.<sup>95)</sup>

P.W. Botha mentioned this "Total Onslaught" at various political meetings. For example, during a 1970 South African Parliamentary session, he emphasised that the Western World was being threatened by the global and total strategy under the leadership of aggressive communism.<sup>96)</sup> The national doctrine of creating a "Total Strategy" to meet a "Total Onslaught" was thus formulated in response to changes in South Africa's external environment, including the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule and the independence of several African states. Counter-terrorist wars were waged in both Angola and Namibia as further examples of this perception of "Total Onslaught", which was ultimately blamed on the Soviet Union.

Yet the idea of Southern African co-operation was continually stressed by various politicians from the inception of the original "outward" policy and in 1979, P.W. Botha stated South Africa was offering the region co-operation by way of a peace agreement and a non-aggression pact, involving the combatting and destruction of terrorism, the mutual recognition of borders, and a common decision to fight communism in Southern Africa.<sup>97)</sup>

The application of the "Total Strategy" is divided into various phases, the first involving the Constellation of States initiative and running from late 1978 until mid-1980. The plan for this Commonwealth-type body was partly negated by the formation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in April 1980, comprising Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The principle strategic objective of the SADCC was considered to be the decrease of external dependence on particularly the RSA.<sup>98)</sup> The SADCC is discussed in further detail at a later stage.

The second phase of the "Total Strategy" began in mid-1980 and continued until late 1981. This is referred to as a period of destabilisation where the South African Government not only increased military action against neighbouring states, but also applied economic methods of coercion. An example of the latter was the withdrawal of approximately 20 locomotives on hire to the National Railways of Zimbabwe.<sup>99)</sup> Checks and controls were implemented at Lesotho borders in May 1983. Lesotho is completely surrounded by South Africa and is thus susceptible to any coercive measures. Military action was also taken against Lesotho, as well as against Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. Two events in this regard should be noted, namely, South Africa's invasions into Angola from 1975; and the signing of the

*Nkomati Accord* in 1984, where both South Africa and Mozambique made a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and rejected the threat or use of force against each other.<sup>100)</sup>

A new phase of so-called intensified destabilisation began in early 1982 and it was announced in 1983 by the South African Foreign Minister that the RSA was determined to force the ANC from all neighbouring states. Attempts were made to reduce support for the ANC in these countries and maintain existing economic links in light of attempts to reduce economic dependence on South Africa.<sup>101)</sup> P.W. Botha, however, responded in 1983 to accusations of destabilisation by emphasising the numerous co-operative agreements between South Africa and several Southern African states. He insisted that he was “prepared to conclude defence agreements with every state in Southern Africa that shares a common interest with us, and I am prepared to conclude agreements with them in which we state that we will not allow our territories to be used against one another”.<sup>102)</sup>

Yet South Africa continued to feel threatened, as evidenced by the following statement made by P.W. Botha in the early 1980s: “Is there a threat against the Republic of South Africa? The answer is clearly, yes...Soviet intervention is a fact...The Soviet aim is to create for itself an intensive power-base in order to bring the Republic of South Africa within its sphere of influence”. Botha was convinced that South Africa’s strategic position was such that it had become “a focal point in the struggle between the major powers of the world”.<sup>103)</sup> It was announced by Pik Botha in late 1984 that: “South Africa is an increasingly confident regional power which has the will, the power and the resources to play a role it has been invited to fulfill in the search for peace in this region”.<sup>104)</sup>

Although accused of destabilisation by neighbouring states, P.W. Botha stated on numerous occasions throughout the 1980s that economic dependence was not the aim of the RSA: “It has never been our aim or our wish to bring about a system of economic dependence under South African dominance. Interdependence is an inescapable fact of life of Southern Africa, which we cannot ignore if we want to serve our best interests. It would be to the detriment of all of us”.<sup>105)</sup> Botha emphasised the old idea of a “commonwealth” of Southern African states when he again extended a “hand of friendship” to South Africa’s neighbours and proposed that urgent consideration be given to the establishment of a permanent joint mechanism for dealing with matters of security, particularly threats to the peace and prosperity of the sub-continent.<sup>106)</sup> Yet in reality, many neighbouring states were facing a situation of economic dependence.

In 1988, the South African Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, delivered a lecture on *The contemporary strategic situation in Southern Africa*. Here reference was repeatedly made to the necessity of an increase in South African influence in the region, such as: “South Africa serves the interests of its people and of the region of which it is part. It is in South Africa’s interests to have stable, prosperous and developing neighbours. For this reason South Africa offers aid and provides assistance in many areas...South Africa is the stabiliser of the region and would like to expand this role”. The RSA also

recognised the sovereignty and territorial integrity of her neighbours. General Malan stated that: “All indications are that South Africa’s role and influence in Africa must increase. The collapse of Africa on a variety of fronts, such as infrastructure, agriculture and medical services, is in reality due to an inability to control technology. It is technology that has made South Africa an acknowledged regional power. I believe that co-existence and good neighbourliness is possible in Southern Africa. Our challenge in this region, which contains some of the world’s richest raw materials and greatest potential, is to enter into lasting relationships with one another...For I share the concern that no significant foreign investment will flow into Southern Africa as long as it is seen as a place of conflict and unrest”.<sup>107)</sup>

Malan noted that although the RSA did not plan any territorial expansion, subversion or aggression against another state, threats to South Africa, her people and interests, would indeed be countered. The South African Security Forces would thus be prepared accordingly. Mention was also made of the Soviet and Cuban threat in the region, where a weapons build-up was continuing. There were, however, increasing indications that Africa was looking inwards for solutions to African problems and South Africa, according to Malan, was playing a key role in this regard. Four matters were of particular relevance to General Malan in 1988, namely, the Soviet arms build-up in Southern Africa and the presence of foreign forces; the revolutionary and terror threat to South Africa; the possibility that rapprochement between East and West could exclude South Africa; and the fact that there was no solid evidence of the new Soviet international relationships, at least in Southern Africa. General Malan also noted that South Africa was increasingly being referred to in international circles as a regional power.<sup>108)</sup>

As has been previously noted, the African continent in general suffered a distinct loss of global interest towards the end of the Cold War. The effects of communism had left most of Eastern Europe in poverty and ruin. Much of the developed world began pouring funds and other types of aid into these former communist countries and Africa became well and truly marginalised. International funds were no longer easily available and Africa was left to resolve her own problems. This in turn created an opportunity for South Africa as regards her strategic significance and role on the continent, especially in the Southern African region. There is thus ample evidence of ego perceptions of South Africa’s strategic significance in the Southern African region. The RSA was intent on establishing a role on the sub-continent as a relatively powerful ally, who could ensure stability in the region and provide economic assistance to her poorer neighbours. Trade with these nations was a vital aspect of this role and is discussed below.

### 2.5.3 Trade in Southern Africa

South Africa was considered the so-called economic powerhouse of the Southern African region and in 1988, approximately eight percent of the RSA’s exports were intended for Africa. The key to economic co-operation lies in geographical proximity, as well as in cultural, historical and personal links. The 1910 Southern African Customs Union remained the most important multilateral trade agreement in Southern

Africa in the mid-to late-1980s. This agreement was re-negotiated in 1969 and had a particularly important impact on the trading patterns of Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana. The Common Monetary Area and the Southern African Regional Tourism Conference were other important multilateral economic agreements of the time-frame under discussion. Zimbabwe and South Africa were party to the most significant bilateral trade agreement in the region, which amounted to almost R750 million in 1986. Zimbabwean industry was, in fact, dependent on exports to South Africa, and there was also a trade agreement between the RSA and Malawi.<sup>109)</sup>

Development aid projects were undertaken by the South African Government in various African countries and emphasis was placed on the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. In 1988, South Africa was also officially represented in Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi and Zimbabwe by the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Industry. Escom, the RSA's power supplier, supplied electricity to Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique and Lesotho, and mention has also been made of South Africa's port and transport infrastructure which were vital to many Southern African economies.<sup>110)</sup> These actions can all be considered indicative of South Africa's strategic significance to the Southern African region.

By implementing a higher degree of economic integration, it would become more difficult for the international community to isolate the RSA and impose sanctions without endangering the economies of neighbouring states. The effects of international sanctions against South Africa on these states will be discussed at a later stage of the study. The added advantage was that South Africa would become known as a strong regional power that could actively promote the economic development and security of the region. The "outward" policy had been introduced with the assumption that "prevention is better than cure" and that economic development of the entire region would secure South Africa's strategic perimeter by preventing a spill-over of internal conflict from neighbouring states.<sup>111)</sup>

The South African Government thus used vital economic links to emphasise the RSA's strategic importance to the international community. It was hoped that these economic considerations would outweigh the criticism directed at South Africa's internal racist policies. This was especially the case as regards landlocked African neighbours who relied heavily on the RSA for a variety of supplies. It thus became customary for many states to openly criticise South Africa, whilst covertly trading with the RSA. Many African nations were aware of their degree of dependence on South Africa, but did not want to incur the wrath of the international community by openly disregarding their wishes. Trade between the RSA and African states was therefore not publicised. Although eventually forced into isolation, South Africa responded by becoming virtually self-sufficient in many aspects.

Yet although P.W. Botha had in the second half of 1984 spoken of optimism and confidence as regards the RSA's role in Southern Africa, the situation had worsened by 1986, with internal violence, fighting in the region and international pressure, all increasing the problems for South Africa. There was still, however,



a degree of economic dependence as regards neighbouring states, especially in the areas of labour, trade and transport.<sup>112)</sup> A decline in the South African economy would thus have unavoidable consequences for neighbouring states.

It has already been noted that the RSA became a target of the international community in the form of various sanctions, in an attempt to coerce the government to alter its internal policies. These sanctions not only failed to achieve their objective, partly due to South Africa's strong national capability, but also strengthened ego perceptions of strategic significance in that they were not universally applied. Although the international sanctions campaign against South Africa will be further discussed in subsequent chapters, it can be noted at this point that although the RSA did manage to circumvent many sanctions, they did have financial consequences for South Africa. According to President P.W. Botha: "Between 1973 and 1984 the Republic of South Africa had to pay R22 billion more than it would have normally spent. There were times when it was reported to me that we had enough oil for only a week". In 1987, South Africa's Minister of Finance, Barend Du Plessis, stated that: "Billions of Rands of scarce capital... have been squandered on building up the country's strategic reserves of oil through fears that supplies would be cut off".<sup>113)</sup> Yet the oil embargo was dismissed by Prime Minister Botha as "not feasible".<sup>114)</sup> Thus although the international sanctions campaign was costly for the South African Government, domestic reform did not result, primarily due to the fact that many states, including those in Southern Africa, did not apply strict sanctions against the RSA. Ego perceptions of South Africa's importance to the international community and particularly the Southern African region, were thus reinforced.

### 3. Conclusion

In the period under discussion, South Africa can be perceived as having travelled full circle. The country moved from compatriot, to *pariah*, and by the end of the era under discussion was moving once again to the level of compatriot. The stage was set for irreversible change and it is this change which would ultimately determine South Africa's strategic significance in the future. The era immediately following the Second World War was filled with hope for an improved world. This hope was subsequently dashed by the rise of communism and international outrage at South Africa's internal racial policies. What followed was a lengthy period of international isolation, which South Africa contested on the grounds of the country's strategic position, especially in view of communist ambitions on the African continent and the RSA's abundance of certain strategic minerals. This line of reasoning worked fairly well with the US and Britain. Eventually, however, even these last two stalwarts of South African support succumbed to international pressures and criticism turned to condemnation and damaging measures. This will be further discussed in the following chapter.

South African attention, however, remained focused on the Southern African region where the RSA held many neighbouring states in a situation of economic dependence. As the Cold War drew to a close, it



became apparent the Africa would increasingly have to seek local solutions to local problems and South Africa, as one of the strongest nations on the continent, was a key player in this regard. As South Africa gradually returned to the international arena and domestic reforms began to surface, another change took place with the coming to power of F.W. de Klerk in 1989. This can be perceived as the beginning of a new era for South Africa.

Ego perceptions during this period were thus centred around South Africa's geo-strategic position, where the Cape Sea Route played a valuable role in the transport of Western oil and other related products. It was repeatedly stated that should South Africa fail to resist communism, this route would no longer be available to the West. Such a situation would have extensive strategic implications for the Western World. South Africa's military capability was also perceived as playing a valuable role in the protection of this vital area of the globe. Add to these aspects, the RSA's key strategic mineral reserves and role as a stabilising force with extensive economic capabilities in a turbulent sub-continent, and South African politicians had numerous factors to emphasise regarding the RSA's strategic significance.

South Africa thus held a distinct perception of strategic importance during the years of isolation and this was duly demonstrated by the various speeches delivered by politicians in this regard. Yet the perceptions of the international community should also be taken into account. Was South Africa really that important to global security or was this merely an incorrect perception on the side of the RSA? Alter perceptions of strategic significance up until the end of 1989 will thus be discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

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## **CHAPTER 5: SOUTH AFRICA'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE IN TERMS OF ALTER PERCEPTIONS IN THE PRE-1990 PERIOD**

As has been determined, national capabilities do not serve much of a purpose until they are turned into an advantage for the state concerned, that is, when they affect relations with other states. An example would be South Africa's vast mineral wealth and the question of whether these minerals were considered important enough by the international community to alter or at least maintain, perceptions of the RSA's strategic significance. Another relevant question regarding alter perceptions concerns the country's internal politics. Did the RSA's internal problems affect the level of significance or was the country's strategic significance of enough importance to the international community that the issue of internal racial conflict played a diminished role? These and other issues will be discussed in this chapter.

As previously noted, the evaluation of South Africa's strategic significance is based on elements of national capability; ego perceptions as regards importance to both regional and global environments; and confirmation by other states of the RSA's strategic significance. A state's own role perception, as well as its national resources are linked to the external environment and while the former relates to national policy, the latter provides the operational means. Interaction with foreign powers is, however, vital in that unless members of the external environment respond to a particular state's policies, strategic significance will not reach its full potential. Although certain states have remained isolated for many years, it is not an ideal situation and entails many hardships for the country and its citizens. South Africa's external relations were inextricably linked to the country's internal policies, more specifically, the policy of apartheid or racial discrimination. Although the entire international community had an effect on South Africa's strategic significance, certain states have played a more important role in the country's history, namely, the US, Britain (as well as other parts of Europe), the Southern African region, and the USSR.

Alter perceptions primarily concern two aspects, namely, perceptions of the international community or external environment regarding a certain country's strategic significance, and the actual relations which take place. These two aspects often do not concur, a point which has been illustrated by the international community in its relations with South Africa. An example of this duality was the fact that illicit trading with the RSA continued (especially with African states), whilst heavy criticism was openly directed at South Africa's internal policies. The RSA's strategic position, as well as an abundance of natural resources not available in Africa and overall strong national capability, thus placed additional emphasis on South Africa's strategic significance. Relationships between the state concerned and the international community are therefore key indicators of alter perception.

Although few states actually made official statements regarding South Africa's strategic significance during the period under discussion in this chapter, it can be deduced from the relations between the RSA and

certain countries that South Africa continued to hold a certain degree of importance in the international region in general and the Southern African region in particular. These relations between the international community and South Africa can therefore be considered to substantiate perceptions of the RSA's importance.

Mention is made of various factors which influenced attitudes towards South Africa. The first of these was increasing Western preoccupation with the countering of communist influence during the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the African region. Another factor was that of the priority of economic considerations, especially the availability of resources and trade opportunities.<sup>1)</sup> The perception was that the Soviet Union was attempting to prevent the extension of Western links in Africa and the rest of the Third World. Western attitudes were further influenced by the human rights standards which were being set on the global stage and South Africa's racist policies were seen to be in direct contrast to these standards. This last factor can be considered to have had a negative impact as regards international support for South Africa solely in light of her geo-strategic position.<sup>2)</sup> Sentiment as regards the RSA's international policies was in fact severe enough to warrant an extensive sanctions campaign.

### **1. The international community's perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance**

Being situated at the tip of Africa in what can be considered a relatively isolated position, South Africa was eager to establish relations with especially the Western World and her neighbours on the African continent. Yet it can be noted that the 1940s to early 1960s were marked by requests and appeals to the South African Government to reject apartheid. The following years, however, witnessed resolutions calling for economic, financial and military sanctions against the RSA. Although most nations in the global environment criticised South Africa's internal racist policies, with many imposing sanctions against South Africa to varying degrees, several also attempted to defend the RSA at international forums and refused to apply stringent economic sanctions as a result of such factors as traditional ties, economic constraints, and humanitarian concerns. The international sanctions campaign will thus form an important part of this section of the study and is discussed at a later stage.

#### **1.1 The US and South Africa - perceptions and relations**

The US and South Africa have had a fairly long history of relations and the following section has thus been organised chronologically for ease of reference.

US perceptions of South Africa's importance were predominantly dictated by Washington's desire to ensure the RSA's assistance in containing the Soviet Union and its communist allies. South Africa was also perceived to be strategically important in a region filled with unrest and there was the added issue of the RSA's importance to the US economy.<sup>3)</sup> This latter aspect refers in particular to South Africa's wealth of

strategic minerals and it has been noted that without these minerals, it would not have been possible to make the necessary military equipment during the Cold War. This made South Africa strategically important for the US on both economic and national security levels.<sup>4)</sup> As will be discussed at a later stage, these minerals were considered important enough to be excluded from comprehensive US sanctions. President Reagan in fact emphasised the concept of “linkage” which referred to his belief that Soviet action anywhere in the world affected US-Soviet relations. The Reagan Administration’s primary concern as regards Africa was superpower competition for control of resources.<sup>5)</sup>

#### 1.1.1 1950s and 1960s

The US can be considered to have had relatively little interest in African affairs throughout much of the 1960s and any visible interest proved to be more economic than political. This state of affairs did attract vigorous criticism from those who favoured stronger measures as regards South Africa’s apartheid policies.

The Truman Administration of the US had, however, recognised South Africa’s strategic importance in the years following World War II and thus proceeded to encourage the RSA’s economic progress. This was, of course, aimed at reinforcing the allegiance of South Africa to the West.<sup>6)</sup> The US voted against apartheid for the first time during a UN session in October 1958, although South Africa was still considered an ally in the fight against communism. In 1961, John Kennedy, a strong anti-apartheid supporter, took over the American Presidency and relations between the two nations changed dramatically as Kennedy was totally against the “tyranny” of apartheid. This change in relations had been preceded by the Sharpsville incident of 21 March 1960, where 67 protestors were killed by policemen, resulting in international outrage.<sup>7)</sup> The 1960s thus marked the beginning of a deterioration in relations between the US and South Africa.

Following the formation of the OAU and the resultant demand that the US choose between Africa and the White rulers of South Africa and the Portuguese territories, it became more difficult for the US to resist pressures to impose sanctions against the RSA. The US then eventually voted in favour of a second call by the Security Council for an arms embargo and in 1964, banned the sale to South Africa of materials for the making of arms. The 1963 arms embargo was also strictly observed. There was growing concern in the US that any available arms would be used to enforce apartheid.<sup>8)</sup>

In 1965, the US National Security Adviser, McGeorge Bundy, approved a recommendation by the State Department to withdraw official guarantees for investors in South Africa. By 1966, the issue of South West Africa was attracting attention and the US supported a UN General Assembly resolution “terminating” South Africa’s mandate over the territory. The US, however, continued to resist punitive economic sanctions against the RSA during the 1960s.<sup>9)</sup>

When US National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, ordered various global strategic evaluations in early 1969, *National Security Study Memorandum 39* (NSSM 39) dealt with Southern Africa and proposed various options. The so-called Tar Baby Option was recommended by Kissinger and approved by Nixon and proposed closer co-operation with South Africa, as well as improved relations with Portuguese leaders in Angola. The arms embargo was, however, not to be lifted, although the distinction between civilian and military equipment was no longer as rigid. The final year of the decade also witnessed UN acknowledgement that economic sanctions against South Africa had failed. Trade by the US, as well as West Germany, Britain, and Japan was blamed.<sup>10)</sup>

### 1.1.2 1970s

In early 1971, US President Nixon made public the chapter entitled “Africa”, in the annual *State of the World Report*. This chapter can be considered one of the primary comprehensive statements on US interest in African affairs. In this document, Nixon stated that: “Our goal is to help sustain the process by which Africa will gradually realise economic progress to match its aspirations”. Economic interests in the continent were considered extensive, although it was noted that it was not the task of the US to determine the pattern of relationships among African states. Mention was made of the Nixon Doctrine’s encouragement of self-reliance, although Nixon believed that the US could assist Africa in achieving peace, justice and economic development: “We look to African leadership to build the framework within which other nations, including the US, can fully contribute to a bright African future”.<sup>11)</sup> This can be considered a reference to South Africa’s possible strategic role as not only a valuable economic player on the African continent, but also as a “peacekeeper” and stabilising force.

It was predicted that African nations would utilise fora such as the UN to promote pressures on the South African Government and in 1971, David D. Newsom, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, noted that the African continent was likely to become increasingly frustrated at the lack of international support in this regard.<sup>12)</sup> In defence of the US position, Newsom referred to the US actions noted above, although there remained an element of veiled support for the RSA in such statements as: “Specifically, much as we deplore apartheid in South Africa...we cannot agree that they automatically constitute a threat to the peace...We have long had relations with South Africa. Although we strongly oppose racial discrimination, we recognize the complexity of the problem South Africa faces”. The issue of sanctions was also not neglected and the indication was a move away from isolation, in that although the US had in fact supported economic sanctions against Rhodesia, the South African scenario was believed to be an entirely different matter. Newsom also hinted that the US was unlikely to become involved in military intervention on any side in Africa.<sup>13)</sup>

Kissinger and Ford, however, possibly realising the need for the Black vote in America, began to switch to a policy in 1976 which emphasised “a more humane point of view”. Kissinger is quoted as saying that

pressure must be exerted “to bring about change” in South Africa and to ensure majority rule and an end to apartheid. Yet the US continued to refuse to support UN resolutions calling for an oil embargo, as well as extensive economic and trade sanctions, and also defended South Africa’s membership of bodies such as the Universal Postal Union and the UN General Assembly. The Nixon Administration had in the early 1970s, however, advised American enterprises in the RSA to pressure Pretoria whenever possible and this was considered an alternative to sanctions.<sup>14)</sup> Kissinger met with South African Prime Minister Vorster in the mid-1970s and talks between these two statesman were perceived as a dramatic diplomatic breakthrough for the RSA and acknowledgement of South Africa’s key role in Southern Africa.<sup>15)</sup>

When Secretary of State Kissinger went to sub-Saharan Africa in 1976 on an official visit, one of his primary missions was stated as being an attempt to reduce Soviet influence in the area.<sup>16)</sup> US alter perceptions as regards the region were thus firmly directed towards the superpower battle for influence and it was here that South Africa would play a key role.

In the meantime, trade between the USA and South Africa was on the increase and the hope was once again fostered that economic and not political considerations, would be the deciding factor in future relations. In 1976, trade between the RSA and the US increased by 21 percent and by the following year, there was also an increase in US investment in South Africa.<sup>17)</sup> It thus appeared that the US considered the RSA valuable enough to resist international pressures for severe sanctions. Yet the late 1970s witnessed a certain lack of interest in South Africa by the Carter Administration, where the threat of sanctions was used in an attempt to force change.

