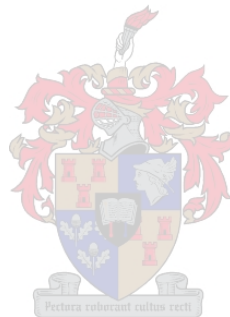


# **A COLD RELATIONSHIP: UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA, 1960 – 1990**

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Military Science (Security and Africa Studies) at the Military Academy, Saldanha, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## ABSTRACT

The diplomatic relations between the United States (USA) and South Africa (SA) had its birth in 1799 with the establishing of a consulate in Cape Town. Over the next two centuries the political dealings between the two countries were at times limited to almost merely acknowledgement of the other's existence, while at other times there was very close cooperation on almost all levels of state. Diplomatic ties were strengthened during the Second World War, the Berlin Airlift and the Korean War when Americans and South Africans shared the same dugouts, flew in the same air missions, and opposed the same enemy on both the tactical as well as ideological fronts.

During the Cold War, SA aligned itself with the Western world in the hope of being seen as staunchly anti-communist in order to fit in with the Cold War rhetoric of the West. Washington was delighted to have an ally in Southern Africa who would ensure, or so Washington hoped, that communism did not get a foothold in this strategically placed part of the globe. Unfortunately for the USA, South Africa's apartheid policies went against everything that the USA proclaimed to stand for – freedom and democracy. The USA eventually found itself in a precarious position of having to choose between its own national interest and moral obligations. From 1960-1990 the USA-SA relationship oscillated as various personalities (presidents, politicians etc) and world events (e.g. Sharpeville massacre, Vietnam War, Watergate etc) impacted on it to various degrees. The USA-SA alliance consisted of political, economic and military relations (including nuclear weapons technology) which at times had to be clandestine in order for the USA to not lose its international prestige as leader of the free world. With SA however forging ahead with its policies of segregation and destabilisation the USA had to increasingly act under a cloak of plausible deniability in all spheres of its relationship with SA.

The Soviet Union (USSR) and its allies (mainly Cuba) conducted military operations in Southern Africa and provided training to African liberation movements with the intention of helping them to achieve freedom from the apartheid regime or to protect themselves from Pretoria's aggression, as was the case with Angola. Soviet support for the liberation movements in SA and the rest of Southern Africa was a mutual concern for both SA and the USA. Consequently the USA supported South African adventurism into its neighbouring countries under the auspices of preventing the communist forces from achieving world domination. By the end of the Cold War, the USA could no longer turn a blind eye to SA's occupation of Namibia or the incursions into Angola. With assistance from the USA and other Western allies Pretoria was able to, in the greatest of secrecy and to the amazement of the world, built several nuclear weapons. SA's nuclear programme never really reached a level where it could threaten the larger nuclear powers but it was troublesome enough to move the USA to action. By means of coercion and diplomatic pressure the USA managed to convince Pretoria to abandon its quest for a nuclear arsenal.

## OPSOMMING

Die Verenigde State van Amerika (VSA) en Suid-Afrika (SA) het al vanaf 1799 'n diplomatieke verhouding gehad met die vestiging van 'n konsulaat in Kaapstad. Tydens die daaropvolgende twee honderd jaar het die verhouding gewissel van kwalike erkenning van die ander se bestaan tot intense samewerking op byna alle gebiede. Die verhouding was versterk tydens die Tweede Wêreld-Oorlog, die Berlynse Lugbrug en die Koreaanse Oorlog toe Amerikaners en Suid-Afrikaners aan dieselfde kant geveg, gewerk en dieselfde vyandige ideologie teengestaan het.

Tydens die Koue Oorlog het die apartheid regering van SA aan die kant van die Weste geskaar en hulself as uiters anti-kommunisties bemark om sodoende in te pas by die Koue Oorlog retoriek van die Weste. Washington was verheug om 'n vriend te hê in Suider Afrika wat kon verhoed dat die kommuniste 'n greep op dié strategiese deel van die wêreld kon kry. Ongelukkig vir die VSA het die Suid-Afrikaanse beleid van apartheid teenstrydig gestaan met die waardes van vryheid en demokrasie wat deur the VSA nagestreef word. Die VSA moes besluit of moraliteit of nasionale belang van die staat die belangrikste was. Vanaf 1960-1990 was die VSA-SA verhouding op 'n wipplank rit wat bepaal was deur persoonlikhede (presidente, politici ens) en wêreldgebeure (bv. Sharpeville, die Viëtnam Oorlog, die Watergate Skandaal ens). Die VSA-SA alliansie het bestaan uit politieke-, ekonomiese- en militêre verhoudings (wat ook kernwapens en tegnologie ingesluit het) wat by tye in geheimhouding moes plaasvind om sodoende nie die Amerikaners se beeld as die leier van die vrye wêreld te skend nie. Die VSA moes gereeld op talle vlakke ontken dat hulle in 