Although the US Administration developed a somewhat “hardened” stance against South Africa with the assumption of the American Presidency by Mr Jimmy Carter in 1977, Carter expressed a desire for peace in Southern Africa and stated that economic sanctions against South Africa would be counter-productive, especially as he recognised the RSA as a stabilising force in the region.<sup>18)</sup> The US, however, withdrew its naval attaché in Pretoria and commercial officer in Johannesburg. US Vice President Walter Mondale met with Vorster in Europe in May 1977 and insisted on the “full political participation by all the citizens of South Africa”. Certain American businesses in the meantime adopted the so-called *Sullivan Principles* which set conditions for remaining in South Africa.<sup>19)</sup> During Carter’s 1978 NATO speech he, however, warned that the organisation could not be “indifferent” to the activities of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Africa.<sup>20)</sup>

### 1.1.3 1980s

Following Carter, President Reagan and his Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, followed a policy of “constructive engagement” during the 1980s. This policy can be defined as an attempt to persuade President Botha to demolish apartheid, while at the same time opposing the armed

struggle of the ANC.<sup>21)</sup> Crocker had stated that: “Under constructive engagement, we would continue our adherence to the arms embargo, our refusal to make use of South African defence facilities, our categorical rejection of apartheid policies and institutions - as well as our rejection of trade and investment sanctions and all forms of economic warfare against South Africa”.<sup>22)</sup> The idea was thus to work towards reconciliation. UN Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick had announced in 1981 that: “The Reagan administration holds the view that economic sanctions are not a very useful instrument of policy”.<sup>23)</sup>

Crocker emphasised that South Africa formed the centrepiece of US policy in the Southern African region, in part due to the economic, technological and military strength of the RSA; but also because the West had economic, strategic, political, and moral interests at stake. Although it was noted that racism was unacceptable, the stated long-term objective of US policy was: “The emergence of a domestic order in South Africa that will permit the United States to pursue a full and normal relationship with it”. The importance of the Cape Sea Route, especially as regards petroleum and non-fuel minerals, was also noted; as was the fact that Soviet expansionism in the area was to be avoided. An added concern was that as Southern Africa was more important to the West than to the Soviets, military force should not become the principle means for change in the region. The emphasis was thus on stability. Economically, South Africa was considered one of the few growth points in Africa and could serve as a “regional engine of development”.<sup>24)</sup> The importance of resisting communist expansionism was also reiterated by Crocker: “The top US priority is to stop Soviet encroachment in Africa”.<sup>25)</sup>

Ronald Reagan voiced his concerns about Africa’s strategic significance when he stated the following: “I’m concerned - scared is the proper word - about what is going on in Africa...Many Americans have interpreted our interest in Africa as an extension of our own desire to achieve racial equality and elimination of injustice based on race. I’m afraid that is a naive over-simplification of what really is at issue, namely, a power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union”.<sup>26)</sup> It is interesting to note, that for the US and Britain, South Africa became a difficult issue, as attempts had to be made to balance concerns as regards both communism and apartheid.<sup>27)</sup>

George Bush held similar perceptions: “Today Africa is ignored at our peril...African resources, such as oil and strategic minerals, are vital to our economy; Southern Africa, in the course of the next decade, could well be the focal point of East-West confrontation”. Bush emphasised that although human rights continued to be a concern, strategic interest could not be ignored. In specific reference to the RSA’s strategic importance, he stated the following: “South Africa has a position astride the sea lanes and has natural resources important to us, such as industrial diamonds and chrome”. He also noted that in order to advance US interests, economic, technical, and military assistance should be provided to those nations who shared US goals and values. Criteria for assistance would include importance to the US, in terms of natural resources, strategic position and influence in Africa; the government’s attitude as regards issues of direct

significance to the US; the country's current and potential contribution to international and regional peacekeeping; and the amount of US investment in the nation concerned.<sup>28)</sup>

From the above-noted conditions, it was clear that South Africa was one of the few, if not the only, nations in the region and probably the continent, that could fulfill most of these conditions. It can thus be deduced that the US considered the RSA to be of considerable strategic significance. The 1981 *State of the Union Address* continued to emphasise both the value of African mineral resources for the US economy and the necessity of expanding efforts to promote trade and investment in this part of the globe.<sup>29)</sup>

In 1981, Reagan stated the following: "Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we've ever fought?...A country that strategically is essential to the free world in its production of minerals we all must have and so forth?" He is also quoted as believing in "continued friendship" with South Africa instead of being "aloof and distant". The US would thus continue to support the UN arms embargo; while at the same time refraining from economic warfare against the RSA. Although there were concerns as regards the situation in Namibia and Angola, the emphasis was once again placed on the communist threat in Southern Africa.<sup>30)</sup> When South Africa mounted an extensive intervention in Angola in 1981, US Secretary of State, General Haig, made excuses for the RSA by referring to Cuban forces and Soviet advisers and arms, which had apparently been "used to refurbish SWAPO elements that move back and forth freely across that frontier and inflict bloodshed and terrorism upon the innocent non-combatant inhabitants of Namibia".<sup>31)</sup> These events emphasised the fact that the RSA's strategic significance, at least as regards the US, was based on South Africa's strategic minerals and vital role as an anti-communist ally on the African continent.

The Reagan Administration's attitude towards South Africa and other Third World countries has been labelled as "too simply anti-communist" or "an obsession with the Soviet Union". Although the US condemned violence in South Africa, the Administration chose to remain politically neutral in its relations as the RSA was generally believed to support the regional political *status quo*. This did not find favour with the Frontline States. Crocker based his strategy on the belief that the US could not break the White minority regime in South Africa and that "constructive engagement" thus had more potential for resulting in change than blatant confrontation.<sup>32)</sup>

The strategic significance of South Africa was also indicated by other US politicians, including those of the Democratic Party who had noted the continent's vast resources in the mid-1980s.<sup>33)</sup> The Republican Party had in turn stressed the priorities of opposing Marxist imperialism in Africa and establishing democracies with market-based economies.<sup>34)</sup> South Africa, with her strong anti-apartheid stance and relatively successful economy, would thus serve as a successful example in this regard. In earlier years, the American Party had deemed South Africa valuable enough to call on the US Government to cease its acts of hostility towards the RSA and "all other non-communist countries."<sup>35)</sup> Even Andrew Young, who served as a UN



ambassador and held strong anti-apartheid views, had admitted that long-term US self-interest coincided with Africa's self-interest.<sup>36)</sup> South Africa, as one of the most powerful countries on this continent, was thus awarded a certain degree of strategic significance, as is evident from the above statements.

Public pressure in the US in the mid-1980s, however, resulted in a tougher stance against apartheid and Secretary of State Shultz's Advisory Committee eventually rejected the policy of "constructive engagement" and called for international efforts to implement economic sanctions and isolate South Africa. The US anti-apartheid movement sought disinvestment from the RSA and by 1985, almost \$4,5 billion of public funds from corporations doing business in South Africa had been withdrawn.<sup>37)</sup> Although the early 1980s were also characterised by increased international loans to South Africa, the decade was thus characterised by increasing disinvestment from the RSA. This disinvestment was the result of two factors, namely, pressure by US anti-apartheid lobbies; and increasing uneasiness among businessmen as regards the security of investments in South Africa.<sup>38)</sup>

When the American Chase Manhattan Bank recalled its finances, followed by other US and European banks, the result was a severe financial crisis for South Africa.<sup>39)</sup> The most effective sanctions were, in fact, perceived as those applied by the banking institutions and it was thus what can be termed the "market forces" sanctions which did the most damage.<sup>40)</sup> Yet in 1986, a spokesman for the US State Department had the following to say as regards the IBM decision to disinvest: "We regret any decision to reduce US private sector involvement in South Africa. It will harm Black workers and reduce US influence".<sup>41)</sup> The emphasis from both the US and Britain always appeared to be on the potential harm to Black workers and not on the effects upon the Pretoria Government. The economic situation in South Africa, however, continued to deteriorate following the Rubicon speech, with the most damage caused by the effects of a capital outflow (as noted above) from 1985 to 1988, which amounted to approximately \$11 billion.<sup>42)</sup>

In an attempt to defuse extensive sanctions in 1985, the White House used *Executive Order* 12532 to prohibit "trade and certain other transactions involving South Africa". This included an embargo on the export of nuclear goods or technology to the RSA, although few new sanctions were announced.<sup>43)</sup> On 2 October 1986, the Senate joined the House, overriding the President's veto and enacting the CAAA. The stated purpose of the CAAA was to set out a "framework to guide the efforts of the US in helping to bring an end to apartheid in South Africa and lead to the establishment of a non-racial, democratic form of government".<sup>44)</sup>

The CAAA and its measures would attempt to encourage Pretoria to repeal the state of emergency; respect the principle of equal justice for all; release Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners; end aggression against neighbouring states; negotiate with all racial groups; permit freedom of political expression; and set a timetable for the ending of apartheid legislation. The CAAA called for such actions as the prohibition of the importation of South African coal, iron, steel, agricultural products, textiles, and uranium. The

legislation, however, also called for the ANC to “suspend terrorist activities” in the period proceeding negotiations with Pretoria; to “re-examine their ties to the South African Communist Party”; and to declare support for a “free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa”.<sup>45)</sup>

It is important to note that certain metals such as chromium, the platinum-group metals and manganese were excluded from the CAAA, as they were considered to be strategically vital for the US.<sup>46)</sup> This can be considered to relate directly to previously-noted ego perceptions regarding South Africa’s strategic significance.

Although a 1986 US *Department of State Bulletin* emphasised the ending of apartheid in South Africa, the value of the RSA was also noted: “We must recognise that South Africa is an integral part of and major player in Southern Africa. Our influence with South Africa on ending apartheid is related to the success of our efforts in the region as a whole”.<sup>47)</sup> When the February 1987 *Department of State Bulletin* was published, it was once again noted that should Southern Africa succumb to conflict, major US political, economic and strategic interests would be jeopardised. Support was also given to those US businesses that had chosen to remain in South Africa. It was noted that violence in South Africa would have consequences beyond the RSA’s borders and would provide the Soviets with new opportunities for communist influence: “We recognise that South Africa’s evolution is intimately connected to the fate of an entire region”.<sup>48)</sup> During the Reagan presidency, Washington officials in fact referred to Africa as “a continent of great promise”.<sup>49)</sup>

In 1989, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen, emphasised the US Administration’s commitment to a non-racial, democratic South Africa, especially at a time when dialogue in the country was imminent.<sup>50)</sup> This can be considered indicative of the US Government’s continuing desire for a stable South Africa, which would in turn help stabilise the Southern African region and thus protect US interests in the area. Yet it can be noted that US interest in South Africa, as determined by the number of articles published in American newspapers and periodicals, declined significantly from the mid-to-late-1980s.<sup>51)</sup> This can, in turn, be considered an indication of changes in the external environment as the world began to lose interest in the RSA and Africa in general towards the end of the Cold War.

In a 1989 US *Department of State Bulletin*, US interests in Southern Africa were summed up by the US Ambassador to South Africa, Ambassador Perkins, who emphasised the maintenance of supplies of key strategic minerals to the US which South Africa alone provided; the maintenance of American influence through mutually productive diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with nations in the region; and the elimination of regional tensions which could escalate into superpower confrontations. Regional security and stability were thus considered vital.<sup>52)</sup> Although perceptions South Africa’s strategic significance were not as focused on the role of the RSA as an anti-communist ally in the late 1980s, there was thus still an

emphasis on South Africa's role for stability in the region, particularly as regards the security of US economic and strategic interests.

There can be no denying the divided nature of the US approach as regards South Africa, with the US being more a supporter of the threat of sanctions and not their actual application. Whether this was for human rights reasons or because the US had certain strategic interests in the RSA (particularly as regards South Africa's valuable minerals and anti-communist position) can be debated. What cannot be contested is that international sanctions could not be effective without the actual physical support of such powerful countries as the US. This is one of the primary reasons which caused the perceived failure of the international sanctions campaign against South Africa.

Domestic change began to take place in South Africa at about the same time as other international events were signalling the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the communist system. Although this chapter only covers the period up until 1989, it is worthwhile at this point to note the description given to this new era by American President, George Bush. He described it as an era where all the nations of the world could live in harmony, free from terror. He also called for a "partnership of nations" using regional and international organisations. It soon became apparent, however, that the era of the Cold War was actually more stable than the one that was to follow. The international environment in transition was far more complex than originally anticipated.<sup>53)</sup> This inevitably led to changes in role perceptions and the period following 1989 will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 1.2 Britain and South Africa - perceptions and relations

British perceptions in this regard were based on such factors as the value of South Africa for trade purposes and as an anti-communist ally; while the historical ties between the two countries were difficult to avoid. It can be noted that during the period under discussion in this chapter, the UK, an island nation, considered trade to be of vital importance. When Soviet expansionism became clear, the situation caused great alarm and could explain the rationale behind Britain's lack of action against South Africa in the struggle to end apartheid in the RSA. It thus became apparent that Britain depended on the world's sea-lanes and the Cape Sea route played a vital role in this regard.<sup>54)</sup>

South Africa initially had a supportive friend and ally in the British, until British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan delivered what became known as the "winds of change" speech to the South African Parliament in early 1960. It was during this speech that he referred to the increasing political consciousness sweeping across the African continent. Yet although MacMillan stated that Britain could not support apartheid, he remained opposed to sanctions against South Africa: "I certainly do not believe in refusing to trade with people because you may happen to dislike the way they manage their internal affairs".<sup>55)</sup>

Although it was deemed improbable that a situation would arise whereby South Africa would engage in war and not the UK, the British Government proceeded to impose an embargo on the export of arms to South Africa when the Labour Party came to power in Britain in 1964. The communist takeover in Zanzibar had provided the communists with a base in the Indian Ocean on the East coast and this caused some concern, as South Africa would not be able to fulfill her “moral obligation” to the West without the necessary weapons.<sup>56)</sup>

For Britain and the US, the idea of the USSR as the “enemy”, made a convenient scapegoat to justify the refusal to act against White minority rule in South Africa. Britain’s Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, had stated that: “Smith should realise that it is most unlikely that international military action including inevitably certain big powers can be delayed for more than a very short period and the likelihood of Russian or East European participation is very grave”.<sup>57)</sup>

By 1966, speculations of a British withdrawal from Simonstown were rife and the South African Minister of Defence had warned that South Africa could not be relied on in an emergency situation if the necessary armaments were not made available. The South African Navy also offered to take over the primary responsibility for the defence of the Cape Sea Route. When the Middle East crisis erupted that same year, the West suddenly realised the vital importance of the route around the Cape and Western nations appealed to South Africa to keep traffic routes open, especially after the closure of the Suez Canal. Yet the British Government was not prepared to review the arms embargo, even when confronted with the advantages that the RSA had to offer.<sup>58)</sup>

The Rt. Hon. Geoffrey Rippon, MP, admitted in a *Round Table* document that should a major conventional war break out, the Cape Sea Route would be of vital importance. He also noted the value of alternative air routes through the South African region; the security of communications; the wealth of minerals available in South Africa which should not fall into communist hands; and the fact that South Africa was the most powerful country in Africa, as regards both industrial and technical capability. Rippon was concerned with increased Russian naval activity throughout the globe and noted that South Africa provided the “only significant friendly maritime force in that part of the world”. South Africa was also valuable from a trade and investment point of view, and it was emphasised that the value of British exports to South Africa had increased by 19 percent in a single year. In conclusion, he noted the following regarding South Africa’s strategic significance: “Whilst in no way suggesting that the Cape Route is the most important in the world for Britain and NATO, the fact remains that, should it be lost to us in war, our problems would be multiplied enormously”.<sup>59)</sup>

A case was made by the British Government as regards the sale of arms by Britain to South Africa on the grounds that the RSA could contribute to the security of the strategically important Cape Sea Route. It was anticipated that the route around the Cape would eventually increase in significance and that protection of

this route was thus vital in light of Soviet naval penetration. South Africa had also demonstrated the ability to play a valuable role in the Southern African region and it was determined that co-operation with the RSA would be more productive than isolation. It was recommended that South Africa's capability as the "one effective and reliable ally of the West in the area" be utilised.<sup>60)</sup> Spence emphasised that South Africa's willingness to take greater responsibility for the stability and economic development of the region was valuable for Western interests, in that it guaranteed security in an area prone to unrest and outside subversion. Ultimately, Britain's conflicting strategic interests and moral concerns placed the British Government in a difficult situation. The British Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence stated that although morality was important and that principle and policy should be linked: "I fail to see the principle which says that we should trade with them, invest in their country, make money out of their trade...and give them a greater share in the command structure of the Southern Atlantic, but refuse to sell them maritime equipment".<sup>61)</sup>

Britain thus had various military, political and economic interests in the Indian Ocean region. An example of these economic interests would be that at any one time during the mid-1980s, approximately one-fifth of the British merchant fleet could be found in the area. Over and above these considerations was the fact that British institutions continued to endure in many of the former colonies.<sup>62)</sup> These factors all contributed to South Africa's strategic significance.

Throughout the years in question, Britain appeared to support South Africa, even to the extent of defending a regime that many nations condemned. Certain ethnic and family ties with many South Africans possibly made the situation even more difficult. Britain also consistently criticised Black violence and insisted that any attempts at change be peaceful ones. Although the US and Britain both condemned South African raids into neighbouring countries, both also initially vetoed UN proposals for sanctions against South Africa. Eventually, Britain conceded to minimal sanctions, but was one of the first nations to oppose such measures as soon as De Klerk became South African president and indicated change. Britain also did not view the ANC in a particularly positive light and in 1987, Mrs Thatcher referred to the ANC as a "typical terrorist organisation". Yet in 1989, Mrs Thatcher told a South African newspaper: "I do not see how, in the modern world, it is possible to achieve political stability except on a basis where all adults have the vote".<sup>63)</sup>

British relations with South Africa were thus characterised by a certain amount of hypocrisy and in 1988, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, stated the following in defence of South Africa's sovereignty: "The power of outsiders to influence events in South Africa is limited. They have to find courses of action which will be effective...The lead for change must come from inside South Africa. We can only give advice and encouragement".<sup>64)</sup> Although the British Government did vote in 1989 for the UN General Assembly's *Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa*, which contained ANC ideas for a future South Africa, most South African Black organisations viewed Britain with what is classified as "deep suspicion". Mrs Thatcher used the argument that sanctions would only serve to

further harm people in Africa: “The neighbouring countries would be the first to suffer from more general sanctions against South Africa, and for very understandable reasons have not imposed them themselves”.<sup>65)</sup>

When the Commonwealth countries issued a statement in 1989, that Britain and the other 48 members had agreed that sanctions against South Africa should remain in place until there was obvious and irreversible change; Britain issued another statement claiming that the Commonwealth should “concentrate on encouraging change rather than on further punishment”. The Foreign Secretary even went so far as to claim that: “The Commonwealth statement sets out what the Commonwealth wants; it does not set out what Britain wants”. Britain in fact differed from the Commonwealth statement on four issues, namely, she rejected the paragraph which stated that sanctions had begun to influence the policies of South Africa; she rejected an Australian proposal to investigate ways of increasing financial sanctions and a call to make the arms embargo more effective; she voted against an Australian-Canadian proposal to review the situation a few months later; and she refused to agree to the creation of an independent agency to review and report on South Africa’s financial links.<sup>66)</sup>

Britain thus perceived the RSA as holding considerable strategic value and little during the Cold War years reflected any change in this perception. Based on such factors as historical ties and South Africa’s significance in the fight against Soviet expansionism, Britain consistently supported South Africa during the apartheid era.

### 1.3 The EC and South Africa - perceptions and relations

As already noted, not all nations were eager to express official support for South Africa in light of international condemnation as regards the RSA’s apartheid policies. The EC countries were no exception and this has resulted in few official statements of strategic significance in this regard. Yet as will be noted, trade between the EC and South Africa continued in spite of sanctions and the importance of the Cape Sea Route for this purpose could not be ignored. South Africa’s primary value for the EC was as an economic ally. Military technology and assistance received particular attention from France and the French not only maintained a supply of arms to South Africa, but also assisted in the development of a ground-to-air missile, which Defence Minister P.W. Botha described in May 1969 as “the most advanced and effective weapon of its kind”.<sup>67)</sup>

French, German and Italian interests in the Indian Ocean region were predominantly economic, particularly as regards the oil trade, although France also had strategic concerns in the area which required protection.<sup>68)</sup> Western Europe, in fact, imported much of its oil supplies, which then travelled around the Cape. The Cape eventually became one of the most crowded shipping lanes in the world. Add to this South Africa’s significance as a strategic minerals supplier and economic trading partner to the West, and the extent of South Africa’s importance becomes clear.<sup>69)</sup> It was noted in the early 1970s, that Europe was likely to

become even more dependent on outside petroleum sources within the next decade and this would place increasing emphasis on the significance of the Cape Sea Route.<sup>70)</sup> These international interests added to the strategic significance of South Africa.

The *Lomé Convention* linked many African states with the EC and although the Europeans did not want to have to make a choice between South Africa and the rest of the continent, there were indications that a choice might have to be made at some point in the future. This was indicated by such actions as proposals for stockpiling in Germany and France, and suggestions in the US and Britain that companies should avoid over-dependence on South Africa.<sup>71)</sup>

EC policy towards South Africa was based on the two aims of economic independence for the less developed Southern African nations, and the abolition of apartheid.<sup>72)</sup> Although European policy towards South Africa fluctuated prior to 1990, the 1977 *Code of Conduct* regulated the employment practices of European firms with subsidiaries in the RSA. Yet by the mid-1980s, there was a certain amount of opposition as regards the implementation of sanctions and there are believed to have been disputes between EC members in this regard which led to a delay in the application of modest trade sanctions until late 1986. This can be considered an indication of South Africa's strategic significance in that certain EC nations were reluctant to impose sanctions and thus lose the benefit of trading with the RSA. Five categories of EC sanctions were, however, in place by the end of the decade, namely, scientific, military, diplomatic, sport and cultural, and economic.<sup>73)</sup>

The *Code of Conduct*, in fact, resulted from attempts by Western governments to achieve reform in South Africa using influence and pressure instead of revolutionary change. Yet, as noted above, although the Code was supported by all Community members, there were differences as regards emphasis and interest. The advantage for Community members in combining as regards operation of the *Code* was that each member had increased protection from international criticism. Yet the *Code* was voluntary, partly due to the practical difficulties involved in such factors as investigating breaches.<sup>74)</sup>

Although the so-called sanctions era resulted in a weakening of international relations, by the mid-1980s, relations were returning to some semblance of normality and in May 1984, P.W. Botha and R.F (Pik) Botha left on a successful eight-nation European visit.<sup>75)</sup> It can also be noted that although anti-apartheid lobbyists declared a political victory when companies left the RSA during the 1980s, it has been claimed that the moves were instead motivated by the declining value of South Africa as a market, as a result of high inflation, civil unrest and the collapse of the Rand. European companies were, however, slower than their American counterparts to disinvest.<sup>76)</sup> By 1989, European foreign ministers were refusing to tighten sanctions, stating that the "time was not right". The fact that British and other EC trade with South Africa had been steadily increasing can be perceived as one of the reasons behind this decision.<sup>77)</sup> This indicated continuing perceptions of strategic significance.

Thus although official statements regarding South Africa's strategic significance were somewhat muted, partly as a result of the fact that the issue of trade and other relations with South Africa was such a sensitive one, it can be deduced from the above that the perceived importance of the RSA as an economic partner appeared to counter-balance some of the concerns regarding South Africa's internal affairs.

#### 1.4 The Southern African region and South Africa - perceptions and relations

The 1960s and accompanying political change in Africa brought many African states to a distinctly hostile stance against South Africa. Yet in the second half of the 1960s, Malawi became the first country not bordering on South Africa to actively support contact with South Africa in public. As already noted, diplomatic relations between the two states were established. This "outward" contact was, however, only explored after the South African Government had established workable relationships with the BLS States, comprising Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland.<sup>78)</sup>

It was these political, diplomatic and economic ties which prohibited Malawi from joining the African-Bloc's attacks on both Portugal and South Africa. Its delegates generally abstained from voting on resolutions which supported boycotts of Portuguese or South African goods. This abstention was even carried over to the South West African issue, where Malawi once again refused to support resolutions authorising the UN to assume control of South West Africa. Malawi also voted against the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development. Although these cordial political relations between South Africa and Malawi were primarily motivated by economic necessity, Malawi's leader, Dr Kamuzu Banda, believed that violence against South Africa would prove largely unsuccessful. The increased liaison with South Africa had several negative effects for Malawi, one of the most important being the resultant collaboration of Tanzania and Zambia with Malawi insurgents. Malawi also became isolated from Black states North of the Zambezi.<sup>79)</sup>

Prior to Rhodesia's *Unilateral Declaration of Independence* (UDI) on November 11, 1965 (under the Smith Government), South Africa and Rhodesia had enjoyed relatively close trade and commercial links. Yet, as was the case with the Portuguese territories, there was a general "reluctance" by the South African Government to use military or political means to extend these links.<sup>80)</sup> On the announcement of the UDI, Dr Verwoerd declared that his government would implement a policy of non-intervention and he urged Rhodesia and Britain to resolve their dispute. South Africa attempted to maintain amicable relations with both parties, although economic aid was given to Rhodesia when Britain and other members of the United Nations imposed economic sanctions. As a result of this aid, sanctions against Rhodesia had limited success and this ultimately resulted in African leaders demanding complete mandatory sanctions. These sanctions would be supported by the necessary force to prevent South Africa and Portugal from aiding Rhodesia in any way.<sup>81)</sup>



In spite of the severe condemnation directed at the RSA, a surprising amount of contact was made between South Africa and neighbouring African states; indicating perceptions of strategic significance as regards the RSA's undeniable value and role in the region. South Africa not only maintained relations with British colonies, but also conducted trade, diplomatic or consular relations with various Southern African, as well as other African states, such as Angola, Egypt, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and Zaire. Most of these formal contacts were gradually terminated as political change began to take place in Africa. Relations with Egypt ended in 1961, while those with Zaire and Kenya were terminated in 1960 and 1963 respectively. Informal relations with Ghana became hostile and Zambia severed links with South Africa in June 1967 when Lusaka prohibited Zambians from working in RSA mines.<sup>82)</sup>

Strained relations between Zambia and South Africa deteriorated further in 1967, when South African police units were sent to the Zambesi Valley in an attempt to assist Rhodesian security forces who were tracking down African guerilla forces in the region. This further strengthened President Kaunda's resolve to avoid becoming an economic hostage of the White-ruled state. He was particularly aware of the fact that Zambia's dependence on South Africa had increased and was determined to seek alternative sources of raw materials, as well as develop other communication links. Kaunda felt vulnerable to South Africa and even attempted to purchase a ground-to-air missile system from the UK in July 1968.<sup>83)</sup>

The South African Prime Minister issued a warning to the Zambian government that force would be met with force if necessary, although it was stressed that South Africa preferred to avoid violence. This was in response to Zambian demands that aid to Rhodesia be halted. Tensions between the two states continued to be strained, however, as a result of Kaunda's willingness to allow "freedom fighters", whose targets lay across the Zambezi, to operate from bases in Zambia.<sup>84)</sup> Yet it is interesting to note that the Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs noted in 1986, that the establishment of Marxism in South Africa would result in the entire Southern African region becoming communist states.<sup>85)</sup> This can be considered a reference to the RSA's strategic significance as an anti-communist force.

South Africa attempted to resist communist control in the Southern African region by taking military action in neighbouring countries. The SADF assisted Renamo in Mozambique in their struggle against the Marxist Government and also assisted UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) in Angola in an attempt to convince the Marxist MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) Government to deny bases to SWAPO and thus restrict the war to Angola.<sup>86)</sup> It has already been established that a non-aggression pact, the *Nkomati Accord*, was eventually signed between South Africa and Mozambique in March 1984.<sup>87)</sup> The Angolan issue is discussed in further detail at a later stage.

It was noted in 1988 that only a "handful" of African states had gone to the aid of the Frontline states in their battle against the South African regime's policy. Several states, including Mauritius, the Seyshelles and the Comoros were, in fact, criticised for their continuing trade links with South Africa.<sup>88)</sup> This can be

considered indicative of the RSA's continuing strategic significance to the region, particularly as regards trade. In May 1988, the OAU's African Liberation Committee issued the *Harare Declaration on the Total Decolonisation of Africa and the Elimination of Apartheid*, which called for an increase in the armed struggle and supported comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. OAU member states who continued to collaborate with South Africa were also condemned.<sup>89)</sup> Realising the seriousness of the situation, especially as regards the armed struggle, various Western countries held the perception that sanctions could prove an alternative to violence.<sup>90)</sup> The armed struggle was eventually suspended in 1990.<sup>91)</sup>

Kaunda, in fact welcomed the coming to power of F.W. de Klerk in 1989 and was prepared to meet the new South Africa President. At the 1989 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Summit, however, Kaunda insisted that sanctions be maintained.<sup>92)</sup> Yet he had stated that he hoped to promote negotiations between the ANC and the Pretoria Administration.<sup>93)</sup> The perception was thus that although the Frontline States were more receptive to the idea of welcoming South Africa into the regional community, any major changes in relations would only occur following permanent reform in the RSA.

Two states, however, will be highlighted due to their direct significance to South Africa, namely, South West Africa/Namibia and Angola.

#### 1.4.1 South West Africa/Namibia

South West Africa became a League of Nations mandate territory under South Africa's administration after the First World War. Smuts approached the UN (the League had since dissolved) after the Second World War and requested approval for the incorporation of the mandate territory into South Africa. It was stressed that South West Africa was well-suited to incorporation as it was geographically indistinguishable from South Africa and economic integration was also firmly entrenched. Security was another reason behind the request in that South West Africa had been a centre for pro-German sentiments and activity during both World Wars. The UN rejected the request for incorporation and an "impasse" was reached in 1946 which dragged on for many years.<sup>94)</sup>

It was announced by Prime Minister Malan in late 1948, that the territory would be administered as an integral part of South Africa. Two resolutions were passed by the General Assembly in November 1953, one regarding a seven-man commission to study the situation, and the other demanding that the territory be placed under UN trusteeship.<sup>95)</sup>

SWAPO became the main focus of opposition to South African rule and although the organisation initially sought change by peaceful means, the armed struggle was later launched. *Resolution 2145* was passed in 1966 by the UN General Assembly, stating that South West Africa was the direct responsibility of the UN. South Africa promptly ignored this decision, built up the country's military potential in the territory and in

1969, passed the *South West Africa Affairs Bill*, which incorporated South West Africa into the RSA. In 1971, the International Court ruled that South Africa was occupying the territory illegally and thus began a long battle between South Africa and the world community, the latter represented by the UN. SWAPO continued its activities against the RSA and a significant change occurred with the end of Portuguese control in Angola, when SWAPO was able to establish bases in Southern Angola. It was from this moment that the war against SWAPO in South West Africa became linked to the civil war in Angola.<sup>96)</sup>

According to Prime Minister Vorster, South Africa had over the years repeatedly attempted to find an acceptable basis for negotiations with the UN in order to solve the problem.<sup>97)</sup> In 1976, the UN Security Council adopted *Resolution 385* which condemned the RSA for, amongst other things, her “continued illegal occupation” of South West Africa; as well as the use of the territory as “a base for attacks on neighbouring countries”.<sup>98)</sup> Although South Africa formally agreed on 10 June 1977 to accept a transitional government in the territory that would include SWAPO, *Resolution 435* resulted from South Africa’s rejection of the Waldheim recommendation in 1978, that 7500 UN personnel were required to implement the independence plan. This resolution endorsed the Waldheim plan for Namibian independence and left the responsibility for law and order during the transition period to South Africa, but under the supervision of up to 10 000 UN personnel.<sup>99)</sup>

Throughout the 1980s, the South African Government responded to international pressure regarding the South West Africa/Namibia issue with various statements emphasising the dangers of communist expansionism and thus the importance of the RSA as an anti-communist stalwart on the African continent. P.W. Botha insisted that the issue for the communists was not South West Africa and its people, but that the actual target was South Africa.<sup>100)</sup> Aware of the possibility of mandatory sanctions should the RSA not comply, *Resolution 435* was eventually implemented in the late 1980s. Although this chapter only deals with the era up until 1989, it can be noted at this point that South African President F.W. de Klerk even attended Namibian independence celebrations on 21 March 1990.<sup>101)</sup>

#### 1.4.2 Angola

Angola did not have extensive economic or political links with South Africa, but did share a common border with Namibia, which as noted above, had been under South African control prior to independence. Following the Portuguese withdrawal and establishment of a Marxist MPLA Government in Angola, South Africa and the US supported the rival Unita movement (in opposition to the Cubans, East Germans and Russians). It has already been established that South Africa was particularly concerned about SWAPO guerrillas based in Angola who were challenging for control of South West Africa.<sup>102)</sup> Although South Africa decided not to intervene in the conflict in Mozambique in the mid-1970s (Mozambique eventually reached independence in 1975), the opposite approach was adopted with regard to Angola. In October

1975, South African military forces crossed into Angola. The South Africans were, however, forced to withdraw when no Western support was provided.<sup>103)</sup>

The UN Security Council adopted *Resolution 387* in 1976, which condemned South Africa for her “aggression against the People’s Republic of Angola” and demanded that South Africa “scrupulously respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People’s Republic of Angola”.<sup>104)</sup> Throughout the next decade, South Africa used the presence of SWAPO bases in Southern Angola as a justification for cross-border attacks, yet these were often in support of UNITA operations. In the 1980s, the US made it clear that any settlement in Namibia had to be accompanied by a Cuban withdrawal from Angola. The civil war continued through 1984-5 and South Africa continued to maintain an extensive military presence in the South of the country.<sup>105)</sup>

The Lusaka Agreement resulted when the SADF struck deeply into Angola and insisted on assurances that SWAPO would not take advantage of the situation should South Africa withdraw. South Africa would in turn comply with UN *Resolution 435* if the Cuban troops were withdrawn.<sup>106)</sup> Angola and South Africa had thus announced in Lusaka that joint steps had been established for a ceasefire.<sup>107)</sup> In 1988, Cuba agreed to the above conditions and the RSA’s withdrawal indicated the end of the destabilisation policy against all Frontline States, as the country now wanted to be perceived as a responsible member of the international community and did not want to damage this new image.<sup>108)</sup>

There was, however, one particular Southern African organisation which played an especially prominent role in the international battle against apartheid and South Africa’s economic dominance in the region, namely, the SADCC.

#### 1.4.3 The SADCC

Perceptions of the RSA’s strategic significance were predominantly dictated by South Africa’s economic capability in the Southern African region. Circumstances and geography thus forced the Frontline States to adopt their role in relation to South Africa. Zimbabwe was the key to the Frontline States because of its central geographical position, level of economic development and important position as regards the region’s road and rail transport links. The SADCC actually only became a viable possibility following an end to the war in Rhodesia when an independent Zimbabwe emerged in 1980.<sup>109)</sup> The foundation for the SADCC was laid in Arusha, Tanzania, in July 1979, with the actual inauguration taking place in April 1980.<sup>110)</sup> It was noted that Southern Africa was dependent on the RSA, particularly as regards transport and communications, the import and export of goods, and migrant labour. The reduction of economic dependence and the promulgation of regional integration were thus important aims.<sup>111)</sup> Yet the SADCC’s executive secretary, Simba Makoni, announced in 1987 that the creation of the SADCC had not specifically been a move *against* South Africa.<sup>112)</sup>

Pretoria responded to the development of the SADCC by attempting to maintain economic hegemony in the region, largely by using the policy of destabilisation. The strategy of the SADCC was to increase regional co-operation, the key to which lay in the development and upgrade of the regional system of transport and communications. The SADCC's weakness, however, resulted from its dependence on international aid to fund its policies. By the 1980s, the apartheid system was viewed so negatively that not even the governments of Reagan in the USA, Thatcher in Britain or Kohl in West Germany would openly support Pretoria. The SADCC offered an alternative for the countries who wanted to avoid a stronger Western policy and aid thus proved generous.<sup>113)</sup> Nonetheless, in 1985, the Frontline States called on Western states to "broaden and intensify the pressure" of sanctions. Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland later joined their call.<sup>114)</sup>

Harare was the venue for the 1986 congress of the Non-Aligned Movement and the occasion was used to increase pressures for sanctions against South Africa. A call was also made on Third World countries to support the economies of the Frontline States. Britain was in the meantime under attack from other Commonwealth members for her refusal to apply sanctions to South Africa and responded by increasing aid to Mozambique during the 1980s. Britain was also providing military training for the armies of Botswana and Zimbabwe; while the EC pledged a considerable sum for rehabilitation work on two of Mozambique's railways. South Africa in turn became aware that investments could now find their way to neighbouring states, although in real terms, Western aid remained minimal. Yet Western strategy was to give relatively generous aid to SADCC countries instead of applying meaningful sanctions or other pressures to South Africa, thus indicating a certain perception of the RSA's strategic significance and a distinct lack of desire to completely alienate South Africa.<sup>115)</sup>

Although the SADCC was considered a success, it became increasingly evident that most Western investors appeared more interested in the new opportunities presented by the changes in Eastern Europe. It was thus hoped that a reformed South Africa might eventually join the SADCC: "We will definitely want to take advantage of the strength and the advances achieved in the South Africa economy to act as a motor for spurring development...our first act upon the termination of apartheid will be to admit an independent and democratic South Africa into the SADCC family".<sup>116)</sup> It was also noted that the US State Department had insisted that South Africa could not be ignored as regards economic development in the Southern African region.<sup>117)</sup> The Frontline States thus found it difficult, if not impossible, to ignore South Africa's strategic significance as a vital regional player and the attitudes of these states varied according to their ability to withstand pressure from South Africa. Zimbabwe, however, faced up to the regional realities at independence when President Mugabe stated that: "We must accept that South Africa is a geographical reality and, as such, we must have some minimum relationship with it".<sup>118)</sup>

As noted, the SADCC states experienced a definite degree of economic dependence on South Africa and their economies were thus linked to that of the RSA. Although the international sanctions campaign against

South Africa will be discussed at a later stage of this chapter, it is pertinent at this point to discuss the effect of sanctions on these neighbouring states as this reflects the RSA's strategic significance to a certain extent.

#### 1.4.4 The impact of sanctions on Southern Africa

Six of the nine SADCC member states are landlocked, thus emphasising the importance of South African infrastructure for trade. Telecommunications were also involved in that in 1980, only 14 direct telephone links out of a possible 72 existed among SADCC member states. Links thus had to be routed through South Africa and to a lesser extent, Western Europe. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland were largely dependent on energy imports from South Africa, particularly as regards oil. Malawi also imported forty percent of its domestic oil requirements. Food was a further important import, especially as agricultural and food output in the region could not keep pace with rapid population growth, while industrial development in the SADCC region was poor.<sup>119)</sup> It is thus clear that the member states of the SADCC found it difficult to implement economic sanctions against South Africa without causing considerable damage to their own economies. A Gaborone press release in May 1979 referred to the situation as one of "brutal structural reality", where South Africa would "naturally" dominate the area as a result of the RSA's size, wealth, technological and military capabilities. South Africa also possessed the most trained labour force.<sup>120)</sup> Thus although the stability and prosperity of the Southern African region was considered vital for the advancement of Western interests, interests were more specific for South Africa's neighbours.<sup>121)</sup>

Approximately 12-21 percent of Mozambican, Zambian and Zimbabwean imports were from South Africa, although only Zimbabwe and Swaziland were exporting significant amounts to South Africa. Five SADCC states also had migrant labourers in South Africa, many of them working in RSA mines. Lesotho obtained all of its electricity from South Africa, while Swaziland, Botswana and Mozambique also obtained about one-third of their electricity from the RSA.<sup>122)</sup> When OAU Ministers in 1980 called for increased supervision of oil tanker traffic to South Africa, in preparation for an oil embargo, it was also indicated that studies should be undertaken to determine the impact of such moves on the economies of Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe.<sup>123)</sup> It was thus clear that the strategic significance of South Africa to the economies of these countries could not be ignored.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the asymmetrical interdependence between South Africa and other states in the Southern African region was regularly emphasised by the South African Government. The creation of so-called buffer states where the RSA could exert political, military and economic influence served to increase the dependence of these states on the goodwill of South Africa. They were also tied to the economic success of the RSA. In the mid-1980s, Zimbabwe was considered the most developed of the Black Southern African countries. Yet its economy was dependent on trade and the use of South African ports and railroads for this purpose. Thus although the Zimbabwean Government supported sanctions, it was difficult to fully participate in their application. Botswana is another example of a country in a situation

of economic dependence and this was noted by Botswana's External Affairs Secretary who stated that: "We appreciate why certain countries want sanctions, but we ourselves cannot impose sanctions". Zambia's economy was dependent on the export of copper, up to half of which travelled across South Africa. In 1982, South Africa also replaced the UK as Zambia's primary source of imports, which mainly consisted of machinery and transport equipment, food, fuels, chemicals, and manufactured items.<sup>124)</sup>

Countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho were thus described as having high degrees of asymmetrical interdependence with South Africa. As a result, Swaziland's conservative government actually supported South Africa and the country's Prime Minister made the following statement as regards sanctions: "We in Swaziland cannot support any action which will eventually threaten our own survival". Malawi maintained full diplomatic relations with the RSA, through which most of its tobacco and tea crop was exported. South African tourists were another source of income. Mozambique was also relatively dependent on the RSA, particularly as regards use of the Mozambican port of Maputo.<sup>125)</sup> It is thus clear from the above that it was relatively impossible for many Southern African states to implement sanctions against South Africa, no matter how much they opposed the apartheid regime. They instead had to be satisfied with pressurising the larger, more powerful states to impose sanctions against the RSA as these states were less likely to suffer economic hardship as a result.

South Africa was thus vital to the political and economic future of the Southern African region, possessing both military supremacy and a strong economy. The RSA was, in fact, the region's primary source of technology, employment, capital, management, agricultural and manufactured goods, as well as internal markets. The country's transport infrastructure was also difficult to avoid. It can be noted that when President P.W. Botha announced in September 1985 that South African citizenship would be restored to residents of the four so-called independent homelands, namely, Bophuthatswana, Transkei, Ciskei, and Venda, this was considered significant as the homelands policy was a vital part of the apartheid view. Yet the perception was that this gradual movement away from apartheid was more the result of domestic and not international pressure, as the latter only served to increase resistance.<sup>126)</sup> South Africa's perceived strategic significance thus played an important role in the decision taken by many Southern African states not to impose strict economic sanctions against the RSA.

Relations between South Africa and many African states gradually improved during the 1980s as reform in the RSA began to take place. These improved relations were not, however, always publicised as many African states continued to publically berate South Africa's internal policies and insisted on continuing the sanctions campaign until a democratically-elected government was in place. International sanctions can, however, be considered to have failed in their primary objective of forcing the South African Government to accept democratic elections under a one-man-one-vote system, partly as a result of South Africa's economic strength and partly because of their incomplete application by states who were too dependent on

South Africa. This can be considered an indication of the RSA's strategic significance as trade with South Africa was considered important enough to prevent the application of sanctions by certain African states.

#### 1.5 The USSR and South Africa - perceptions and relations

It can be noted at this point that there is a general lack of sources regarding official Soviet perceptions of South Africa's strategic importance during the period under discussion. A certain amount of deduction, based on the extent of Soviet-SA relations, will thus be necessary as regards determining alter perceptions of strategic significance.

Although the West emphasised the Soviet desire for communist expansionism in Africa, Soviet interest also appeared to be focused on the RSA's mineral resources, particularly those minerals which could only be found in two places, namely, the RSA and the Soviet Union. Control of South Africa's minerals would thus leave the Soviet Union with valuable bargaining power.

There have been two arguments regarding Soviet interest in the Southern African region in general and South Africa in particular, the one contradicting the other. The first argument, as relentlessly pursued by the South Government itself and much of the Western World, was that communist expansionism in the region was a reality, with the ultimate goal of denying South Africa's strategic minerals and the use of the Cape Sea Route to the rest of the world. Once South Africa had fallen to communist control, it would also be easier to destabilise and control the rest of the region, thus denying the West access to its numerous political, economic and strategic interests. Mention has been made of the so-called "weak link" principle, which implied that the Soviets would be able to ensure US economic and political concessions as a result of the nation's dependence on external sources of strategic minerals.<sup>127)</sup>

Supporters of this theory define the key objectives of Soviet policy in Africa as expanding the nation's political and economic influence; diminishing Western influence; extending the global reach of Soviet military delivery capacity; and counteracting the influence of the People's Republic of China in Africa.<sup>128)</sup> According to Dr Igor Glagolev, who served as a consultant to the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Southern Africa formed the most dynamic part of the free world and Soviet policymakers were intent on acquiring the riches of this region. The programme adopted by the Soviet Communist Party in 1961 eventually included what Glagolev terms "active preparation for the future conquest of Africa". The goal of world domination was considered a long-range aim, although important Soviet policymakers had admitted that the governments of countries such as South Africa would be "liquidated". Glagolev was convinced that a communist takeover in Southern Africa would have enormous repercussions for the entire free world, including a reduction in the availability of strategic minerals and a resultant recession in the West.<sup>129)</sup>



In 1985, the London *Times* detailed an assessment of Soviet influence in the Southern African region and referred to the Cape as a prize for Soviet foreign policy. Aside from the RSA's strategic minerals, South Africa was also an important trading partner for many countries. The article suggested that: "The indications are that Russian policy is directed not towards the rapid overthrow of the Pretoria government, but rather to a long period of destabilisation for the country leading only eventually - if possible - to the establishment of a government dominated by Moscow".<sup>130)</sup>

Although the world was surprised at the lack of attention paid to the Third World by Mikhail Gorbachev in his Political Report to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1986 (in contrast to the early 1980s when Brezhnev emphasised Soviet achievements in this part of the globe), it was stressed that this did not actually indicate a curtailment of activities in the Third World. The belief was that the Soviets were merely re-adjusting their focus and priorities. There was evidence to indicate that there had been increased Soviet economic, diplomatic, political, and military activity in the Southern African region.<sup>131)</sup> There also appeared to be a particular emphasis on economic benefit for the USSR.<sup>132)</sup>

The second argument as regards the ultimate aim of Soviet policy in the Southern African region, emphasised that the above scenario was unrealistic in that it exaggerated Soviet capacity and undervalued Western strengths. It was, however, noted that access to naval basing facilities in Southern Africa would reduce transit time for the Soviets as regards the projection of a naval presence in the Indian Ocean and the maintenance of naval forces. Yet this argument also maintained that even Soviet economic co-operation with the Third World was limited and that resource denial was not a "discernible" goal of Soviet policy. Underlying this entire argument was thus the fact that although Soviet interests in this part of the globe were real, they were not considered vital. Strategic involvement instead formed a part of overall superpower rivalry.<sup>133)</sup> In fact, the West was considered to hold more of a threat as regards competition for mineral reserves in that other nations could be denied access to these same sources.<sup>134)</sup> Although there is a general lack of information as regards true Soviet interests in South Africa, a few Soviet statements were made and one involves support for the above theory: "Through the medium of the Union of South Africa the US monopolies are striving to take control of South West Africa with its vast reserves of extremely important strategic raw materials -copper and vanadium".<sup>135)</sup>

During an interview with Olzhas Suleimenov, member of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet, Suleimenov emphasised the fact that the Soviet Union was not interested in South African mineral reserves and instead preferred to concentrate on accessing strategic minerals which lay in Kazakhstan. As regards relations with South Africa, Suleimenov stated that the Soviet Union supported the UN in the condemnation of apartheid. Moscow wanted human values to prevail in the RSA, without ethnic or social domination and suggested the release of political prisoners and the unbanning of the ANC.<sup>136)</sup>

As evidence of a change in Soviet policy towards South Africa, a former director of the Africa Institute in Moscow emphasised in 1980 that the USSR did not want to prescribe any course of action to the RSA or the ANC. The solution to South Africa's problems would thus come from within the country itself. This can be considered a marked change to previous years when the Soviet Union had supported military confrontation in the Southern African region. It had apparently become Soviet policy to promote stability in the developing world in order to prevent possible superpower involvement which could rapidly escalate. A Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister in fact acknowledged that the USSR was willing to play the role of mediator as regards the South African issue.<sup>137)</sup>

In conjunction with his "Perestroika" line of thought, Gorbachev himself indicated that the USSR would respect Western interests, including access to South Africa's minerals: "I have explained on many occasions that we do not pursue goals inimical to Western interests. We know how important...other Third World regions and also South Africa are for American and West European economies, in particular as raw material sources. To cut these links is the last thing we want to do, and we have no desire to provoke ruptures in historically formed, mutual economic interests".<sup>138)</sup> Gorbachev was noted as being eager for economic co-operation to replace ideological conflict.<sup>139)</sup>

Although the USSR supported UN sanctions against South Africa, the two countries did apparently share a secret relationship for the marketing of gold and diamonds, emphasising once again the value of economic interests over political concerns.<sup>140)</sup> In fact, although South Africa and the West had for years emphasised the "communist threat" in the Southern African region, it has been theorised that the region did not form part of short- or medium-term USSR priorities. USSR support was instead given to the ANC and for the international sanctions campaign, which as noted above, was ignored at times.<sup>141)</sup>

The *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* had indicated as early as the 1970s, that the Soviet Union continued to support those who were fighting social, national and racial oppression, including those in South Africa and that political ties in this regard were being increased: "The Soviet Union is expanding its political ties with the developing countries...the Soviet Union's mutually advantageous economic cooperation with the young states has a solid foundation and good prospects".<sup>142)</sup> Economic concerns were thus already a feature of Soviet policy and increased the level of strategic significance awarded to South Africa and other states on the African continent. Yet on the surface, support was given to the application of sanctions against South Africa: "In its foreign policy activities, the Soviet Union firmly and unswervingly supports all UN decisions and recommendations in regard to the boycott of Pretoria's racist regime".<sup>143)</sup>

Throughout the period under discussion in this chapter, the Soviet Union did hold certain perceptions as regards South Africa's strategic significance. These perceptions were originally based on the RSA's vast quantities of strategic minerals. With the USSR being one of the few, if not the only, other country to have such a natural supply, control of South Africa's minerals by the Soviets would have extensive implications

for the international community. During the Cold War years, South Africa's position at the tip of Africa was of particular interest to the USSR as this was along one of the world's most valuable trade routes. There was also the important position of South Africa as an anti-communist ally for the West on a continent where the USSR was trying to expand its influence. Towards the end of the Cold War, however, it would at least appear that the RSA started to assume a certain degree of value as a stabilising force in the region.

In the pre-1990 period, there can be no denying that the official focus of relations between South Africa and other countries was centred around the threat and application of international sanctions, in an attempt to coerce the South African Government to change its internal policies. Many countries across the globe were determined to effect change in South Africa, but the level of action varied from intense support for comprehensive sanctions from the African states, to attempts by the US Government to forestall Congress in their goal of extensive sanctions. Ultimately, the sanctions campaign covered most of South Africa's activities and the RSA became one of the world's *pariah* states.

## **2. The international sanctions campaign against South Africa**

South Africa became an international outcast as a result of the country's apartheid policies and contact with the outside world was gradually reduced over a period spanning approximately four decades. There was little doubt that South Africa was effectively isolated from the international community and by 1989, the RSA's isolation stretched over four areas, namely, diplomatic, military, economic, and socio-cultural. The international crusade against South Africa took various forms and the eradication of apartheid became a moral issue for many international governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as individual governments and various private organisations. The UN became the focal point for punitive measures against South Africa from the very first session of the General Assembly in 1946.

A sanction has been described as a "threatened evil", the purpose of which is "to induce the threatened state to refrain from certain conduct and instead do something else". Some unlawful act is committed prior to the imposition of sanctions, which may take the form of economic coercion; armed force; the termination of rail, sea and air links; exclusion from international institutions; the severance of diplomatic relations; and non-recognition of a state or territorial acquisition.<sup>144)</sup>

In order for sanctions to be effective, they must be strictly enforced by a broad spectrum of countries. This type of uniform enforcement is, however, difficult to achieve. Economic sanctions have thus seldom been effective. The arms embargo against South Africa presents examples of circumvention and the RSA was also able to establish a domestic armaments industry. The most successful use of sanctions has been when they have been deployed by a strong state against a weaker state with which it is asymmetrically interdependent. Other policy guidelines as regards the probability of the successful application of sanctions include the fact that they must be in the self-interest of the countries whose co-operation is required; they

should be applied in a short time-frame; and should also be specific in nature.<sup>145)</sup> One of the factors which resulted in Western resistance to sanctions against the RSA was the knowledge that South Africa forms an integral part of an interdependent region. Sanctions could thus effect the entire region.

Economic sanctions against South Africa have included sanctions against the provision of defence industry goods and services; the sale of nuclear technology; the importation or sale of Krugerrands; the sale of oil; and the extension of loans. The RSA attempted to counteract or at least reduce the impact of these sanctions by locating alternative sources or turning to domestic capabilities.<sup>146)</sup> It should also be noted that South Africa could not be classified as economically or militarily weak when the arms embargo was declared.<sup>147)</sup> The success of sanctions thus depends to a large extent on the economic and political stability of the target. As already established, the South African economy did eventually weaken by the mid-1980s as a result of numerous factors, thus increasing the possibility of success for economic sanctions.

Those who opposed sanctions or disinvestment against South Africa did so on the grounds that they were immoral; contrary to the wishes of most Black South Africans; and counter-productive in that they harmed the very people they were supposed to help. Sanctions were deemed not only disastrous for the economies of neighbouring states, but also their political stability, and were considered to be mere interference by self-interested foreign nations.<sup>148)</sup>

Apartheid has, however, been widely criticised on the international front in accordance with the UN Charter, which obligates states to promote respect for human rights without distinctions based on race. The 1966 *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* and the 1973 *International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid* denounced apartheid as unlawful. The International Court of Justice also declared it to be contrary to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter; while apartheid has been labelled an “international crime” by the International Law Commission and other international bodies. Although a mandatory arms embargo was eventually declared in 1977 against South Africa, attempts to extend this to include extensive economic sanctions failed due to the veto power of certain Western powers, including the US. Eventually the US Congress adopted the CAAA of 1986; the Nordic countries imposed a total trade ban on South Africa; and the Commonwealth countries, as well as the European Economic Community (EEC), imposed collective sanctions.<sup>149)</sup>

## 2.1 The legal framework for mandatory sanctions

The UN Security Council is authorised under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to order enforcement action against any state that threatens international peace, should it find that this is a “threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” under article 39 of the Charter. It should also be noted that the five permanent members of the Security Council, namely, the US, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the Soviet Union, have the power to block a resolution by means of a veto. The US and the UK in particular

utilised this veto regarding efforts to declare punitive sanctions against South Africa. Most of the Security Council resolutions on South Africa were, however, adopted under Chapter VI of the Charter, which states that the Security Council may *recommend* measures to rectify a situation that is “likely to endanger” or “disturbs” international peace. The UN General Assembly, however, is limited solely to the making of recommendations which ultimately mobilise international public opinion and pressurise the Security Council.<sup>150)</sup>

## 2.2 A history of UN sanctions against South Africa

India was the first nation to impose trade sanctions against South Africa when in 1946, legislation was passed by the South African Government restricting Indian land ownership in the RSA. This was followed by an appeal to the conscience of the international world to take action against racism in South Africa. While many countries were spurred into action, the US not only withheld even verbal condemnation, but until 1958, abstained from voting on UN General Assembly resolutions which condemned South Africa’s racial policies. This action was defended by Article 2(7) of the UN Charter which stipulates non-interference in domestic affairs. The South African Government continued to refuse to discuss the country’s treatment of its Indian population during the late 1940s/early 1950s on the same grounds.<sup>151)</sup>

Apartheid appeared on the agenda of the General Assembly by the early 1950s and the first resolutions in this regard consisted primarily of appeals to observe the Charter’s human rights obligations, as the situation was not yet considered a danger to international peace and security. After 1960, international outrage at the situation in South Africa deepened with the independence of several African states and their acceptance into the UN. States were requested by the General Assembly in 1961 to consider taking both separate and collective action against South Africa. This was followed by appeals to member states to cease diplomatic relations with the RSA; as well as boycott all South African goods; close their ports to South African ships; prohibit the export of goods to South Africa; and refuse landing and passage facilities to all South African aircraft. Although the RSA’s primary trading partners did not implement many of the non-mandatory recommendations, South Africa did become more isolated on the international front.<sup>152)</sup>

The UN General Assembly had by this time realised that the appeals of approximately two decades had practically been ignored and members were “discouraged” in the 1960s from collaborating with the South African Government on economic matters. Apartheid was declared “a crime against humanity”.<sup>153)</sup> General Assembly *Resolution* 1761 (XV111) of November 6, 1962, called for: “Boycotting all South African goods and refraining from exporting goods, including all arms and ammunition, to South Africa”.<sup>154)</sup> The Security Council adopted a resolution regarding the arms embargo in 1963, which called upon: “All states to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition of all types, and military vehicles to South Africa”.<sup>155)</sup> Although the UN General Assembly in 1969 requested that the Security Council consider the idea of using

force against apartheid and pressurising the South African Government to release political prisoners, the US vetoed the idea.<sup>156)</sup>

In 1970, the UN Security Council called on member states to strictly implement the arms embargo against South Africa. The aim of such restrictions was to isolate the RSA and coerce the disintegration of the apartheid policy.<sup>157)</sup> By the mid-1970s, the US, France and Britain had vetoed a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa in response to continued RSA presence in Namibia; although the US and its Western allies eventually voted for the already-mentioned UN Security Council *Resolution 385*, which stipulated an end to racial discrimination and political repression in Namibia; the repatriation of exiles; the release of political prisoners; and free elections which could be held under UN supervision.<sup>158)</sup>

In 1977, following local unrest, the “massive violence against and wanton killings of the African people” was condemned by the Security Council. *Resolution 418* imposed a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa and stated that: “The acquisition by South Africa of arms and related materiel constitutes a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security”.<sup>159)</sup> The arms embargo against South Africa was significant in that it represented the first time that the Security Council had ordered enforcement action against a member state. The US (Reagan Administration) and the UK (Thatcher Government), however, once again utilised their vetos to prevent further mandatory sanctions.<sup>160)</sup> Security Council *Resolution 421* provided for a committee of the Security Council to monitor the implementation of *Resolution 418*.<sup>161)</sup>

A state of emergency was called in South Africa in 1985 and this was followed by Security Council *Resolution 569*, which called for the lifting of the state of emergency and urged member states to implement such measures as the prohibition of all new contracts in the nuclear field; the suspension of new investments; the restriction of sports and cultural relations; the prohibition of all sales of computer equipment for use by South African military and police services; the suspension of guaranteed export loans; and the prohibition of the sale of Krugerrands.<sup>162)</sup>

President Botha opened parliament in 1986 and announced that the idea of an undivided South Africa with only “one citizenship” had been formally accepted and Blacks were now offered an advisory role in government. Yet he refused to negotiate with the ANC and had no intention of accepting a one-man-one-vote or Black majority rule in a unified South Africa.<sup>163)</sup> This did not find favour with the international community and the sanctions campaign continued. In 1986, 126 member states thus voted in favour of a resolution calling on the Security Council to impose mandatory economic sanctions against the South Africa.<sup>164)</sup>

One of the most serious implications of the sanctions campaign was the limiting of the inflow of foreign capital into South Africa, which would have had serious implications for the RSA’s economy had sanctions been extensively applied. Yet many states continued to trade with the RSA and between 1965 and 1975,

the net inflow of foreign capital increased from R 225 million to R 1774 million. The UK was one of South Africa's most important sources of foreign capital, although the US, France and Germany also constituted sources.<sup>165)</sup>

As noted, the UK remained opposed to economic sanctions against the RSA, using the rationale that sanctions would inflict damage on all involved parties and not just the South African Government. Although countries in Europe did apply certain sanctions, there were differences in application. This led to a certain degree of ineffectiveness as regards the application of sanctions. Local governments, labour unions, businesses, and both the private and public sectors of the international community, also became involved in the sanctions movement.<sup>166)</sup>

The main emphasis of the public sanctions movement was on disinvestment and divestment. The former is defined as "selling or writing off direct, subsidiary, or other business investments in South Africa"; while the latter is the "elimination of any indirect investments in South Africa by selling equity investments in companies that either possess investments in South Africa or conduct business with South Africa". Consumer boycott actions in the US and Europe did not achieve much success, but several major corporations such as Apple Computer and PepsiCo did take disinvestment action. Coca-Cola was one company which while deciding to reduce its investments, believed that its presence in South Africa was beneficial from an employment perspective.<sup>167)</sup> As has been indicated, contraventions of the international sanctions campaign did indeed occur and several of these are discussed below.

### 2.3 Co-operation and trade with South Africa during the sanctions era

There were various allegations of contraventions of the arms embargo and boycotts against South Africa and these reflect the fact that the RSA's strategic significance prevented the universal application of sanctions. Of all the international sanctions applied against South Africa, the international arms embargo probably received the most emphasis. It has, however, been noted that, as was the case with the oil embargo, the arms embargo did not result in internal reform in the RSA in that South Africa merely developed a strong local defence industry in order to counteract the restrictions.

#### 2.3.1 Armaments trade during the embargo

In response to increasing international calls for the boycotting of South African goods and military equipment, the RSA sought intermediaries for these exports to prevent announcement of origin. Several countries are mentioned in this regard, including the UK, FR Germany and Israel. The US also imported South African equipment for military purposes. Such products increasingly fell under the category of dual-use equipment which was not affected by the arms embargo. As regards the South African arms industry, the declared export policy from 1982 had been aimed at Africa, Latin America, the Far East, and the Middle

East. Portugal, Malawi and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) were all customers, as were Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho. South African military support, in fact, assisted Rhodesia sufficiently enough to survive UN and British economic and military sanctions. Chile, Guatemala and Paraguay are noted as “keeping up relations” with South Africa as regards defence matters; while other customers have been Morocco, Iran and Israel. Technological co-operation with Taiwan also took place.<sup>168)</sup>

Yet these are not the only countries which through the years have allowed South Africa access to foreign technology. Others include Italy, France, Japan, Belgium, Austria, Canada, and the Netherlands.<sup>169)</sup> Many countries have used so-called “loopholes” in UN embargo legislation in order to circumvent these embargoes. It is noted that the initiative for an embargo against South Africa came from the Third World nations in the UN and not from the West. The result was a distinct hesitancy by Western nations to impose severe sanctions against South Africa.<sup>170)</sup> This hesitancy can be considered a result of the RSA’s perceived importance to the West.

### 2.3.2 Oil trade during the embargo

South Africa’s dependence on oil has been discussed in preceding chapters. This particular section will take a brief look at efforts to circumvent the oil embargo and will highlight the increasing importance of economic interests over political concerns. In other words, a state’s strategic significance became more closely linked with economic opportunities. It is generally accepted that the oil embargo against South Africa did not achieve much success. Other than the imposition of extensive costs, South Africa did not experience too much difficulty in obtaining oil imports. Opposition by the UK and the US within the UN Security Council prevented the oil embargo from becoming mandatory in nature, although most UN members voluntarily adopted an oil embargo, as did organisations such as the EC and the Commonwealth. The embargo was also endorsed by all the primary oil exporting countries, including the member states of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).<sup>171)</sup>

Most of South Africa’s oil in the 1970s came from Iran, resulting in minimal effect from the OPEC and OAPEC boycotts. The fall of the Shah of Iran, however, changed this situation and the RSA lost her primary supplier. Pretoria managed to buy oil from various countries between 1979 and 1982, although sources then began to diminish. Brunei became a supplier for a while, until a ban in this regard was introduced in 1987. Approximately 35 percent of South Africa’s imported crude oil had been carried on Norwegian-owned or managed ships, but this arrangement followed a similar fate as that with Brunei in accordance with 1987 Norwegian legislation. This legislation, however, had an extensive loophole as it was still permissible to transport oil to South Africa on Norwegian ships if the oil was resold on the high seas. According to the Shipping Research Bureau, much of the oil shipped to the RSA originated in a few oil-exporting countries, particularly in the Persian Gulf area, namely, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United



Arab Emirates. Western shipping companies, especially from Greece, Hong Kong, West Germany, and the UK then carried the oil to South Africa using their tankers.<sup>172)</sup>

It is thus relatively clear that although damaging to the South African economy, international sanctions were not able to achieve their ultimate objective, namely coercing the government to change internal policies. This was a result of the fact that South Africa was not only well-positioned in the global environment, but also held extensive international economic contacts and possessed a relatively strong national capability.

### **3. Conclusion**

Historically, South Africa has maintained a relative degree of strategic significance as regards the international community. The country's abundance of natural resources, particularly minerals; her strategic location and historical ties with the United Kingdom; as well as her economic strength and strong anti-communist stance, have all played a role in South Africa's importance to the rest of the world. Even throughout the sanctions era, politicians testified that this case was not as simple as that of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). It was the RSA's perceived strategic significance which, in fact, became a deciding factor in the application of further sanctions, as a result of the factors noted above. In the era following the Cold War, South Africa's national capability was likely to become even more important for the rest of the African continent as the country headed towards increasing regional commitments.

South Africa's status of strategic significance is the result of a complex historical inheritance. Yet it has been with the Third World that South Africa has held great attraction, and the interdependence between South Africa and the rest of Africa was likely to increase as the "old" Europe with its East-West divisions crumbled as a result of the collapse of communism. With much of the international community in turmoil, the African continent was bound to experience a definite lack of interest and a reduction in funding from the outside world. Countries would thus become increasingly dependent on neighbouring states. As one of the most powerful states in Africa, South Africa could be a valuable ally and trading partner within the African region and it was difficult to perceive South Africa as being excluded from this situation of interdependence.

By the late 1980s, South Africa's strategic significance had changed considerably, partly as a result of reform in the RSA's internal policies. With the passing of the Cold War changes were inevitable, an example being the delivery of Russian strategic minerals to the West by suitable sea routes that were once again safe for such transportation. South Africa's strategic significance continued to be concentrated on the nation's importance to Southern African states in a regional context. Most of these states are landlocked and had little option as regards trade with their powerful regional neighbour. South Africa's strong infrastructure facilitated the transportation of vital economic and industrial goods, and trade arrangements continued in spite of continuous criticism as regards the RSA's internal policies. The commencement of the so-called sanctions era thus witnessed a distinct reluctance on the part of South Africa's neighbours to apply punitive

sanctions. This is not to imply that South Africa's racist policies were not vehemently criticised at every available opportunity. Much of the international community eventually obliged with various sanctions, albeit to varying degrees.

Although financial damage did result from the sanctions campaign, trade continued, albeit in a clandestine fashion. The arms embargo itself did little other than to result in a strong local military manufacturing capability and generally served as a substitute for more severe economic sanctions. World leaders, especially the UK and the US, in fact resisted sanctions for many years as a result of their perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance. Combined with the RSA's ability to counter international attempts at isolation, the result was a relatively ineffective sanctions campaign.

Yet it is clear that although South Africa did hold a certain degree of strategic significance, it was the government who reduced this value with their domestic policies or at the minimum, had a negative impact on the level of strategic significance. A government can thus diminish the value of the state.

The primary aim of this chapter and the preceding chapter was to establish ego and alter perceptions regarding South Africa's strategic significance during the period under discussion. Ultimately, there can be no denying that the RSA was considered to be strategically important by much of the international community. In many cases to the extent that although there was extensive international condemnation regarding South Africa's internal racial policies, in practical terms, little was done to isolate South Africa in an attempt to enforce change. When the South African Government eventually began to emphasise domestic change, the RSA then slowly moved from a position of *pariah* status to one of increasing international acceptance. In order to establish the depth of this acceptance and to further establish ego and alter perceptions in this regard, it is necessary to study these aspects in the years 1990 to 1993. This study will be conducted in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER 6: SOUTH AFRICA'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE IN TERMS OF EGO AND ALTER PERCEPTIONS IN THE 1990-1993 PERIOD

Ego and alter perceptions regarding South Africa's strategic significance to the rest of the world up until the end of the 1980s have been discussed in preceding chapters. As this study takes the form of a comparative analysis, this chapter will focus on perceptions regarding the RSA's strategic significance in the second period under discussion, namely, from 1990 to 1993. Although there will be a brief evaluation of perceptions during the two periods at the end of this chapter, a more detailed comparative analysis will be presented in the next chapter.

It has been established in previous chapters that both ego and alter perceptions, linked to national capability, form part of the overall concept of strategic significance. A nation formulates its perceptions in this regard in accordance with the capability at its disposal. In order for the state to have international importance, however, these perceptions require a response from the international community and this response will take the form of alter perceptions. When ego and alter perceptions regarding strategic significance are similar, practical measures, often in the form of relations, result. The extent of international relations can thus reflect perceptions of strategic importance, especially in cases where few official statements are available in this regard.

The changes in the external environment as a result of the ending of the Cold War eventually had an impact on South Africa, with the end result being that Pretoria could no longer claim to be the target of communist forces; while the ANC began to lose support in Moscow for its armed struggle.<sup>1)</sup> As a result, the ANC underwent a remarkable transformation in its focus and direction. This was evident when a senior member of the ANC's International Department stated the following in 1993: "Our future relations with the international community will have to be based on economic and trade considerations rather than on ideological considerations".<sup>2)</sup>

After decades of international isolation, South Africa was relocated to a very different position. A shift in the global political and power balance, as well as radical internal political reforms, led the way for a normalisation of South Africa's international position. Much of South Africa's foreign policy during the Cold War era was largely determined by international reaction to the government's apartheid policies and foreign policy was thus primarily directed at influencing international opinion in this regard.<sup>3)</sup>

Dramatic changes in South Africa's internal policies began to surface after the inauguration of State President F.W. de Klerk, who committed himself to the negotiation of a new constitution for South Africa. His aims included the establishment of a multi-party democracy with regular elections, the protection of minority rights, an entrenched bill of human rights, and a market-orientated economy.<sup>4)</sup> International

reaction in this regard was immediate and positive. Although many countries continued to enforce sanctions against the RSA, on the insistence of the ANC, relations with South Africa thus continued to develop.

There could, however, be no doubt that once the initial euphoria regarding South Africa's transformation had subsided, the road ahead would be fraught with challenges for the new post-apartheid society. South Africa's policies would now have to be diverted from an emphasis on security issues to those concerning wealth, welfare and the environment. There was also the additional importance of re-establishing certain international relations, not least of all so as to gain access to financial and other aid. The early 1990s witnessed successful moves in this direction, although the issue of marginalisation could not be ignored. The re-orientation of Western funding away from the Third World, in fact, left South Africa with several opportunities on the African continent.<sup>5)</sup>

It can thus be anticipated that while alter perceptions regarding South Africa's importance would, *inter alia*, be reflected by the extent of the RSA's relations with the international community; ego perceptions would primarily emphasise South Africa's role on the African continent. The end of the Cold War also resulted in the predominance of economic concerns, and both ego and alter perceptions were thus likely to reflect the importance of international trade relations. In contrast to previous years, the focus would no longer be purely on South Africa's significance in the attempt to control Soviet expansionism and this is emphasised below.

### **1. Ego perceptions regarding the strategic significance of South Africa in the 1990-1993 period**

In Chapters 4 and 5 of this study, emphasis was placed on South Africa's important position at the Southern tip of the African continent. It was this geo-strategic position which resulted in a vital role for the RSA as an anti-communist stalwart in the Third World. The threat of communism and Soviet encroachment had, however, diminished by the early 1990s and South Africa lost an element of strategic significance in the process. The global changes that occurred at the end of the Cold War thus forced the South African Government to emphasise aspects of strategic significance other than ideological orientation. Yet certain elements of strategic significance remained in the new era, such as South Africa's importance as a strategic minerals supplier, albeit amongst tougher international competition. It has been established that a state should adapt its roles in accordance with the changing environment and this chapter will present evidence of South Africa's attempts at such adaptability.

#### **1.1. Relevant elements of national capability and related ego perceptions**

As already noted, it is the elements of national capability which ultimately result in a perception of possible roles for a nation and these roles are discussed below. Several important issues to be addressed which could have provided the RSA with role opportunities include an acceptance that South Africa was undeniably

linked to global politics; the growing importance of regionalism, especially as regards Southern Africa; an emphasis on South Africa's pivotal position in Africa; and the global extension of South Africa's bilateral and multilateral relations. There was also a movement towards issues of human concern and a sensitivity for global interdependence, including issues relating to the environment; arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and resource management.<sup>6)</sup> Ego perceptions were thus likely to emphasise South Africa's importance to the rest of the world as regards certain of these concepts.

#### 1.1.1 Strategic mineral reserves

South Africa is endowed with vast mineral resources which resulted in a general unwillingness by such nations as the US to apply full economic sanctions against the RSA. In the post-Cold War years, with other markets for these minerals opening up around the globe, it was unavoidable that a certain degree of the RSA's strategic significance would be lost. Yet South Africa continued to hold a large percentage of the world's mineral resources, for example, 80 percent of global chromite ore, which is vital for the production of stainless steel. On the other hand, it was equally important for South Africa to become a producer of "added-value" platinum and gold products if the country was to retain relevance as a minerals supplier.<sup>7)</sup> Another issue of importance in the new era was that minerals could serve the additional purpose of wealth creation for the fulfilment of important socio-economic development in South Africa.<sup>8)</sup>

There is a difference between sensitivity and vulnerability as regards mineral dependency; with the former referring to a short-term dependency without any changes in policy. Vulnerability refers to the resultant situation after all efforts to evade dependency have failed. Strategic minerals are those vital for the continuation of industry, whose supply could be limited at some point.<sup>9)</sup> As already noted, the CAAA exempted ten such minerals from its sanctions efforts against South Africa, namely, natural industrial diamonds; chrysotile asbestos; cobalt; antimony; titanium; andalusite; manganese; vanadium; chrome and ferrochrome; as well as the platinum group metals.<sup>10)</sup> This can be considered an important indication of the continuing role of South Africa as a supplier of these minerals, which were difficult to substitute or locate elsewhere in an economically-viable manner.

Throughout much of the period under discussion in this chapter, emphasis was placed during South African Parliamentary sessions on the value of minerals for the economy. It was noted that the mining industry was "largely export-orientated" and that exports in this regard had increased and would continue to increase as the world reacted favourably to political change within South Africa. In fact, international interest in trade with South Africa had improved considerably.<sup>11)</sup> Gold continued to be the top earner of foreign exchange, along with the platinum-group metals, copper and diamonds, and the RSA remained one of the world's most important mineral producers, with mineral exports representing a little less than 50 percent of total exports. As sanctions against South Africa were removed and the global economy strengthened, it was anticipated that demand for the RSA's platinum group metals would increase.<sup>12)</sup>



Sanctions against South African minerals had never really proved effective, although the gold price had been negatively effected by various factors during the early 1990s, which had led to a loss of employment for many mineworkers. Yet even coal had managed to perform successfully on the competitive international market.<sup>13)</sup> South Africa's importance to the international community was indicated by the fact that the volume of coal exports had increased to an all-time high by 1993.<sup>14)</sup> Mention was, however, made of the weakened international economy which had a negative impact on the South African mining industry. Yet mineral sales were increasing, thus emphasising the continuing strategic significance of the RSA as a minerals supplier.<sup>15)</sup> It was re-iterated that the country's mineral wealth had prevented major US sanctions and the perception was that South African minerals would continue to provide the RSA with international importance for many years to come.<sup>16)</sup>

As noted above, however, competition by mineral suppliers began to increase and South Africa was forced to compete in areas where there had previously been little international competition.<sup>17)</sup> It has been established that the concept of strategic significance is a dynamic one and this dynamic extends to the actual elements of national capability, in this case strategic minerals. In other words, substitutes for certain minerals could eventually be located, as could alternative markets.

It was, however, anticipated that the South African mining industry would continue to provide both employment and foreign exchange. If this assumption proved to be incorrect and mines were forced to close as a result of falling prices and alternative minerals markets, the re-employment of a large segment of the community would place an additional heavy burden on society.<sup>18)</sup> Another aspect which can be noted is the basically undiscovered and undeveloped mineral resources of South Africa's neighbours and other African states. Southern Africa in particular, would require the development of a mineral resource base and the necessary infrastructure in this regard. South Africa could play a valuable role in this regard and would increase perceptions of strategic significance in this manner.<sup>19)</sup> It was, in fact, emphasised that there was increasing co-operation in the mining industries of South Africa and her neighbours, and that the RSA would serve as a valuable source of finance for this industry in Africa.<sup>20)</sup>

It would, however, appear that although South Africa was still considered a vital minerals supplier, the impact of this particular resource on the RSA's strategic significance was not as extensive as it had been in the Cold War years.

### 1.1.2 National capability in the Southern African region

The importance of South Africa's geographical location, namely, as part of the African continent, has already been established. Although certain high-profile South African politicians had throughout the apartheid era attempted to focus on the importance of relations with Africa, the idea became more popular after the end of the Cold War as South Africa began to experience the threat of marginalisation along with

the rest of the continent. This was evident in statements made during South African Parliamentary sessions, for example: “We...believe that the establishment of normal and constructive economic and diplomatic relations between South Africa and the other countries of Africa should be a priority objective of foreign policy...the route back to becoming a full and accepted member of the world community is not through America, Europe or Asia”.<sup>21)</sup>

In his 1990 parliamentary address, State President de Klerk announced that the previous year was to be seen as the year of the demise of communism. The President noted these dramatic events as having a direct effect on the future of Africa, predominantly through a process of marginalisation.<sup>22)</sup> More importantly, he emphasised the importance of regional co-operation: “The countries of Southern Africa are faced with a particular challenge: Southern Africa now has a historical opportunity to set aside its conflicts and ideological differences and draw up a joint programme of reconstruction...The season of violence is over. The time for reconstruction and reconciliation has arrived”.<sup>23)</sup>

The South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, L. Wessels, also emphasised that: “Africa is where we belong...the people of Africa are our people...their problems are our problems. We are part of both the challenges and the solutions of Africa”.<sup>24)</sup> This was considered a remarkable turnaround in relations and a return to earlier days when South African leaders had emphasised the importance of an African community. South African Foreign Minister Botha urged a strengthening of relations between nations in the Southern African region when he noted the marginalisation taking place and the important influence that South Africa could have in this regard: “Through trade, transport, investment, labour, migration, tourism and technology transfers they (the countries of Southern Africa) can interact more closely and beneficially with the strongest and most diversified economy South of the Sahara, that of South Africa”.<sup>25)</sup> This can be considered a “marketing effort” for the continuing strategic significance of the RSA, albeit with a different emphasis than during the Cold War years. According to the 1990 Foreign Affairs Deputy Director, Rusty Evans, proposals for a regional development programme for Southern Africa had been welcomed by the leaders of Mozambique, Angola, Zaire, and Zambia.<sup>26)</sup>

Yet there was a certain amount of skepticism as regards the high expectations held by African countries for the fledging democracy of South Africa. It was noted that the RSA’s role in Africa would be influenced by such factors as the extent of local problems, as well as the enormity of Africa’s development crisis. South Africa’s own development and economic concerns would absorb most, if not all, available funding in the short-to-medium term. This was not to deny the important role that the RSA could play on the continent, particularly as regards technical expertise and by keeping African development issues on the agendas of international forums.<sup>27)</sup> Emphasis was placed on Africa’s challenges and prospects, where South Africa could reap valuable benefits in the future if the RSA’s economy improved and in turn strengthened the economies of surrounding states.<sup>28)</sup> South Africa’s ultimate role in the global community would, however, depend on both local and international developments in the years to come, as most countries were adopting

a wait-and-see attitude before investing large amounts of money and effort in the New South Africa.

The State President shared the following as regards the RSA's role on the African continent: "South Africa is part of Africa. Her people of all colours, cultures and creeds belong to Africa - as much as the citizens of any other country on our continent. Logically, therefore, close co-operation between South Africa, her neighbouring states and even countries further afield in Africa would be in the best interests of everybody".<sup>29)</sup>

By 1992, the effects of marginalisation were noted during South African Parliamentary sessions. In spite of Africa's extensive natural resources, the continent had a poor economic record, partly as a result of a lack of technological and management skill, as well as a dependence on foreign debt. These problems would need to be addressed as not even South Africa would survive a collapse of the total regional economy.<sup>30)</sup> It would thus appear that the South African Government had come to the realisation that survival in a marginalised section of the globe was relatively dependent on national capability and ultimately, influence. Africa had demonstrated the apparent inability to function effectively on a state-to-state basis and the individual nations of this vast continent would therefore have to group together to ensure survival and growth. South Africa would play an important role as a stabilising force and development would ultimately result.<sup>31)</sup> It was, however, noted that development would take place by means of "joint projects based on the principle of partnership...we are not a donor country and must therefore, together with fellow African countries, tackle the problem of marginalisation as a common problem which will require a joint strategy".<sup>32)</sup> South Africa's ambassador to the EC in the early 1990s, B.G. Ranchod, emphasised the importance of South Africa for the EC and other countries as a powerful ally in the struggle to rebuild the African continent.<sup>33)</sup> The State President also mentioned what he believed to be a changed thinking about South Africa and the complexity of the country's internal problems. Nothing could be allowed to disturb the stability of South Africa, as any instability could spread to the rest of the continent.<sup>34)</sup>

Earlier in the year, attention had been called to the fact that although links with Europe were important, South Africa was not merely an extension of Europe on the African continent: "We are an African country... A new South Africa will be able to make the Southern African region one of the success stories of the world".<sup>35)</sup> Attention was thus to be focused on the Southern African region and the issues that would need to be addressed, such as the debt crisis and marginalisation.

In 1993, the South African Director-General of Foreign Affairs, stressed the importance of the RSA's moral obligation to the Southern African region. It was already anticipated that South Africa would be expected to play a dominant role in the regional context, especially as regards general economic and financial considerations; security considerations; migration and refugee problems; human rights; socio-economic development; information technology; education; and job creation. At the time, South Africa's foreign policy was supported by the two complementary pillars of an internationally-acceptable political accommodation, and the revitalisation of the South African economy.<sup>36)</sup>

The continuing marginalisation of the Third World emphasised the requirement for these nations to group together in a regional context in order to promote economic development and prosperity. The formation of regional economic blocs would lead to an improved ability to compete on international markets.

#### 1.1.2.1 Trade and the possibility of a regional economic bloc

South Africa's internal policies had prevented regional co-operation in previous decades, but the time had come for growing realism amongst African leaders and government initiatives to lead the way forward towards progressive relations. President de Klerk expressed a desire for South Africa to join a Southern African economic community, where the RSA could play a variety of constructive roles, especially in fields such as business skills, health services and communications. He was, however, aware of the fact that such an economic association would not be possible without financial assistance from the wealthier, industrialised nations. Nonetheless, De Klerk urged the other nations of Southern Africa to join together with South Africa in such a mutually-beneficial project. South Africa was prepared to encourage growth and development in Southern Africa, although the President emphasised that aspects such as migration should be strictly controlled.<sup>37)</sup> It was thus obvious, even at that early stage of co-operation, that masses of unemployed people could stream into South Africa in an attempt to find work and escape conditions in their own countries.

According to De Klerk, South Africa's international standing was as the economic, industrial and technical engine of Southern Africa and this was not to be ignored in light of the RSA's vast resources and industrial/commercial economic base. The President placed great emphasis on South Africa's impressive infrastructure, especially as regards roads, railways, electricity, harbours, and telecommunications. Many of these facilities were already in use in parts of the African continent and it was hoped that these same countries would make some of their own resources and products available to South Africa. This was evident from the following: "If the countries of Southern Africa, in particular, were to co-operate closely and pool their resources, the region would have every potential of becoming a significant economic bloc in the world. Not only would this be to the advantage of all the people of the region, but would rebound to the benefit of the entire continent".<sup>38)</sup>

President De Klerk and Foreign Minister Botha, began to market the idea that if Africa was to survive in the new era, the continent should be divided into regional economic power blocs modelled on the European Community. The most powerful economy in each bloc would act as an "engine of development" for the region. Regional self-interest would thus be the primary emphasis, although there would be efforts to co-ordinate the entire continent's economic growth. South Africa would act as the "locomotive" for economic development in Southern Africa; while this role would fall to Kenya in East Africa, Nigeria in West Africa, and Egypt in North Africa. The idea behind this concept was that Africa as a continent was too large and diverse an area for economic transformation.<sup>39)</sup>

Minister Botha emphasised the opportunities for the Southern African region if it served as a single unit: “We shall simply be part of a natural group which can bargain with Europe and other blocs. If we succeed, then in 15 to 20 years we will be able to help the rest of Africa. All we need is a big brother like Western Europe to help us develop and to encourage countries in our area to maintain fundamental rights and democracy”.<sup>40)</sup>

The South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasised the difference between the African continent as a whole and Africa South of the Sahara. The latter had been unable to organise itself into a true regional grouping, as was evident by the fact that although the countries of Southern Africa traded with the RSA, they did not trade amongst themselves as there were no common market areas. South Africa could be the catalyst for this type of development. Wessels referred to a possible partnership between Europe, South and Southern Africa, with the RSA being the key to international trade in the region. With international aid and South African expertise, an economic revival was indeed a possibility. It was vital for Africa to perform well both politically and economically if the continent wanted to retain international interest, particularly considering the continent’s dismal record in the past. According to Wessels, South Africa’s most important long-term aim was the mobilisation of Southern Africa so that the region could attain important common political and trade goals on the regional level.<sup>41)</sup>

The South African Government thus realised at an early stage that if it wanted to retain international interest in South Africa, new elements of strategic significance would have to be emphasised. With the rest of the world turning away from Africa as regards aid and other assistance, South Africa could re-establish herself as a key international player, with a particularly important role on the continent.

There could be no denying the ties between the RSA and her neighbours in the early 1990s, even after the years of international sanctions and isolation. It has been noted that many African countries openly criticised South Africa, while secretly continuing to trade with the apartheid state. Trade figures thus continued to increase at the beginning of the new decade, an example being trade with East Africa which increased by 26 percent in 1990 over the previous year’s figures. Trade with North, West and Central Africa also increased. Yet it was noted that unless Africa had foreign exchange, this kind of trade would not be able to continue. It was thus in South Africa’s interest to boost the continent as a whole. It was anticipated that the situation would improve if South Africa could act as a channel for the utilisation of international funds, which had been logistically limited in the past. Southern Africa, however, remained the focus for South Africa, as epitomised by South Africa’s Deputy Director-General of Foreign Affairs: “It is essential for the survival of the region that we share resources and present the world with a large, dynamic and stable market. This would undoubtedly attract investment from abroad, without which Southern Africa cannot survive”.<sup>42)</sup>

South Africa could thus not afford to become marginalised or for that matter, allow extensive marginalisation on the continent, as international aid was required if the plans of the South African

Government (for the RSA to become actively involved in rejuvenating the African economy and continent in general) were to come to fruition.

The South African State President stressed that the end of the Cold War had left a world in which human development and economic performance were of the utmost importance. It was now vital that the nations of Africa stand together in order to survive the competitive climate that had resulted from the emergence of regional economic power “blocs”, such as the Pacific Rim and the European Community. Conflict should thus be set aside and a process of regional organisation be initiated. This would motivate the developed world to end African marginalisation and the continent would become a valued global player.<sup>43)</sup>

It was clear that any future relationship between the RSA and the rest of Africa would be dictated by both global events and socio-economic concerns in South Africa and the African continent. The South African Government, like much of the developed world, would come under increasing pressure to address local problems such as unemployment and poverty before seeking to address concerns outside the RSA’s borders. Yet a great deal of co-operation between South Africa and her neighbours had blossomed in the years following the end of the Cold War and the country’s remarkable political transformation. Trade was taking place with 48 African countries by the early 1990s, and relations between South Africa and parts of the continent had reached ambassadorial and diplomatic level. It was anticipated that South Africa’s primary potential as regards the region would be to attract potential investors. The RSA’s well-developed financial infrastructure would also be utilised for the mobilisation of capital for economic development. This would allow the international community to contribute to the development of the region, except that there would now be a solid framework in place for such assistance.<sup>44)</sup>

#### 1.1.2.2 Regional security

As regards security, Defence Minister Malan referred to the dramatic shift in Soviet foreign policy towards Southern Africa. It had become apparent that the external powers were moving towards a strategy of disengagement as regards the continent. The new era of co-operation indicated new circumstances and demanded new initiatives. The South African Government thus decided to commit itself to growth programmes in the political, economic and social sectors, although Malan stressed the continuing importance of security.<sup>45)</sup> He did, however, note the value of human development and emphasised that the SADF did not have a threatening stance against its neighbours. In fact, states with internal security problems, such as Angola, should resolve such problems themselves. Yet the SADF was prepared to assist the Frontline states as regards training and facilities.<sup>46)</sup>

Minister Malan warned of several problems in the new era, including excessive population growth and the lack of economic growth throughout most of Africa. There was the fear that the perception of Africa as a poor and disease-ridden continent would affect South Africa. Although an attack on South Africa by

forces outside of Africa or a combined regional force from inside Africa was not expected, the realities of the continent could easily deteriorate into unrest and ultimately, armed violence. It was thus predicted that the Africa of the nineties would be characterised by internal military and semi-military conflict, which could spill over boundaries. This would result in a surge of refugees across national borders and an aggravation of unrest.<sup>47)</sup> Although regional co-operation and economic development remained the ideal in the early 1990s, the realities of possible collapse and violence could therefore neither be ignored nor forgotten. It was thus in South Africa's own interest to take a pro-active and constructive role on the continent.

#### 1.1.2.3 Possible membership of regional and international organisations

The general perception in the post-apartheid, post-Cold War era, was that South Africa would continue as a regional economic power, playing a dominant role in many aspects. There was, however, the added perception that the power would be a "gentle one" and would assist in the maintenance of order, as well as the dispensing of aid across particularly the Southern African region. It was anticipated that the RSA would ultimately join the SADCC and the OAU and play a valuable role in the region.<sup>48)</sup> South African dominance in the region was, however, a concern, although the ANC had pledged that the New South Africa would not become a military or economic threat to neighbouring states.<sup>49)</sup>

ANC foreign affairs spokesman, Thabo Mebeki, had stated in 1991 that a "free" South Africa would eventually join the OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement and the UN, and emphasised the RSA's strategic significance as regards the country's position on the continent: "As part of the African continent, South Africa would also actively promote the objectives of democracy, peace, stability, development, and mutually beneficial co-operation among the people of Africa".<sup>50)</sup>

State President de Klerk noted the various trends in the international political realm in late 1991 and stressed the significant changes taking place regarding disarmament. There was also an increasing movement towards both regional and global multilateral co-operation, and the President predicted that South Africa would eventually become a constructive member of various African organisations and regional groupings. President de Klerk also emphasised the need to participate in international organisations such as the IMF and the UN. The relaxing of international sanctions would have the effect of opening South African markets to worldwide competition and trade; while aid from the IMF would promote a successful economy. The State President emphasised the importance of environmental management and nature conservation, and expressed the intention of South Africa to submit a report in this regard to the UN Conference on Environment and Development, which would be held the following year. Closer international co-operation regarding such aspects as crime prevention, agriculture and drug abuse would be in South Africa's interest.<sup>51)</sup> The RSA was thus attempting to create the perception of being a responsible member of the international community by focussing on current issues of global concern.

Parliamentary consideration was given in 1993 to the future role that South Africa might be called on to play in both regional and international forums and it was anticipated that in view of South Africa's position as a major economic power on the African continent, the RSA would be called upon to play a leading role in this regard. It was also mentioned that increasing multilateralism and regionalism had resulted in the fact that no state could take unilateral action without international response.<sup>52)</sup> South Africa would in turn, however, have to adopt policy positions on important global issues.<sup>53)</sup>

Ultimately, of all the potential and actual roles carved out by South Africa in the post-Cold War era, the one of regional superpower and ally was considered the most important. This is partly evident in the numerous references made in this regard by various South African politicians and others, and by the actual relations between the RSA and her neighbours that followed. If South Africa had an important role to play in previous decades as an anti-communist ally, this role had now taken on new meaning. There was a growing gap between Africa and the rest of the modern world that the RSA was prepared and willing to fill. Ego perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance thus continued in the post-Cold War period, but with a different emphasis, namely the RSA's importance for the Southern African region.

### 1.1.3 International economic capability

Ego perceptions of strategic significance in the era under discussion in this chapter also emphasised South Africa's importance as an economic partner for much of the international community. As the South African economy was relatively dependent on foreign trade and was likely to remain so in the near future, it was vital that South Africa not only retain the interest of the international community, but also remain competitive in export markets.<sup>54)</sup>

As was the case with all South Africa's prospective and existing relationships, the catalyst for further international co-operation and assistance would depend on the establishment of a stable democracy and the elimination of the apartheid system. Developments were, however, "encouraging", with new markets opening in Africa, Asia and Europe. South Africa would in turn face the challenge of transforming the manufacturing sector, as the world was increasingly focusing on fewer raw materials and more manufactured goods and services.<sup>55)</sup>

De Klerk later noted that the process of reform in South Africa had resulted in increasing foreign investment and loans, as well as a boost in tourism. This would have positive repercussions for the country's economy. He stressed that South Africa was experiencing the positive and immediate fruits of reform, such as a return to international sport; the normalisation of international relations throughout the world; growing exports; and new doors that had opened for the RSA in the scientific, academic, artistic and cultural fields.<sup>56)</sup>



Various preferential trade agreements were concluded in the early 1990s and a representative of the South African Foreign Trade Organisation (SAFTO) was optimistic that two-way trade with most Eastern European countries would reach in excess of \$50 million annually. Major deals which can be noted at this point include Telkom's sale of public phones to Budapest in 1991, as well as similar arrangements with Czechoslovakia and Romania a few years later. South African Breweries even purchased an 80 percent share of a Hungarian brewery.<sup>57)</sup> According to South Africa's ambassador to Moscow in 1992, Dr Gerrit Olivier, even the Russians were eager to purchase South African products.<sup>58)</sup>

There was a similar focus on trade with Asia and an indication of the rapid transformation in South African international relations in the early 1990s was, in fact, reflected by the rapid increase in ties with these countries. By 1990, Pretoria had missions in Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan, and Australia and the number of missions increased substantially over the next few years. Trade increased as a result.<sup>59)</sup>

Four countries led trade exports to South Africa during the period under discussion, with German exports heading the list. Switzerland imported the most South African goods and it can also be noted that trade with Zimbabwe (one of the RSA's fiercest critics during the apartheid years) was also taking place. In fact, as regards both imports and exports, Zimbabwe was South Africa's greatest trading partner in Africa. Trade with Africa in general in the early 1990s was an untapped market for the RSA.<sup>60)</sup> This market would obviously have to be further developed if South Africa was to retain perceptions of strategic significance as a valuable trading partner for the African continent. As regards international markets, the continuing improvement of trade relations between South Africa and much of the globe, can be considered evidence of continuing perceptions of strategic significance.

A normalisation of South Africa's trade relations was thus taking place and this was emphasised during 1993 South African Parliamentary sessions. As noted above, this normalisation even applied to countries in parts of Europe where there had been no real tradition of trade in the past. Trade relations with countries in the Far East and Africa had also improved and economic representation in these countries was increasing.<sup>61)</sup> It was anticipated that offices would be opened in countries with which the RSA traded before the sanctions era, such as Sweden and Australia. Much work had also been completed in an attempt to eventually normalise trade relations with countries such as India, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia; while exports to Africa increased from R4 billion in 1990 to approximately R6 billion in 1992. These exports consisted primarily of manufactured products and although the goods were exported mainly to countries in Southern Africa, progress had been made as regards export markets in countries such as Kenya and Angola.<sup>62)</sup> Successes as regards outward trade missions were also attained during three missions to Western Europe, the US and Kenya, which were undertaken in the early 1990s.<sup>63)</sup>

#### 1.1.3.1 Relations with the international community

It has been noted that relations with the international community can be considered to reflect a degree of strategic significance. The South African Government thus emphasised the normalisation of relations that was taking place between the RSA and much of the globe in the post-Cold War era.

In mid-1990, President de Klerk addressed the South African Parliament as regards this aspect and expressed confidence that substantial progress had been made, especially in light of a recent trip to Europe. It had become apparent to many that South Africa could not continue to live in isolation from the rest of the world. Participation in the international community would result in economic and cultural benefits for all South Africans: “We cannot stop the world and get off, as some people in South Africa would like us to do; neither can we turn the clock back and take refuge in the past... Whether we like it or not, we must also wrestle with the international realities of the present and secure for our country its rightful place in the community of nations. This the Government will continue to bring about”.<sup>64)</sup> The South African Government was thus placing an emphasis on the importance of international relations; something which had been underscored during the apartheid years.

International relations continued to be emphasised in 1992, with the previous year perceived as one in which both Central Europe and Africa welcomed South Africa back into the “fold”. In his Parliamentary address, De Klerk expressed the wish that these positive relations continue to be strengthened.<sup>65)</sup> In general, the Middle East and North African countries were eager to establish relations with the New South Africa and examples of countries with at least some form of diplomatic relations in the early 1990s include Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, and Tunisia.<sup>66)</sup> Relations with New Zealand and Australia also improved and it was hoped that friendly relations would spread to such East Asian countries as India and Pakistan.<sup>67)</sup> As regards Latin America during the early 1990s, numerous states in this section of the globe established at least some form of diplomatic relations with South Africa, including Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. F.W. de Klerk undertook an official tour of Latin America in 1993, where issues such as bilateral trade and investment were discussed.<sup>68)</sup>

The general perception was one of re-acceptance by the international community and South African Parliamentary sessions were dominated by the expansion of international relations. Global relations were themselves undergoing a metamorphosis and the world was changing from a bipolar to a multipolar structure, based more on economic needs than ideological and military strength. The internal political changes that had taken place since February 1990, had resulted in the RSA being welcomed back as a respected member of the international community and it was obvious that South Africa was no longer considered an international *pariah*: “Changing political realities, the recent drought and a growing awareness of the value of regional harmony are helping to foster an environment that is more conducive to co-operative relationships”.<sup>69)</sup>

Emphasis was also placed on the number of international agreements undertaken by South Africa: “Over the past three years we have opened diplomatic and trade missions in Africa, in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia. We are now represented in 79 countries of the world. We have signed a record number of international agreements... We are participating in international sporting events. We have access to cultural events”.<sup>70)</sup> “We have expanded our relations, we have normalised them, we have opened up a host of new missions, both embassies and consulates-general. We are in the process of normalising our relations with the important countries of the Far East and lately, of course, we have been concentrating on Africa and the Middle East”.<sup>71)</sup>

The South African Government eventually began to welcome direct foreign engagement as regards the desire for a peaceful settlement. The result of this change in attitude was the arrival of observers from the UN, the OAU, the Commonwealth, the EC, and other interested groups. Although many countries considered it a “moral obligation” to assist in the development of a democratic order in the RSA, on a more pragmatic level, the motivation was also likely to be sound economic relations in the future.<sup>72)</sup>

Considering that the previous chapter emphasised the RSA’s military isolation, it is pertinent to discuss ego perceptions regarding the importance of participation in international arms control measures; particularly as South Africa had been considered a threat to world peace in previous years.

#### 1.1.3.2 Arms control, nuclear proliferation and international responsibility

The “New World Order” demonstrated an increasing emphasis on the importance of multilateral developments. Eager to be a part of this interdependent world, South Africa intended to participate in multilateral affairs and thus assume a role as a responsible player in the international community. The early 1990s witnessed a resurgence in the emphasis on arms control and this was particularly relevant for such areas as the Third World, which had suffered a proliferation of weapons during decades of violence, insurrection and warfare.

The South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, R.F. Botha, stated in March 1991 that the South African Government supported the idea of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Southern African region and indeed, across the entire African continent. A safeguards agreement would also be concluded with the IAEA as regards South Africa’s nuclear facilities. This was considered an attempt to demonstrate the Government’s commitment to non-proliferation objectives and responsibilities.<sup>73)</sup> Such moves would emphasise the importance of the RSA as a peaceful, stabilising ally in a historically unstable region.

Although there was some concern as regards the South African Government’s intention to later violate the treaty, a former IAEA official stated that: “There is no point to joining a treaty to create confidence that you are being responsible and then to do something which, if detected, destroys that confidence”.<sup>74)</sup> South Africa

officially acceded to the NPT on 10 July 1991 and two months later, concluded a comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA.<sup>75)</sup>

In August 1991, the following appeared in the South African *Government Gazette*, under the heading *Armaments Development, Production, Import, Transit, Export and Marketing Control*: “With effect from the date of publication of this notice no nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices or spare parts which can be used for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices as purported in Article II of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons shall be developed or manufactured in the Republic or transported through the Republic from any place outside the Republic to any such other place or exported from the Republic or marketed inside or outside the Republic, and no attempt shall be made to develop or manufacture such goods inside the Republic or to transport such goods through the Republic or to export such goods or to market such goods inside or outside the Republic”.<sup>76)</sup> The publication of this notice can be perceived as a definite attempt by the South African Government to improve its standing in the international community.

Ultimately, it was to the benefit of the entire country that normal international relations be resumed as soon as possible and perceptions regarding South Africa’s nuclear threat played a vital role in this regard. President De Klerk stated the following: “In years to come, South Africa will be an important international factor. That is our destiny”.<sup>77)</sup> De Klerk noted that disarmament had become an important trend of international politics, especially as regards the Cold War threat of nuclear conflict.<sup>78)</sup>

By 1992, South Africa had a Permanent Representative at the United Nations, R. Eksteen, who also confirmed the wish of South Africa to finalise a convention that would eliminate chemical weapons. He stressed the importance of a nuclear weapons-free zone in Southern Africa. The very presence of South Africa at the Conference was, in fact, an indication of South Africa’s intention to fulfil important international obligations.<sup>79)</sup> Eksteen stated that: “For its part, South Africa is ready to accept its international obligations...As a direct result of the initiatives of President De Klerk to pursue a peaceful, negotiated political settlement in South Africa, we have been part of the international trend in greatly reducing our military expenditure. That is a sign of my Government’s desire for peace and good neighbourliness in our region and in the global context...We want to demonstrate our willingness to be a responsible and active member of the international community”.<sup>80)</sup> Ego perceptions of strategic significance in this regard revolved around the belief that South Africa’s importance to the international community would be increased by the RSA’s participation in arms control measures.

President De Klerk announced in March 1993, that South Africa had indeed produced six nuclear weapons, although the programme had ended before the RSA signed the NPT in 1991. The weapons were dismantled and a seventh weapon was apparently never completed. De Klerk denied that South Africa conducted a secret nuclear test and also insisted that the RSA did not acquire nuclear weapons technology from any

country, nor provided such materials to another country.<sup>81)</sup>

There were concerns about the highly enriched uranium (HEU) stockpile that would have remained, but the assurance was given by the AEC that the HEU would not be sold during the transitional period. ANC President, Nelson Mandela, had also indicated that South Africa must never again allow her resources and scientists to produce weapons of mass destruction. Both President de Klerk and the ANC thus favoured the establishment of an African nuclear weapons-free zone. Non-proliferation legislation was also enacted in 1993, which prohibited South African citizens from assisting in any programme involving the construction of nuclear weapons.<sup>82)</sup>

In summary, by 1993, South Africa was a signatory to the following treaties and protocols as regards arms control: the *Chemical Weapons Convention* (as well as the *Geneva Protocol*); the *Biological Warfare Convention*; the *Antarctic Treaty*; the *Partial Test Ban Treaty*; the *Seabed Treaty*; the *Outer Space Treaty*; as well the *Non-Proliferation Treaty*.<sup>83)</sup> Although not a member of the *Missile Technology Control Regime*, South Africa adhered to MTCR export control guidelines.<sup>84)</sup> All of these actions provide an indication of South Africa's desire to be perceived as a responsible member of the international community. As such, the RSA would be more difficult to ignore. In addition to these factors, South Africa had also added another factor to her strategic significance by formulating a role as a facilitator for a future nuclear weapons-free zone in Africa, something that the rest of the developed world was interested in seeing accomplished.

South Africa's ego perceptions of strategic significance in the 1990-1993 period were thus centred around the country's importance as a stabilising force in Africa and particularly the Southern African region, where South Africa could serve as an "engine of development". Additional emphasis was, however, also placed on the value of the RSA's strategic minerals and the country's importance as a trading partner to the rest of the international community. With the continuing normalisation of relations between South Africa and the world, the South African Government also wanted to be perceived as a responsible ally and thus undertook certain arms control measures.

Attention is now focused on alter perceptions of strategic significance in order to evaluate any differences between ego and alter perceptions regarding South Africa's importance to the international community.

## **2. Alter perceptions regarding the strategic significance of South Africa in the 1990-1993 period**

Alter perceptions of significance and the actual relations which follow, constitute the third element of strategic significance covered in this study. The end of the post-Cold War era coincided with the gradual ending of the international sanctions campaign against South Africa and the country's re-emergence as a global player. It has been noted that throughout the apartheid era, many states continued to trade with the RSA and maintain bi-lateral relations, thus boosting both ego and alter perceptions of strategic significance.

The fact that much of this trade took place in an illicit fashion drew attention to the fact that although nations were taking a stand against apartheid on the political front, the practical significance of South Africa resulted in a different behaviour.

In the period under discussion in this chapter, the international community was eager to formally re-establish relations with South Africa, especially considering that the opening of Eastern Europe had resulted in increasing international competition for markets. Many states did not even wait for the formal lifting of sanctions, even though regional and other organisations were insisting that the sanctions campaign continue. The result can be described as a relative normalisation of international relations for the RSA.

It can, however, be noted that many states, especially the larger, more powerful ones such as the US, were carefully observing the international political environment in South Africa before investing large amounts. South Africa was thus motivated to continue the transformation process and maintain favourable economic conditions, as foreign assistance would be required to fulfil several of the roles that the South African Government had highlighted. According to Evans, the actual pace of the normalisation of South Africa's international relations was, in fact, determined by the perception of the international community that the process of change was in motion and that this process was irreversible. It was clear that the RSA's place in the "New World Order" would depend as much on domestic developments as on the course of events in the rest of the world.<sup>85)</sup> As the international sanctions campaign can be considered to reflect alter perceptions of strategic significance, it is important to note its conclusion and the statements made by the international community in this regard.

## 2.1 The end of the sanctions campaign against South Africa

By early 1990, US President, George Bush, began to lean towards a distinctly negative stance as regards the effectiveness of sanctions. This is evident in the following statement: "Well, I don't know that one can attribute all the change in South Africa to sanctions...Frankly, I think some are counterproductive. I happen to think American jobs there make good sense".<sup>86)</sup>

The EC, however, remained determined to maintain sanctions due to the emergency situation in the RSA; even though Margaret Thatcher was equally determined to "go it alone" and unilaterally lift at least some sanctions so as to demonstrate the benefit of De Klerk's reforms and prevent a conservative backlash in South Africa.<sup>87)</sup> The EC thus voted to support sanctions until apartheid was "irrevocably abolished" and an "agreement to install a new constitutional order" was reached.<sup>88)</sup> Yet in possible recognition of the RSA's strategic significance, the EC noted that the new South Africa should have access to extensive economic resources and assistance.<sup>89)</sup>

It had, however, become apparent by late 1990, that the EC was seeking ways in which it could ease the restrictions which had been placed on South Africa and at the Rome summit, it was decided to lift the ban on new investments in the RSA. Although the ANC was dismayed at such an early move, the EC defended its action by stating that it wished to “contribute to the speeding up of the process under way through sending to all parties involved in negotiation a concrete sign of support for the establishment of a new South Africa, united, non-racial, and democratic and capable of resuming the place which it deserves in the international community”.<sup>90)</sup> There was thus recognition of the role that the RSA could play as part of the international system of states.

When President De Klerk announced the repeal of all remaining apartheid legislation in early 1991, the international response was swift and favourable. Although the EC acknowledged that sanctions could now be eased, this would not be done until “legislative action was taken” in South Africa. In the US, a State Department spokesman referred to De Klerk’s “courageous statesmanship”, but also called for the release of all political prisoners before sanctions could be lifted. The ANC, however, threatened “mass actions” should sanctions be lifted.<sup>91)</sup> Yet oil companies across the globe eagerly awaited South Africa’s “official” return to the oil business.<sup>92)</sup> It has been noted that the oil embargo had not been effectively implemented during the sanctions era, thus increasing perceptions of strategic significance in spite of continuing political differences.

Following a visit to Kenya by De Klerk (where regional trade was stressed), General Ibrahim Babangida, President of Nigeria and Chairman of the OAU, applauded De Klerk’s efforts to dismantle apartheid and Zaïre began to establish diplomatic relations with South Africa. As a further “coup” for international relations, South African Airways was once again given overflight rights with Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, and Côte d’Ivoire. This had been denied for almost three decades.<sup>93)</sup> Even the Commonwealth began to head towards a phased relaxation of economic sanctions if Pretoria continued with the reform process and met certain conditions, such as the release of all political prisoners.<sup>94)</sup>

President Bush lifted the Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) on 10 July 1991. The US also became the first country to lift the oil embargo; while Israel lifted its own ban on “the sale and transfer to South Africa of oil and its products” a few days later.<sup>95)</sup> Japan had earlier noted that other sanctions against South Africa would be maintained as long as America continued a sanctions campaign.<sup>96)</sup> It was thus anticipated that other countries would follow the US lead in this regard. President Bush made the following statement when he lifted the CAAA: “During the past two years we’ve seen a profound transformation in the situation in South Africa - I really firmly believe that this progress is irreversible”.<sup>97)</sup>

The US would at the same time increase aid to Black South Africans. The ANC, however, disputed the move on the grounds that the conditions stipulated in the CAAA had not been completely met. The month of July, in fact, witnessed numerous favourable international moves to lift pressures on South Africa.

Finland resumed commercial relations with the RSA, as did Israel, although the ban on military contracts continued. The Soviet Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed an agreement on mining co-operation with the South African Chamber of Mines; and Japan was considering the lifting of economic sanctions. Argentina was to resume relations with the RSA by the end of 1991; while Czechoslovakia and Hungary agreed to establish embassy-level diplomatic ties with South Africa. Poland was likely to undertake similar moves. South Africa was also allowed to re-enter the international sporting arena with an invitation to participate in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.<sup>98)</sup> Even Denmark, one of apartheid's fiercest critics, was poised to lift a veto in 1992 on imports into the EC of South African gold coins, iron and steel.<sup>99)</sup>

Following the passing of a bill in the South African Parliament in September 1993, which established the TEC, ANC President, Nelson Mandela, called for the lifting of all economic sanctions against the RSA. The TEC was a multiracial body which would work in conjunction with the South African Government in the run-up to the country's first democratic elections, scheduled for April 1994. Mandela also urged the international community to assist in the "regeneration" of the South African economy. The arms embargo was, however, to remain until after the 1994 elections. The international response was again positive, with the US lifting remaining sanctions and President Clinton stating that the US would launch "initiatives to help restore economic growth", including supporting RSA access to the World Bank and the IMF. The US Secretary of Commerce would lead a trade and investment mission to South Africa, indicating the perceived importance of trade with the RSA.<sup>100)</sup> Canada, Australia and New Zealand were also eager to lift sanctions against South Africa following Mandela's announcement.<sup>101)</sup>

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Emeka Anyaoku, responded to what was perceived as positive change in South Africa, by announcing that the Commonwealth would lift all remaining sanctions and even went so far as to express the hope that the RSA would eventually rejoin the Commonwealth. The OAU also announced the lifting of economic sanctions. Although the EC undertook what has been termed a "rolling programme" for the normalisation of relations with South Africa, no new trade accords would be signed until after democratic elections. China, India and Sweden all announced the resumption of relations and the lifting of restrictions.<sup>102)</sup> The Arab League lifted sanctions against South Africa in 1993.<sup>103)</sup>

There were also internal differences as regards the UN's treatment of South Africa. This was evident by the fact that by late 1990, the US, Japan and the EC had implied that they would not support any resolution binding members to continued sanctions against the RSA.<sup>104)</sup> It later became evident that the UN was proposing a more moderate stance against South Africa.<sup>105)</sup>

The UN was concerned with the level of political violence in South Africa and called on the international community to observe the arms and oil embargoes. The General Assembly did, however, urge the resumption of academic, scientific, cultural and sporting links with certain bodies and individuals in South Africa. This call was primarily the result of what was perceived as progress in the removal of obstacles to



multi-party negotiations.<sup>106)</sup> Continuing political violence and delays in negotiations ultimately resulted in the deployment of UN observers in an attempt to assist the peace process.<sup>107)</sup>

As noted earlier in this study, the UN General Assembly President announced the lifting of the oil embargo against South Africa in December 1993. This can be considered a response to an earlier reminder by the South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, that the UN itself had set the establishment of the TEC as the condition for the lifting of the oil embargo. The TEC was set to commence in early December 1993.<sup>108)</sup> As already noted, these moves were a disappointment to the ANC, as the organisation had urged the maintenance of the embargo until after democratic elections had taken place.

The international community in general, was thus eager to lift sanctions against the RSA as a reward for moves towards the establishment of a democratic South African Government and there were ample examples of international assistance as the country attempted to transform into a democratic society. This can be perceived as an indication of continuing strategic significance. It would seem unlikely that the international community would be interested in restoring order in a country which was not considered to be of strategic importance.

## 2.2 The resumption of international relations

As noted in the first part of this chapter, the South African Government wanted to be perceived as a responsible member of the international community and efforts were made to emphasise international relations. The perceived importance of relations with South Africa will now be established, as such relations provide an indication of strategic significance.

### 2.2.1 The US and South Africa - perceptions and relations

When communism collapsed, along with the Soviet Union, what was South Africa's and indeed much of the Third World's, primary strategic significance to the West? As noted, amongst other things, the strategic raw materials produced in these countries. There was also a change in other aspects of strategic importance in that although the Cold War years had necessitated a struggle to resist communist expansionism, the post-Cold War era in turn necessitated the preservation of global order so as to ensure access to economic and other resources. Statements made by various US defence officials in the early 1990s supported this theory and concentrated on such aspects as the fact that underdevelopment in Africa promoted instability and posed "significant threats to US vital interests worldwide". According to a US Marine Corps Commandant, insurgencies had the "potential to jeopardise regional stability and our access to vital economic and military resources...therefore, if the United States is to have stability in these regions, maintain our access to their resources, protect our citizens abroad, defend our vital installations, and deter conflict...we must maintain

within our active force structure a credible military power projection capability with the flexibility to respond to conflict across the spectrum of violence throughout the globe".<sup>109)</sup>

In fact, the situation was considered important enough for the US to establish a Special Forces Group in the early 1990s for intervention in Africa, which along with Latin America and the Pacific Rim of Asia, was considered one of the "three most likely areas for low intensity conflict". This was despite the fact that the US, like many countries, was increasingly turning to domestic economic problems, as well as crises in other parts of the globe, such as Eastern Europe.<sup>110)</sup>

George Bush emphasised the importance of economic progress in Africa in a March 1990 statement: "But Africa's most fundamental challenge, I think, is on the economic development side: harnessing the continent's natural and human resources side to create better and richer lives for all the people there. Governments clearly have a role to play".<sup>111)</sup> This was an indication of the new attitude in the post-Cold War era, where the international community tended to step back from Africa (generally for financial reasons) and let internal problems be resolved by the government's concerned.

According to Nöffke, the US was intent on playing a role in South Africa because the perception was that the RSA was an important market, possessed valuable minerals, and was the country with the greatest growth potential in Africa. There was also the use of the waters around the Cape Sea Route for trade purposes and the continuing possibility that the nation which controlled South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia would have an important impact on the use of these waters for the delivery of strategic provisions, such as oil, to the West. The West therefore had a particular interest in the stability of South Africa and this was closely linked to the RSA's strategic significance. South Africa was the only country in Africa with both a partial First World economy and a strong industrial sector.<sup>112)</sup>

Yet according to the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in 1990: "We do not have any significant national security interests in South Africa. Our main concern is the development of a viable economy. We do not have any strategic interests in that part of the world... Strategic minerals are important; they're also available from the Soviet Union. We cannot conceive of any government - future government in South Africa - which will not want to sell us those strategic minerals, regardless of their ideology".<sup>113)</sup> The US could thus have been attempting to underplay the strategic significance of the RSA's strategic minerals, even though the events of previous years had emphasised the value that the US attached to access to this vital resource.

Several studies have been completed on the actual value of South Africa's strategic minerals and one such study reported that there existed sufficient alternative world sources to the RSA for the provision of such minerals as manganese, chromium, palladium, titanium, and vanadium. Yet the cost for a country such as the US was considered a negative factor, in that an embargo of South Africa's strategic minerals would cost

in excess of \$9 billion over a five-year period. This particular study was primarily aimed at potential damage to the US automotive industry, where the platinum-group metals were utilised; GNP; and employment. It was discerned that many jobs would be lost and automobile production would decrease as a result of such an embargo.<sup>114)</sup> Thus although efforts were made to find alternatives for many South African mineral imports, by 1991, it did not appear as if any results in this regard had been implemented to the extent that, at least US dependence on the RSA's minerals, had diminished.

Yet Africa remained a relatively low US priority and it was anticipated that the outcome of South Africa's attempts at reform would ultimately affect the way the US acted towards the continent as a whole. In other words, should South Africa successfully make the transition to a stable, prosperous democracy, US interests in Africa could increase.<sup>115)</sup>

Presidential hopeful, Bill Clinton, delivered a speech in late 1991 which highlighted several aspects as regards future US security policy towards Africa. He stressed the importance of constant vigilance, even in a world free of communism, against threats in a newly unstable world which could ultimately develop into threats against essential US interests. Yet in line with an almost global period of "introspection", the future US President was also convinced that the US could no longer act unilaterally, but should instead "reach a new agreement with its allies for sharing the costs and risks of maintaining peace". This can be perceived as indicative of a future peacekeeping role for South African forces, thus minimising costs for the US and other international players. Clinton was more specific when he discussed the situation in South Africa, where he stressed the importance of irreversible transformation, as well as the need to maintain remaining sanctions until democracy was achieved.<sup>116)</sup>

In his annual report on the *National Military Strategy of the United States*, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, stated in 1992 that: "The United States must maintain the strength necessary to influence world events, deter would-be aggressors, guarantee free access to global markets, and encourage continued democratic and economic progress in an atmosphere of enhanced stability... the threats we expect to face are regional".<sup>117)</sup> Like many nations in the international environment, the US was predominantly interested in expanding economic relations and supporting a democratic and stable regime in South Africa.

The opinion of one writer in the early 1990s was that although it was generally accepted that a growing economy was a primary element in a democracy, the US was pursuing a contradictory policy as regards South Africa. In other words, the sanctions it was using to force the RSA into a democracy, were actually damaging the struggling economy and making the passage to democracy more difficult and less likely. As has been noted, US financial aid was, in fact, decreasing in light of changes in Eastern Europe where much aid was now being funnelled. The US was also decreasing international funding in general, partly as a result of increasing pressure to concentrate on domestic concerns. Yet the idea of encouraging the establishment

of democracies across the world was perceived as fairly ingrained in US foreign policy.<sup>118)</sup> The US was thus unlikely to completely lose interest in developments in South Africa and because of the factors mentioned above, the RSA would retain a certain degree of strategic significance.

Ultimately, with Africa relatively low on the international list of priorities in the immediate post-Cold War era, the level of tension in other parts of the globe would determine the amount of US involvement in Africa. Domestic events within the United States would also affect the amount of time and money available for such involvement. Yet although the early 1990s witnessed what can be described as a general phase of “immobility” as regards US security policy towards Africa, the US retained certain political, military and economic interests on the African continent, which it would no doubt be forced to defend should they be threatened in any way. President Clinton reiterated as much in his inaugural address on 20 January 1993, when he referred to a free, but less stable world: “While America rebuilds at home, we will not shrink from the challenge, nor fail to seize the opportunities of the new world...When our vital interests are challenged...we will act - with peaceful diplomacy wherever possible, with force when necessary”.<sup>119)</sup>

There had been a distinct improvement in relations between South Africa and the US since the commencement of the reform process. This was most clearly demonstrated by the 30 percent growth in bilateral trade between 1990 and 1991, with the US becoming one of South Africa’s largest trading partners. It can also be noted that although Clinton had stated that the US should maintain pressure on the RSA until there was an irreversible and full accommodation of all citizens, the word he used was *accommodation* and not a new constitution.<sup>120)</sup> This could be indicative of the eagerness of the US to re-establish relations with South Africa. Naturally, much would depend on the continuing reform process, as well as local US problems which could limit efforts directed at South Africa.

The US perception was that South Africa had the potential to become a major economic power and successful democracy, and that what happened in the RSA would ultimately affect democracy and economic prosperity throughout the continent. Evidence of the strategic significance awarded the RSA can be found in the vast amounts of US aid distributed in South Africa in the early 1990s. The US was, in fact, the second largest donor of financial aid to South Africa after the EC.<sup>121)</sup> Yet according to an ex-US Department of State consultant, Americans were far too ego-centric to be extremely concerned with the rest of the world, including South Africa. It was thus doubtful that an excessive amount of US aid would be funnelled into the RSA.<sup>122)</sup> The battle against marginalisation was evident when the Clinton Administration admitted in 1993 that as a result of US domestic budget concerns, South Africa would probably not receive more than the \$80m in US aid it was receiving at that point. Political and moral support, however, would continue, provided the reform process was successful. It was also noted that certain economic conditions would need to be met prior to investment.<sup>123)</sup> In other words, South Africa would be forced to increase her strategic significance by ensuring economic growth and stability.

In late 1993, US Commerce Secretary, Ron Brown, referred to the “great potential” of the RSA economy and noted that American companies were now “exhilarated” by commercial prospects in South Africa.<sup>124)</sup> Brown, indicated the eagerness of the US to become economically involved in South Africa: “Now is the time to ensure that the expansion of US business involvement in SA is one of this administration’s highest priorities”.<sup>125)</sup> The US thus maintained a relative amount of interest in developments in the RSA, indicating continuing perceptions of strategic significance. The US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, George E. Moose, also emphasised South Africa’s strong economy and its importance as a base for international trade: “Its location makes it a natural springboard for business opportunities in the region and the continent. Few countries rival South Africa’s mineral wealth”.<sup>126)</sup>

It was noted that South Africa’s stability could lead to regional economic integration and ultimately, economic growth. The RSA would thus serve as a catalyst for economic development in Southern African and this was considered important for US interests in the region. The US therefore supported a successful transition to democracy in South Africa.<sup>127)</sup> It is thus clear that US interests in South Africa in the period under discussion were primarily centred around economic concerns.

#### 2.2.2 Britain and South Africa - perceptions and relations

Britain had throughout the apartheid years followed a policy of so-called “constructive engagement” (originally associated with the US) in relations with South Africa, with the premise that change should come from within the South African establishment. According to the British Foreign Minister, Douglas Hurd, Britain’s position as regards South Africa was that of a “sympathetic, friendly observer, who was prepared to listen if requested, and who from time to time might be able to use its good offices; but no more than that. We must be chary...to sticking our noses into this kind of discussion uninvited”.<sup>128)</sup>

There can be no denying the continuing historical and cultural links between the two countries, which would, in fact, become reinforced with English likely to be the main official language in South Africa. There were, however, numerous issues of concern for Britain regarding relations with the RSA. The first was the possible movement of British nationals living in South Africa or those with rights to British passports, to Britain in light of increasing political tension and uncertainty in the RSA. To avoid a potential immigration problem, it was therefore in the interests of Britain to promote a peaceful South Africa and in so doing, encourage British passport holders to remain in the RSA. Another issue of concern was the maintenance of a stable Southern African region, where Britain had provided financial assistance as part of the programme of “constructive engagement”. Stability and prosperity in South Africa would, in turn, ensure a similar situation in the region.<sup>129)</sup> This reflects the RSA’s continuing importance for countries such as Britain that had strategic interests in the region.

As was the case for many international countries attempting to re-establish ties with South Africa, one of the primary issues of concern was that of economic interest. Although certain British companies had reduced their investments during the sanctions era, it had not been on the same scale as that of other countries and in 1991, Britain remained one of the RSA's primary trading partners. Britain was eager to lift sanctions and Douglas Hurd had stated that if sanctions were to remain in place until after the achievement of a one-person-one-vote system, the result would be a "dearth of investment, where people who are going to come in sharing that political inheritance would be coming into a South Africa which has been impoverished by international action". Thus by the early 1990s, Britain informed the Commonwealth that not only was it re-establishing trade missions with South Africa, but was also encouraging business people to visit the country. Concern was, however, expressed as regards political violence, South Africa's generally weakened economy, and politicised industrial relations. New investment would not be forthcoming unless this situation improved. South Africa thus faced an enormous challenge in the attempt to improve the economy before it descended to Third World status.<sup>130)</sup> Considering the increasing marginalisation of the continent in general, South Africa would be hard-pressed to retain perceptions of strategic significance if these problems were not rectified.

Britain's own economic experience in the past had also proved rather limiting, in that it was established that only "interests" and not "responsibilities" could be attended to. Yet although many countries were adopting a "wait and see" attitude as regards South Africa, Douglas Hurd noted in the early 1990s that his government intended to "push on", thus indicating a continuing active role in the RSA and continuing perceptions of strategic significance.<sup>131)</sup> As in the case of the US, alter perceptions of South Africa's importance were predominantly related to economic interests and the RSA's significance as a stabilising force in the Southern African region; although the importance of historical ties between the two countries could not be ignored.

### 2.2.3 The EC and South Africa - perceptions and relations

In Europe, the end of the Cold War period coupled with the remarkable internal change in South Africa, led to the ultimate removal of sanctions against the RSA and the application of co-operative development and trade policies. This process was, however, stretched over a period from late 1990 to the establishment of the TEC in 1993. Britain had made a unilateral decision in early 1990, when it suspended its restriction on new investments in South Africa. In fact, the inclusion of South Africa as the first and only topic not inside the immediate geopolitical interests of the Union was one of the first five "joint actions" undertaken by the European Union.<sup>132)</sup>

At the time, Germany was one of South Africa's top trading partners, although trade with many countries had suffered a slight decline in previous years. Trade with the UK, however, increased and a UK/South Africa Trade Association (Uksata) mission to the RSA was undertaken in the early 1990s. The group

reported on opportunities for further economic co-operation.<sup>133)</sup> Yet the issue of marginalisation was reaffirmed in the early 1990s, when it became apparent that the EC was giving more aid *per capita* to Eastern Europe than to the Third World. There was also little need for the so-called “conscience money” which had been used in previous years to quieten critics of the West’s South Africa policy.<sup>134)</sup>

It can, however, be noted at this point that although EC ministers were aware of the need for international supervision of the South African elections and indeed, of the entire security situation in the RSA, the precise role for the EC in this regard was not yet decided. Mention was made of the fact that a decision would only be made after a visit to South Africa by the Foreign Ministers of the UK, the Netherlands and Portugal.<sup>135)</sup> The EC “troika”, consisting of Douglas Hurd and his Danish and Portuguese counterparts, Mr Uffe Elleman-Jensen and Mr Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, did indeed pay a visit to South Africa in September 1992, where discussions primarily revolved around ways in which the EC could assist in curbing the violence in South Africa, as well as ways to restart constitutional negotiations. As a result, 15 EC observers were sent to the RSA.<sup>136)</sup>

The Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ivo Butini, emphasised the importance of relations with South Africa in 1990, as evident by the visits of De Klerk and other cabinet ministers to Italy.<sup>137)</sup> Mr Durao Barroso stated that during Portugal’s period as chair of the EC, South Africa would be a focal point for European interest. He emphasised that Southern Africa: “Should be regarded as an ensemble. The process of opening up which is taking place in South Africa should be supported. The future Southern Africa will be one of the most important economic partners of the EC. We think that we should show European support for these countries”.<sup>138)</sup> Again the emphasis is here on the importance of the RSA as an international trading partner.

According to a senior French industry spokesman, French investors were also eager to commence new investment in South Africa, despite the government’s ban on such investment. Mr Jean-Pierre Prouteau said that French investors perceived South Africa as a stimulus for economic revival on the continent: “What interests us most is the emergence of a new South Africa, the prospect of peace and the role of the country in the development of the Southern Africa region and in the revival of the economies of sub-Saharan Africa”. He noted that many French firms had left Africa as a result of the continent’s political and economic problems. If South Africa was to assist in the resolution of such problems, the country would need access to massive investment.<sup>139)</sup> The French thus attached considerable strategic significance to South Africa, especially as regards the ability to act as a regional ally for economic and political stability.

The Netherlands believed it had a duty to assist South Africa in the country’s return to the international community and this would take place by means of an economic development programme. This was the sentiment of the leader of a Dutch trade mission to the RSA in 1991. Dr Engering emphasised that the visit to South Africa was a sign that the Netherlands wanted the RSA to take an important economic and political

position in the global arena. As in the case of Britain, the Dutch felt a particular kinship with a country where such historical and cultural links existed. If South Africa continued to reform, it was anticipated that the country would become the most important economic “locomotive” in Southern Africa.<sup>140)</sup>

The EC Council eventually decided to ease the set of measures adopted in 1986 against South Africa as soon as certain apartheid legislation was repealed, as a sign of support for a New South Africa “capable of resuming the place which it deserves in the international community”.<sup>141)</sup> Other European nations also noted the importance of South Africa, particularly for the Southern African region: “Without an economically prosperous South Africa, the neighbouring countries have little prospect of economic development”.<sup>142)</sup> Alter perceptions of the RSA’s strategic significance were thus focused on the importance of trade with South Africa, with particular emphasis placed on South Africa’s role in the Southern African region.

#### 2.2.4 The African continent and South Africa - perceptions and relations

South Africa, like most states in Southern Africa, faced little potential in the early 1990s for interstate conflict. What was more likely to be a threat was mass economic migration to a country that was perceived as having the most successful economy on the continent. As political tensions eased in the RSA, the dangers of a massive influx of people became clear and this particular problem would need to be controlled. There was also the issue of an Aids epidemic, which threatened to overwhelm much of the region. In light of these issues, the emphasis in Southern Africa at the time was slowly moving from conflict resolution to security management, as the region began to realise that individual situations of security were very much linked to those of neighbouring states. There was increasing emphasis on the advantages of a regional peacekeeping force, even though the concept had not proved particularly effective in the past as the continent had lacked the necessary resources to ensure successful operations. With South Africa now generally accepted as part of the region, the RSA’s considerable resources could be utilised in this regard. Ultimately, international support would be needed and considering that a number of countries had an interest in the stability of Southern Africa, it was anticipated that such assistance would not be too difficult to acquire.<sup>143)</sup>

Most African states in the early 1990s, at least officially, did not want to lift sanctions at that stage against South Africa; even though trade between the RSA and the rest of the continent was rapidly increasing. This is yet another indication of the continuing difference between policy and action, as evident throughout much of the apartheid era. A Harare economist described this hypocritical situation: “The self-righteousness over sanctions still reigns...but the reality is that it’s a practical decade”. The SADCC, however, issued a communique stating that it would be necessary for the “international community to maintain the measures taken against apartheid until the system is completely dismantled”. In fact, in response to suggestions that the SADCC commence dialogue with non-liberation movements in South Africa, the organisation’s executive secretary stated that: “There is no basis for (the) SADCC to relate to any institutions of apartheid”. The OAU had also urged the maintenance of pressure against the South African Government.<sup>144)</sup>



Thus although South Africa was continuing to trade with her neighbours and other states on the continent, politically, the pressure for change was strong and it was clear that a complete normalisation of relations would only be possible once a democratic political system had been established.

Africa, however, had more pressing concerns than the democratic development of countries on the continent, namely, little hope of foreign investment in the post-Cold War era. Contacts between the RSA and the rest of the continent thus continued, some of which are noted below:

- Madagascar invited President De Klerk on a state visit where a reciprocal air link agreement was signed.
- A preferential trade agreement was concluded with Mozambique, and relations between Angola and South Africa improved dramatically.
- President Houphouët-Boigny not only granted SAA landing rights, but also permitted a South African trade mission in Abidjan.
- A South African trade mission was established in Lomé, Togo and high-level contacts were made with Cameroon and Gabon.
- Kenya licensed South African Airways to commence weekly flights to Nairobi (although this was temporarily suspended after Mandela protested the move).
- Zambia lifted a ban on South African transport routes.<sup>145)</sup>
- President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria referred to various areas of possible co-operation between South Africa and Nigeria. He also noted the possibility of a regional defence force for conflict resolution on the continent.<sup>146)</sup>

Zaire established diplomatic relations with South Africa at ambassadorial level in late 1993. Other countries which had followed the move towards a normalisation of relations with South Africa included the Congo and Equatorial Guinea.<sup>147)</sup>

Thus although ANC President Mandela had urged restraint in the re-establishment of relations with South Africa prior to the establishment of an interim government, following the reinstatement of relations with South Africa by such countries as Kenya and Zambia, the normalisation of relations between the RSA and much of the African continent continued.<sup>148)</sup> Following a visit to South Africa by a group of African financiers, the president of the Africa Development Bank (AFDB) stated in early 1992, that should the CODESA negotiations be successful, South Africa would be welcomed as a member of the AFDB within two years.<sup>149)</sup>

In keeping with efforts at reconciliation, the South African Government eventually relinquished control of Walvis Bay and 12 offshore islands, as well as an adjoining piece of desert. Although Namibia had been granted independence in 1990, this section of land had not been included.<sup>150)</sup> Thus ended the protracted

battle regarding control over the former South West Africa. It would appear that the RSA was continuing to promote the impression of being a responsible global player, an aspect that would be considered vital if complete marginalisation was to be avoided.

It was noted at a SADCC summit that there would not be regional peace until South Africa had abolished apartheid. Yet the importance of the RSA to the region was made clear when it was emphasised that a New South Africa would be welcomed into the SADCC and would bring with it “a very strong economy”.<sup>151)</sup> It was anticipated that South Africa would play the roles of “financier” and “engine of growth” in the Southern African region and replace increasingly-reluctant foreign donors.<sup>152)</sup>

The SADC was established in 1992 at a summit of the SADCC, with the aim of creating an economic community in the Southern African region. SADC leaders urged Pretoria to hasten the country’s transition to democracy, as this was set as a condition for the RSA’s membership of the community.<sup>153)</sup> This can be considered significant in that the foundation had been laid for South Africa’s admittance to the SADC; while the SADCC had been created to lessen dependence on South Africa in previous years. By 1993, the RSA’s importance to the region was again made apparent when a request was made at a regional security conference for the use of the South African arms industry to supply African armed forces.<sup>154)</sup> The previous year had also witnessed increasing co-operation between the RSA and the rest of the Southern African region, as evidenced by discussions regarding joint co-ordination of grain imports for drought-stricken states. Even the Frontline States moved to acknowledge South Africa by establishing a diplomatic mission in Pretoria.<sup>155)</sup>

It would thus appear that, taking into account the relations and statements noted above, South Africa was indeed considered to hold a certain degree of significance for the nations of the African continent. As the OAU has been highlighted in the preceding chapter as playing a role in the anti-apartheid campaign, a brief evaluation of OAU statements and relations regarding South Africa in the 1990-1993 period is provided below.

Although the OAU Secretary-General, Salim Salim, insisted that there was no basis for the international community to re-establish relations with the RSA while vestiges of apartheid remained; he held the belief that it was the people of South Africa who would ultimately decide their own future. Salim emphasised that the transformation in Eastern Europe could force Africans to realise the value of a combined effort as regards economic integration: “We can only do so by pooling our resources. I personally believe that Africa’s second and more fundamental, economic liberation, can come about only by a co-ordinated, concerted inter-African action...If countries in Europe feel the urge and necessity to unite in order to become a force, the need for Africa to become more united is even more imperative”.<sup>156)</sup> This sentiment was in line with statements made by South African leaders as regards the importance of African development and the RSA’s potential in the region.

Yet, as noted above, the early 1990s witnessed continued calls by the OAU for the maintenance of sanctions against South Africa.<sup>157)</sup> The *Abuja Declaration*, however, acknowledged the “positive developments” in South Africa and although the need to maintain pressure on the RSA was re-affirmed, a review of the sanctions policy would be undertaken once South Africa removed “all obstacles to genuine negotiations”.<sup>158)</sup> This was a clear indication that South Africa’s isolation, at least as regards much of the African continent, was drawing to a close. There can be no denying that perceptions of strategic significance played a role in this change of events. The US decision to lift economic sanctions against South Africa in 1991 was, however, condemned by Salim as “premature and unfortunate”.<sup>159)</sup>

Yet certain African nations decided to commence trade with South Africa in spite of the OAU sanctions policy. Two examples in this regard are Kenya and Madagascar, who were determined to make use of early trade opportunities in the Southern part of the continent.<sup>160)</sup> The OAU found itself in a precarious position, namely, the choice between lifting sanctions and being accused of betraying its cause against apartheid on the one hand; and continuing with sanctions while many of its members disregarded the organisation in their relations with the RSA, on the other. The primary concern for the “disobedient” members was making a niche for themselves in the South African marketplace before the countries of Eastern Europe managed to do so.<sup>161)</sup>

By 1992, the racial problems and township violence in South Africa were of primary concern.<sup>162)</sup> The OAU sent a fact-finding mission to South Africa, as well as a Mission of Experts, to establish the role that the organisation could play in counteracting the violence in the country.<sup>163)</sup> The OAU was thus eager for a peaceful resolution to South Africa’s problems and the Frontline States endorsed moves as regards the establishment of closer relations with the RSA.<sup>164)</sup> This provides an indication of the continuing interest of the international community and particularly the African continent, in developments in South Africa. In contrast to previous years when trade with the RSA was conducted secretly by OAU member states, there was now little attempt to hide such relations and it was clear that political concerns were secondary to economic interests.

As with the other nations discussed in this section, alter perceptions as regards South Africa’s significance were thus predominantly dictated by economic interests, as was the case for many African nations during the Cold War era.

#### 2.2.5 The USSR/Russia and South Africa - perceptions and relations

As already noted and in line with changes in the post-Cold War environment and Mikhail Gorbachev’s changed philosophy, Moscow eventually began to support negotiation as a means of regional conflict resolution. This concurred with a reduction of commitments in Angola and Mozambique. Revolution had thus lost much of its apparent appeal for Moscow. This included the situation in South Africa, where it

appeared that a negotiated settlement was now a primary objective.<sup>165)</sup> In accordance with these changes, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, met with President De Klerk in March 1990.<sup>166)</sup>

According to the head of the African department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Yuri Yukalov, the Soviet Union was eager to co-operate with South Africa as soon as it was possible to lift sanctions against the RSA. He insisted that confrontation and ideological differences had made way for “mutual understanding and co-operation”. The Soviet Union was convinced that a political solution should be found for certain domestic conflicts and that the country was willing to assist in this regard: “We are prepared to develop all kinds of mutually beneficial co-operation with a democratic and non-racist South Africa. We are hopeful that this will become a real possibility in the near future and we are willing to promote this process”.<sup>167)</sup> Yet Yukalov was convinced that a realistic date for the opening of a Soviet Embassy in Pretoria would only be 1995. This date would ultimately depend on the dismantling of apartheid, although the USSR would not wait for the “total completion of this process”. The only specification was that changes in South Africa have what he termed an “irreversible character”.<sup>168)</sup> This can be considered a broad description of the terms for full recognition. The USSR like many global players, was thus eager to re-establish relations with South Africa.

As emphasised, there were not many official statements made regarding South Africa’s strategic significance to this particular part of the globe during the periods under discussion; although it was clear that, particularly for economic reasons, the re-establishment of relations with South Africa was considered in a positive light. Alter perceptions in this case are thus based on the extent of relations between the two countries.

Eleven of the former USSR Republics eventually became the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991.<sup>169)</sup> It was anticipated in the early 1990s that Russia, as the generally-accepted legal successor to the USSR, would seek to increase relations with South Africa as the RSA was the most developed country in Africa and had been an ally of various CIS countries as regards markets for mining and raw materials. Yet like many countries across the globe facing economic and political changes, CIS nations were turning inwards instead of focusing on regional and international concerns. This would ultimately restrict CIS involvement in the Third World and it was anticipated that a neutral position would be maintained as regards any future regional conflicts, at least in the short-to-medium term.<sup>170)</sup>

By 1991, there was a real breakthrough in Soviet/RSA relations with the opening of respective interest offices in both Pretoria and Moscow. Yet, the sentiment was that international sanctions against South Africa would have to remain until the complete dissolution of the apartheid system. This placed the Soviet Union in an interesting predicament, as described by a Soviet Foreign Ministry official: “The Soviet Union now has no specially acute, urgent need for establishing economic co-operation with South Africa...At the same time, however, in a modern interdependent world, the absence of such ties, dictated purely by

ideological and political factors, becomes an absurd anachronism and hardly contributes to long-term national interests. This is a contradictory situation".<sup>171)</sup>

The Soviet Ministry of External Economic Relations also expressed interest in the early 1990s in the development of co-operation with South Africa: "The Soviet Union should undertake brave steps to secure its economic interests in South Africa." Possible fields of co-operation included mining, manufacturing, and consumer goods. Prospects for economic co-operation between the two countries were, however, uncertain in light of such factors as the South African Western-orientated economy, and instability in both countries. Eventually, the Soviet Union-South African Society was established to develop increasing contacts.<sup>172)</sup> Former Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, was convinced that extensive technological and industrial co-operation would be possible between the Soviet Union and South Africa.<sup>173)</sup>

Boris Asoyan, Soviet Ambassador to Botswana in 1991, admitted the inevitability of spontaneous contacts between the two countries and noted that many countries were not waiting for the official repeal of sanctions. The reason for this was economic interest: "Economic considerations are the basis, South Africa...has a lot to offer on preferential terms".<sup>174)</sup>

It was noted that Soviet policy in earlier years as regards South Africa had been influenced by two mutually contradictory approaches, namely, the ideological-political approach, and the commercial-economic approach. Priority to the latter approach gradually became clear. In conjunction with this renewed emphasis on economic concerns was an emphasis on political means for the solution to the problem of apartheid: "We do not place emphasis on support of the armed struggle".<sup>175)</sup> In 1991, there were considered to be three main areas of potential co-operation between the RSA and the Soviet Union, namely, co-operation on the international market in gold, diamonds and rare metals; direct economic ties; and South African contributions as regards managerial expertise and knowledge about doing business in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>176)</sup>

Throughout the period under discussion in this chapter, the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* indicated various statements regarding the importance of economic relations with South Africa, for example: "The advantages of co-operation with a country of such economic potential as the RSA...are unquestionable for us, especially today, as we grapple with acute shortages of food and everything else".<sup>177)</sup> Another example involved a particular reference to the mining industry: "The potential for co-operation is enormous. It has been said and written many times that by pooling their efforts and co-ordinating their policies, South Africa and Russia could set world prices for diamonds and, to a significant extent, for gold".<sup>178)</sup> As an example of economic co-operation in the minerals industry, there was an agreement by a Swiss-based subsidiary of De Beers in 1990, to market Soviet uncut diamonds, although this was later suspended as a result of internal Soviet politics.<sup>179)</sup> The potential for trade and economic relations was considered to be "rather good".<sup>180)</sup> South Africa was also referred to as "the most powerful state on the Dark Continent".<sup>181)</sup> It was noted that

even though the UN sanctions campaign against South Africa had been supported in the past, the Soviet Union would “certainly not be the last to abandon” policy guidelines stipulated by the UN.<sup>182)</sup>

Consular relations with the Kremlin were established in September 1991 and were upgraded to full embassy status by early 1992. President De Klerk even paid an official visit to Moscow in June 1992. South Africa continued to establish full diplomatic relations with other states of the CIS during the years under discussion in this chapter, although often without resident ambassadors. The Russian Government did, however, close the ANC office in Moscow and this can be considered another sign of the Russian Government’s commitment to a peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa. The official two-way trade figure in 1993 between South Africa and Russia was estimated at \$200 million.<sup>183)</sup> Yet there were concerns that Russian interest in the African continent was diminishing. This was contested in 1993 by the Director of the Russian Foreign Ministry’s Africa Department: “Shifting our co-operation with Africa... will in fact allow Russia to strengthen its positions there and to put them on a basis that serves Russia’s interests first of all”.<sup>184)</sup>

Eventually the Soviet Union came out against sanctions, stating that they were counterproductive and merely reinforced “the psychology of the laager”, which referred to the isolating of the target state and ultimately, increased resistance to change. As has been noted, although there was an insistence on the establishment of a democracy in South Africa, the sentiment was that it was to be achieved by negotiation and not the armed struggle.<sup>185)</sup> This radical change in behaviour as regards relations with the RSA can be considered a complete reversal of attitudes to those during the Cold War era, when the perception was that the US and the USSR were attempting to use Africa and particularly the Southern part of the continent, as a strategic “pawn” in the battle to extend or resist communist expansionism. In the aftermath of global change, it would appear that South Africa continued to retain perceptions of strategic significance, although these perceptions were now primarily focused on economic interests.

### **3. Conclusion**

The end of the Cold War thus had repercussions for states far beyond the US and the former USSR. For South Africa, the element of strategic significance related to the control of communism in the Third World had been lost; although the importance of economic concerns remained strong. In the pre-1990 period, there had been a continual emphasis on the value of South Africa as regards the Cape Sea Route; the RSA’s strategic minerals; and the importance of a pro-Western ally in an unstable part of the globe, prone to Soviet influence. This was apparent in both ego and alter perceptions of strategic significance. The strategic importance of South Africa, particularly in the Southern African region, could therefore not be avoided, as indicated by the economic transactions between the RSA and the international community which continued in spite of criticism regarding South Africa’s domestic apartheid policies.

The end of the Cold War, however, removed the need for an anti-communist stalwart at the tip of the African continent. Facing increasing marginalisation in favour of Eastern Europe, African nations began to turn inwards and it was clear that South Africa would play a valuable role in this regard. This was evident in the vast number of statements made by South African politicians as regards South Africa's important role in the Southern African region. Attention was paid to such aspects as the RSA's stabilising effect, strong economy and management skills. It was hoped that this would be recognised by the international community and would afford South Africa a certain degree of strategic significance. As international relations also indicate the degree of recognition which the international community bestows on a state, emphasis was placed on the normalisation of these relations. This could be little denying that these relations were based on economic concerns, as indicated by alter perceptions in this regard. South Africa's strategic minerals were still considered important and although it was possible to procure alternative sources, costs were prohibitive. As economic issues were vital in the post-Cold War era, it was unlikely that states would consider political concerns to be the primary influencing factor as regards international relations.

The international community, in general, thus established relations with South Africa, particularly in the area of trade, and often prior to the official ending of the sanctions campaign. South Africa's role in the Southern African region was indeed recognised and the RSA was described as an "engine of growth" in this regard. Considering Africa's dismal record of the past, it was clear that the international community welcomed the opportunity to relinquish responsibility for much of the Third World's future economic development and security to South Africa. This provided the RSA with a relative degree of strategic significance.

What is thus apparent in the period under discussion in this chapter, is that although South Africa's strategic significance had indeed undergone a certain amount of change, the country retained elements of importance for the international community. As communism was no longer an issue of concern, the South African Government realised the need to retain international support and thus emphasised the RSA's importance for both the Southern African region and the entire African continent. These ego perceptions were recognised as being valid by much of the world, thus securing South Africa's strategic significance in this regard. Other ego perceptions which were validated included the importance of South Africa for global trade and the value of the RSA's strategic minerals. It is thus clear that South Africa managed to retain a degree of strategic significance in the post-Cold War era.

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## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

It has been established that the term strategic significance has evolved to include aspects other than pure military strategy. It is now a more total concept, including both tangible and non-tangible aspects of national capability, such as political leadership and economic capability. Strategic significance is influenced by both ego and alter perceptions, with the former referring to local perceptions and opinions; and the latter focused on the perceptions of states in the external environment. Yet it should be noted, that although certain aspects of strategic significance remain unaltered, the concept itself is a dynamic one and change is thus to be anticipated. A nation's strategic value is thus likely to alter with time.

### 1. The concept of strategic significance and the end of the Cold War

The first aspect of strategic significance, namely, national capability, forms the basis of a state's level of power and influence in the international community. Yet, as noted, national capability is a relative concept and is thus linked to certain situations. The implication is thus that a state may possess a strong capability and level of power in a certain situation only. The tangible and intangible determinants of national capability need to be utilised and formed into a cohesive unit if they are to be translated into power. It is therefore insufficient to merely possess, for example, an abundance of natural resources, as these need to be effectively incorporated into objectives. Examples of tangible or physical elements include geography, natural resources, population, and economic capability. Military capability is also included as it continues to form a vital part of national capability. The intangible determinants of national capability are more difficult to measure and include such aspects as national morale, national character, political organisation, and political leadership. These aspects are, however, no less important than the more tangible aspects and should thus also to be taken into account.

Ego perceptions of strategic significance can be linked to national roles in that a government, taking into account the country's national capability, will pursue various orientations in accordance with both domestic and external conditions and requirements. It is clear that the stronger a state, the more roles it will play and the more power it will possess in the external environment. It is, however, possible for states to assume completely different roles in different situations and as in the case of national capability, roles will thus vary according to local and foreign influences. As indicated in this study, South Africa's strategic significance and related role perceptions were affected by the end of the Cold War and the resultant changes in the external environment. No one state can claim to exist independently from other states in the international system and it is therefore inevitable that changes in this system will have an impact on individual members. The perceptions of strategic significance held by these member states (alter perceptions) should thus also be considered in an assessment of strategic significance.

As the Cold War drew to an end in the late 1980s, it became clear that there would be repercussions in many parts of the globe. It has been established that South Africa's strategic significance was emphasised during the Cold War era as a result of the country's geo-strategic position and national capability, particularly as regards vast reserves of strategic minerals. The end of this era, however, witnessed a decline in US-Soviet conflict and the need for an anti-communist ally at the tip of the African continent diminished as a result. In fact, nations became less interested in the external environment in general and instead turned to previously-neglected domestic concerns. This resulted in the marginalisation of many Third World countries, including those in Africa. The new democratic states of Eastern Europe also began to draw international investment away from Africa, in part because of the latter's poor financial and human rights record.

Strategic significance thus began to include other aspects of importance, including what has been termed a state's record of "good governance", the presence of market-based economies, arms control, and a lack of human rights violations. States that did not develop these characteristics would lose an element of strategic significance as a result. Ideological concerns in the new era were thus secondary to economic and humanitarian issues. The African continent did not fare well in many of the aspects noted above and thus the tendency of the developed world to turn to Eastern Europe in an attempt to ensure the successful transition of these states to full democracy. In order to survive, African nations would have to turn to regional co-operation and development, and it was here that South Africa would find a primary focus in the post-Cold War era. The RSA possessed, amongst other things, a strong economy, a solid military capability, and experience of African problems. The perception was thus that South Africa would become a stabilising and developmental "force" not only in the Southern African region, but across the entire continent. This would ensure a degree of strategic significance for South Africa, while at the same time releasing the international community of much of the responsibility for development in this part of the globe.

In order to assess the ability of South Africa to fulfill this role, as well as related perceptions of strategic significance during both periods discussed, a comparative analysis of the previous chapters is provided below. This will include a brief, tabulated comparison.

## **2. Comparative analysis**

In the introduction to this study, the concept of comparative analysis was defined as the presentation of information, either as facts or figures, for the purpose of comparison. It provides an opportunity to identify uniformities and/or differences, and the process requires systematically-selected data. Variables are thus identified and compared. The preceding six chapters have provided information regarding the theory of strategic significance, South Africa's national capability, and ego and alter perceptions of the country's strategic significance. This information covered two distinct periods, namely, from approximately 1945 to 1989 and from 1990 to 1993. Although a brief comparison of the two periods is available at the end of certain chapters, a more

in-depth comparison is now provided. This section has been sub-divided not only into the three elements which constitute the concept of strategic significance, but for ease of reference, has also been separated into the pre-1990 and 1990-1993 periods.

## 2.1 National capability

The national capability of the RSA has assured South Africa of a relative degree of strategic significance. Although not a particularly strong state when compared with such world powers as the US, on the African continent at least, South Africa's national capability was considered extensive.

### 2.1.1 South Africa's national capability in the pre-1990 period

South Africa's geo-strategic position at the tip of Africa, controlling the Cape Sea Route, cannot be disputed. This can be considered the most important aspect of South Africa's strategic significance, as the country was automatically awarded a degree of importance as a result of this vital positioning.

Although generally considered a dry country with little arable land, South Africa is relatively well-endowed with natural resources, particularly strategic mineral and energy reserves. Gold, coal, diamonds, and the platinum-group metals are examples in this regard and all contributed to South Africa's strategic significance. It has, in fact, been noted that such was the value of certain minerals to the West, that they were not included in the CAAA. The one aspect lacking in South Africa's national capability was oil and although this can be considered a vulnerability, the South African Government displayed a remarkable ability to obtain oil reserves from external sources. The fact that this took place during a supposed oil embargo against the RSA indicates that trade with South Africa was considered valuable enough to override political concerns as regards domestic apartheid policies. Yet South Africa's economy did weaken at a certain point and this was linked to both domestic and external circumstances, including the effects of the international sanctions campaign against the RSA.

As regards population, South African citizens constituted various population groups, with different skill and educational levels. These differences had a negative impact on the overall level of population skill. On the technological level, few could doubt the resourcefulness of the South African nation as regards self-sufficiency in the face of increasing international isolation. This is especially relevant in the military sector, where South Africa not only developed a military industry for own use, but eventually began to export military technology. Overall, South Africa maintained a relatively strong military capability, particularly after the concept of "Total Strategy" was developed to deal with the perceived communist onslaught. South Africa also possessed a modern transport system on which many states in the Southern African region were dependent. This had an important effect on the country's level of strategic significance in that few countries in the region could afford to be isolated from the RSA.

As noted above, non-tangible determinants of national capability are as important as their tangible counterparts. In the case of South Africa, national character and morale were negatively affected by domestic crime, political violence and high unemployment levels. As regards political organisation, there was a definite decrease in support for the concept of apartheid and a resultant diminishing of apartheid legislation. Political leadership and support revolved around the National Party, whose leaders managed to obtain support for a change in domestic policies. In summary, although facing various socio-economic problems and low morale, South Africa possessed a relatively strong national capability and this was linked to both the national roles selected, as well as perceptions of significance.

#### 2.1.2 South Africa's national capability in the 1990-1993 period

Although the aspect of the RSA's strategic mineral reserves remained important for the international community, the opening of more markets and alternative sources in the era following the end of the Cold War, resulted in increasing competition. This situation made the effective functioning of the South African economy even more important and it was clear that negative factors such as high inflation rates and ineffective trade policies would have to be addressed in order to bring the RSA in line with global standards. Appropriate technical and educational standards across all population groups would also have to be attained. South Africa's military capability, however, was relegated to a lesser position of importance as a result of increasing domestic social concerns that demanded a decrease in defence budgeting. The end of the Cold War thus resulted in the diminishing importance of the defence establishment as social and economic concerns began to predominate.

As in the preceding period under discussion, non-tangible aspects of national capability were increasingly negative. High inflation, unemployment, continuing political violence and high crime levels, as well as a lack of adequate housing, were just a few of the problems troubling South African citizens. Many were uncertain about a peaceful future in the RSA and personal safety was a primary concern. The level of political violence and general crime was, in fact, so extensive that it was anticipated that the internal situation could become uncontrollable. This had a negative effect on the economy as investors became increasingly hesitant. The aspect of crime can be considered the issue that had the most impact on national morale in the 1990-1993 period. As the reform process of South Africa's domestic political dispensation continued, other concerns, such as minority group rights and land redistribution, also had a negative effect on national morale. Yet most citizens remained in favour of negotiating a new constitution.

Despite the negative factors noted above, South Africa's national capability in the immediate post-Cold War period displayed a certain increase over the preceding period, as indicated by the statistics contained in this study. Factors such as the importance of the Cape Sea Route for international trade and the availability of South Africa's strategic mineral reserves, even taking increasing international competition into account, remained important elements of national capability. There was also the added aspect of the RSA's infrastructure, which

played a vital role in the economies of neighbouring states; as well as the increasing importance of South Africa's role in the Southern African region and the African continent in general. Both ego and alter perceptions of strategic significance emphasised these aspects.

## 2.2 Ego perceptions

Based on the RSA's established national capability, South African politicians were eager to emphasise the importance of the RSA to the international community, particularly when the international sanctions campaign threatened to isolate the country from much of the globe.

### 2.2.1 Ego perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance in the pre-1990 period

Although the RSA had played an important role for the Allied powers during the Second World War, this was apparently insufficient to deter international opposition to South Africa's apartheid policies. In order to counter this situation, South African politicians emphasised the RSA's value to the African continent and the West in general, particularly as a result of Soviet aims in the Third World. Soviet control of the Cape Sea Route and South Africa's strategic mineral reserves would have had negative consequences for the West and world trade patterns. South Africa's perceived importance was thus directly linked to the country's position as an anti-communist ally in the Third World. Much of NATO's oil and mineral requirements were shipped around the Cape, increasing the importance of Cape Route to the international community and it was established that except for Soviet sources, South Africa was the only major source of certain strategic minerals. Although these minerals could be substituted or stockpiled, the costs associated with such moves were considered prohibitive.

There was also the issue of South Africa's strong military capability and the use of the Simonstown Naval Base by Western allies. It has already been noted that several states continued to provide South Africa with oil supplies in spite of the oil embargo and a similar situation evolved as regards the armaments embargo. Although South Africa was forced to develop a local military industry as a result, certain foreign sources were still available. Local industry was, however, sufficient to provide the RSA with an added degree of strategic significance.

South Africa's value to the Southern African region during the periods under discussion cannot be denied, particularly as many of the states in the region were geographically dependent on the RSA as regards such aspects as trade, infrastructure and employment. The application of extensive economic sanctions against South Africa would thus have had negative consequences for the economies of these states. This was something that was continually emphasised by the South African Government, who attempted to establish a "Commonwealth" in the region as a result. Although the states of the Southern African region attempted to liberate themselves economically from South Africa by the establishment of the SADCC and eventually the SADC, they did not



manage to loosen the economic ties which bound them to the RSA. Trade between South Africa and the other states in the region actually increased. It was thus clear that economic concerns and not political criticism, dictated relations in this regard and the perception was that by implementing a higher degree of economic integration, it would become increasingly difficult for the international community to isolate the RSA without endangering the economies of other states in the region. It was anticipated that this would also eventually award South Africa with recognition as a strong regional power that could assist in the economic development and security of the Southern African region. It thus became customary for many states to vehemently criticise South Africa's racial policies, while at the same time secretly conduct trade relations with the RSA. Many African states, in fact, relied on the international community to apply sanctions on their behalf,

This is not to deny the impact of the international sanctions campaign, as this played a predominant role in the first era under discussion. It has, however, been established that sanctions were not the only factor which ultimately led to the abandonment of the country's apartheid policies. When change eventually did occur, it was as a result of various aspects, including domestic factors. The sanctions campaign, in fact, hardened the attitudes of many South Africans who became increasingly determined to resist their effect. This has been termed the "laager effect".

Yet the international community persisted in the sanctions campaign, partly in an effort to convince the more radical African nations not to resort to violence in an attempt to enforce change in South Africa. International condemnation of the RSA's policies first appeared on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in the early 1950s. Sanctions were eventually implemented by many nations across the globe and covered a wide spectrum of aspects, including landing rights, and the sale of Krugerrands and military equipment. The extent of these sanctions, as well as differences in international application, conveyed an indication of the strategic importance that the international community attached to South Africa. The US refusal to include certain strategic minerals in the CAAA, as noted above, is an example; as is the dispute between the Commonwealth and Britain regarding sanctions. In the years under discussion, it is clear that most of South Africa's support, even during the sanctions campaign, came from the US and especially Britain. This support can be considered to have been the result of perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance as an anti-communist stalwart alongside the Cape Sea Route; as an economic trading partner; and as a stabilising force in a notoriously unstable section of the globe. Britain had the added complication of strong historical ties with South Africa which were difficult to ignore. Although many EC nations did impose certain sanctions against South Africa, trade continued and it has been established that the failure of the sanctions campaign to achieve its ultimate aim can be considered a result of such ineffective application.

In the pre-1990 period, much attention was thus paid to communist aspirations on the African continent, even though the Soviets released few official statements in this regard. It has been argued that the communist threat to South Africa had been over-estimated, although there is sufficient information available to counteract this

theory. There can be little denying that Soviet control of South Africa's strategic mineral reserves, in conjunction with Soviet reserves, as well as control of the Cape Sea Route, would ultimately have led to an extremely difficult situation for the Western World. It has even been suggested that an economic recession would have resulted in such a case.

South Africa's ego perceptions during the Cold War era were thus dominated by geo-strategic, ideological and economic interests.

### 2.2.2 Ego perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance in the 1990-1993 period

The end of the Cold War resulted in various changes in the external environment, such as a diminishing of the Soviet threat. Further reform in South Africa and the relaxation of international sanctions against the RSA, as well as the relative normalisation of South Africa's international relations, were also characteristic of the 1990-1993 era. Considering that South Africa could no longer count on a certain degree of automatic strategic significance as an anti-communist ally, the emphasis of ego perceptions was bound to be altered. The question was in what direction South African politicians would place the country's strategic importance? Certain elements, for example, the importance of the Cape Sea Route and the value of the RSA's strategic minerals, continued in the post-Cold War era; but there was a definite change in their actual significance in that both elements were previously directly linked to Cold War perceptions of communist expansionism. In the second era under discussion, the Cape Route and the minerals issue took on a purely economic slant and it was clear that South Africa's strategic significance would need to be augmented.

By 1990, South Africa's national capability began to assume increasing importance for the Southern African region. As the marginalisation of Africa began to exact a financial toll on the over-burdened continent, the assumption was that South Africa's national capability could assist neighbouring states. As the world entered a new era, it became clear that economic interest would be of primary concern. In order to regain the degree of strategic significance lost as a result of diminishing Soviet expansionist aims, attention was instead focused on regional concerns and South Africa's national capability, particularly the country's infrastructure and strong economy. This is not to neglect the importance of South Africa's military establishment for the purpose of regional security and possible peacekeeping missions, especially as the developed world began to withdraw in this regard.

The country's continuing strategic importance for the African continent in general and the Southern African region in particular, was thus continually emphasised. In this era of improved relations, African nations were more open to these suggestions and the value of the RSA's national capability was increasingly welcomed. The need for regional development was stressed and it was clear that the aim was the re-establishment of South Africa as a key international player, with a particularly important role on the continent. There was also another

side to this argument, namely, the realisation that South Africa's survival was linked to that of her neighbours. In other words, political instability and economic despair in neighbouring states would have unavoidable repercussions for the RSA.

The importance of South Africa as an international economic partner was also emphasised. The apartheid years of the previous era had proved the significance of the RSA in this regard, as evidenced by continuing trade in spite of the international sanctions campaign. The normalisation of relations between South Africa and the rest of the world resulted in the formal re-establishment of trade relations with many countries, in some cases even prior to the formal ending of sanctions. These relations were noted by the South African Government as a sign of the country's significance to the international community and thus formed an important part of ego perceptions.

Ultimately, an analysis of the two periods under discussion highlights the strategic importance awarded South Africa during the Cold War as a result of the country's geo-strategic position and strategic mineral reserves. Although these two elements remained in the post-Cold War era, the threat of communist expansionism was replaced by ego perceptions of South Africa's significance as both an international economic partner and particularly, an important regional ally.

The final aspect to be summarised in this concluding chapter is the strategic significance of the RSA as noted by the external environment. As previously established, the concept of strategic significance involves both ego and alter perceptions, and the latter aspect is thus discussed below.

### 2.3 Alter perceptions

In response to the South African Government's emphasis on the RSA's strategic importance to the international community, many states inadvertently reinforced these perceptions by criticising South Africa's apartheid policies on the one hand, but secretly trading with the RSA on the other.

#### 2.3.1 Alter perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance in the pre-1990 period

The international sanctions campaign against South Africa dominated much of the pre-1990 era and as already noted, the failure of this campaign can be considered to provide an indication of strategic importance in that it was not universally applied. Fears of communist expansionism dominated Western perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance, especially as regards the US and Britain. Both Administrations thus resisted the application of sanctions as long as possible, although the US eventually succumbed to pressure and drafted the CAAA. These two countries were, however, eager to lift sanctions once the South African Government met certain requirements. This was despite the request by many African nations and the OAU in particular, for the continuation of the sanctions campaign until the establishment of a true democracy in South Africa.

South Africa's importance to the US and Britain during the Cold War era was thus clearly as an anti-communist ally, which permitted use of the Cape Sea Route and allowed access to the country's strategic minerals. This latter aspect was especially important for the US as these minerals were vital for the manufacture of certain products, including automobiles and military equipment. The US had undeniable strategic and economic interests in South Africa and the Southern African region which would be threatened in the event of a communist takeover in the RSA. This scenario would become increasingly likely in the event of continuing political and economic instability in South Africa. The US was thus intent on assisting the RSA in the transition process, but was forced as a result of pressure from particularly the African states, to apply sanctions as a form of criticism of apartheid policies. Yet the importance of South Africa's geo-strategic position, mineral reserves, and anti-communist ideology was continually emphasised by various US politicians and Presidents. US policies in this regard have, in fact, been labelled "obsessive" as regards the pre-occupation with the countering of Soviet influence in the Southern African region.

British perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance were influenced by both the factors mentioned above, as well as the historical ties between the two countries; while for the other members of the EC, South Africa's importance was primarily as an economic ally. This perception was reinforced by continuing trade between many EC member states and South Africa throughout much of the sanctions campaign, although certain sanctions were eventually introduced by individual states. For many nations, the sanctions campaign was, in fact, a means to satisfy the demands of African states so that "a call to arms" would not be considered. Although the African continent in general was vehement in its criticism of South Africa's apartheid policies, as has been noted above, trade with the RSA was a matter of survival and thus continued. The RSA's strategic importance to the African continent during and prior to the Cold War era, was thus as an economic trading partner.

For decades, the Soviets supported "liberation fighters", including the ANC, in their battle against South Africa's apartheid regime, leading to what was termed the "Total Onslaught". There was also Soviet support for the sanctions campaign, although it has been determined that economic relations, predominantly as regards the diamond industry, continued. As mention has already been made of fears of communist expansionism in the Southern African region, it is not necessary to reiterate this information. Yet there can be little denying that access to South Africa's minerals and the Cape Sea Route, as well as denying these aspects to the West, would have provided the Soviets with an added advantage during the Cold War.

Once it was deemed that change in South Africa had taken on an irreversible character, the end of the sanctions campaign followed. It was clear that nations were eager to re-establish relations with the RSA, particularly in the economic sphere. There was thus a definite shift to a normalisation of relations between South Africa and the international community, and the former's role on the African continent and particularly in the Southern African region, began to assume increasing significance as a result of marginalisation of the Third World in the post-Cold War era.

### 2.3.2 Alter perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance in the 1990-1993 period

As noted above, the end of the Cold War and the South African Government's attempts at reform resulted in a normalisation of relations between the RSA and much of the international community. Alter perceptions regarding South Africa's strategic significance in the 1990-1993 era were predominantly centered around the importance of South Africa as an economic partner and stabilising power in the Southern African region. Although few official pronouncements in this regard were made, expanding relations can be considered to provide an indication of strategic importance, and the ending of the international sanctions campaign against South Africa played an important role in this normalisation of relations. The US continued to emphasise the importance of stability in the Southern African region in order to safeguard US interests in this part of the globe, and stability in South Africa played an important role in this regard. It was anticipated that the successful transition of South Africa to a democracy with a strong economy would have positive effects throughout the region and would result in increasing international interest in the African continent. As has been noted, the Third World was suffering increasing marginalisation and South Africa was perceived as playing a valuable role in re-awakening international interest in Africa and especially the Southern African region.

Britain and the rest of the EC were also eager to end the sanctions campaign against South Africa and trade between the RSA and these countries increased in the post-Cold War era. South Africa was again perceived as vital to the economic prosperity of the Southern African region. Although many African states in the early 1990s did not want to lift sanctions, trade between these states and South Africa continued to increase in response to the situation of dependence noted above. It was emphasised that the RSA would be welcomed into regional organisations should the process of reform be continued and that South Africa would bring a strong economic capability into these organisations. Alter perceptions of South Africa's strategic significance were thus directly linked to the RSA's economic capability, and relations between South Africa and the rest of the continent continued to improve during the second period under discussion as a result.

Soviet involvement in South Africa in the post-Cold War era displayed a remarkable change from previous years in that the emphasis was on negotiation and political solutions. The USSR (later Russia) was also eager to re-establish relations with the RSA. Mention has been made of Soviet economic interests in South Africa and as was the case for many states in the new era, alter perceptions of strategic significance were centred around economic concerns. This was admitted by various Soviet politicians and academics. Considering that the new era witnessed an increasing introspection by nations across the globe as they attempted to solve domestic economic and social problems, the importance of stable economic relations could not be ignored. Alter perceptions in the 1990-1993 period thus focused almost exclusively on South Africa's strategic value in the Southern African region and as an international economic partner.

A tabulated comparison of relevant aspects of the RSA's strategic significance in the pre- and immediate post-Cold War period is provided below. The tables will highlight and compare aspects of importance as regards South Africa's national capability, as well as ego and alter perceptions of strategic significance in both periods under discussion in this study.

### 3. Tabulated comparison

#### South Africa's National Capability

Element	Pre-1990	1990-1993	Similarities/Differences
1. Physical determinants - form the basis of initial strategic significance			
Geography, climate and natural resources	Important geographical position alongside the Cape Sea Route; warm climate; vast natural resources, particularly mineral and energy; RSA possesses minimal local oil supplies.	Value of extensive resources continues to increase; four oil refineries built to process imported crude oil.	Increase in local and international sales of minerals and energy; but a degree of strategic significance lost in this regard in the post-Cold War era as a result of increased international competition.
Population and manpower, including distribution, employment, and technical and educational levels	Various population groups with various skill and educational levels; extensive unemployment.	High unemployment levels remain a concern; requirement for improved educational levels across all population groups; South African population continues to grow.	Population remains unskilled, although some improvement in standard of education; unemployment levels continue to rise and have a negative influence on overall national capability and strategic significance.



<p>Economic capability, including industrial capacity, technological capability, and communications infrastructure</p>	<p>Economic recession during the 1980s, partly as a result of the international sanctions campaign; relative self-sufficiency attained as regards technological capability; deterioration in growth performance from the late 1960s; well-developed communications infrastructure.</p>	<p>High inflation considered problematic; GDP declines in the early 1990s, although there is a slight increase by 1993; foreign trade increases dramatically; less emphasis on the need for self-sufficiency, particularly as regards military technology.</p>	<p>Continuing high inflation levels, although a slight economic improvement is noted; increasing dependence on foreign trade considered a problem; attempts to increase technological capability as regards non-military products; RSA's communications infrastructure continues to increase and improve, to the extent that Southern Africa cannot avoid dependence; all of the above have a positive impact on South Africa's strategic significance.</p>
<p>Military capability</p>	<p>Relatively strong military capability, based on self-sufficiency as a result of the arms embargo.</p>	<p>End of the Cold War reduces requirement for a strong military capability; defence budget shrinks.</p>	<p>Although military capability remains strong when compared with the rest of the African continent, deterioration to a certain extent did occur as a result of budgetary cuts in order to finance socio-economic concerns; yet the RSA's military capability could possibly be utilised in peacekeeping operations on the African continent, thus increasing South Africa's strategic significance.</p>



2. Non-tangible determinants - difficult to measure, but vital to an assessment of strategic significance			
National character and morale	Low level of national morale as a result of such factors as unemployment, political violence and minority group fears; support for a negotiated settlement.	Social concerns a priority; extensive unemployment, political violence, crime, and poverty continue to have a negative effect on morale.	General despondency as regards the crime situation, although less concern about external threats to the RSA; morale low among all sectors of the population during both periods under discussion, with a resultant negative influence on overall national capability and strategic significance.
Political organisation	Apartheid policies practised, resulting in local and international condemnation; but process of democratisation commences.	The process towards establishment of a democracy continues; majority support incorporation of Black leaders into government; realisation that power of the state will be increased by changes to apartheid policies.	Movement towards a more acceptable political dispensation; considered vital as regards formal re-establishment of international relations and increased strategic significance.
Political leadership	National Party displays strong leadership skill by gathering enough support to continue the reform process.	F.W. de Klerk (NP) and Nelson Mandela (ANC) both skilled leaders in that each manages to convince their respective electorates of the importance of peaceful negotiations.	Continuing strong leadership during both periods under discussion; as evidenced by the relatively peaceful negotiating process that followed; success in this regard has a positive impact on strategic significance.





Economic policy	Decrease in economic performance as a result of various factors, including ineffective government monetary policies; presence of monopolies and interventionist policies considered to have a negative impact on the economy.	Principles of free-market economy, private enterprise and ownership supported; attempts made to improve economic performance.	Increasing efforts made towards the establishment of sound economic policies in an attempt to increase overall national capability and ultimately, strategic significance.
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**Ego Perceptions of South Africa's Strategic Significance**

	Pre-1990	1990-1993	Change in degree of strategic significance
Aspects emphasised by the South African Government as adding to the RSA's strategic significance			
Geographical location	Importance of the Cape Sea Route; threat of Soviet control and imposition of a blockade.	Cape Sea Route still important, but no emphasis on possible communist expansionism; importance of South Africa as a stable, economically strong ally on a generally unstable continent.	Continuing importance of geo-strategic location, particularly for the purposes of world trade and as a strong ally for the rest of the continent; but an element of strategic significance lost as a result of the end of the Cold War.
Anti-communist stalwart	Role of South Africa in the battle against communist expansionism in the Third World.	No longer relevant.	Definite loss of strategic significance in this regard.



Military capability	Role played during both World Wars; particular importance of Simonstown Naval Base.	Possible peacekeeping role in Africa and particularly the Southern African region.	Decrease in strategic significance as regards RSA's role as a military ally for the West; but this coincides with the above-mentioned increase in strategic significance as a result of South Africa's importance for regional peacekeeping operations.
Strategic mineral reserves	Possibility of Soviet control of South Africa's strategic minerals and their denial to the West.	Continuing importance of strategic minerals, although with increasing international competition.	Loss of a degree of strategic significance in this regard, although RSA minerals still valuable.
Importance to the Southern African region	Region economically dependent on South Africa; emphasis on "outward" policy; relatively extensive trade relations.	Emphasis on South Africa's role in the region in light of increasing marginalisation of the Third World; possibility of a regional economic bloc.	Increased strategic significance of South Africa to the Southern African region; can be considered particularly important in a marginalised Third World.
International economic capability	Not emphasised as much as the above aspects during this period.	Value of South Africa as an economic trading partner; trade and other relations increase as sanctions are eased; arms control emphasised in an attempt to create perception of international responsibility.	RSA's increased national capability results in increased ego perceptions of strategic significance, not only as an international economic partner, but the RSA also likely to play an increasingly important role in the international community as a responsible global player.



**Alter Perceptions of South Africa's Strategic Significance and Resultant Relations**

	Pre-1990	1990-1993	Change in degree of strategic significance
The countries noted below held definite perceptions of the RSA's strategic importance during the years under discussion in this study.			
US	South Africa's value as a strategic minerals supplier along the Cape Sea Route and as an anti-communist ally in an unstable region; CAAA eventually implemented after initial resistance to sanctions against South Africa.	A stable RSA would secure US interests in the Southern African region and African continent in general; continuing value of South Africa's strategic minerals; sanctions campaign ends following positive change in South Africa.	RSA retains a degree of strategic significance as a stabilising power on the African continent and supplier of strategic minerals; but no longer important as an anti-communist ally.
Britain	RSA's significance as an anti-communist ally; importance of the Cape Sea Route and historical ties; initial resistance to sanctions against South Africa.	Importance of South Africa for stability in Southern Africa, which would in turn protect British interests in the region; importance of bilateral economic ties.	Continuing strategic significance as a stabilising power on the continent; but the end of the Cold War results in a relative decrease in strategic significance as the RSA is no longer important in the battle against communist expansionism.



EC	Importance of South Africa as an economic trading partner; although the EC applies economic sanctions against the RSA, application is not uniform.	Trade with South Africa increases as sanctions campaign draws to a close; emphasis on importance of trade with the RSA and the Southern African region in general.	RSA continues to be strategically significant as a trading partner.
The African continent	Economically dependent on South Africa; SADCC attempts to diminish this dependence, but fails in its objective; sanctions against South African have a negative effect on the economies of these states and bilateral trade with the RSA therefore continues; politically opposed to the apartheid regime, but trade with South Africa practically unavoidable.	Resistance to formal ending of the sanctions campaign, but trade with South Africa continues; SADCC prepared to accept a democratic South Africa into the organisation, partly due to the RSA's strong economy; bi-lateral relations with South Africa increase.	Unavoidable economic dependence on South Africa becomes more acceptable following internal RSA political reform; South Africa thus retains and increases strategic significance.
Soviet Union	Interest in access to the RSA's strategic minerals; value of South Africa as a potential communist ally in the Third World, although this theory has been contested; support for sanctions against South Africa, although trade in diamonds and gold believed to have taken place.	Emphasis on negotiated settlement of South Africa's problems; importance of economic relations with the RSA.	Certain loss of strategic significance at the end of the Cold War, but continuing focus on the importance of economic relations.

In conclusion, South Africa's strategic significance in the pre- and immediate post-Cold War period was undeniable and there is ample evidence to this effect. The emphasis of strategic importance did, however, change in accordance with changes in the external environment. The determinants of strategic significance identified in Chapter 1 form the basis of a comparative analysis of South Africa's strategic significance and it has been established that with increasing national capability and the ability to perform effectively in both a regional and an international role, South Africa's strategic significance in the post-Cold War era was assured, albeit with a different emphasis.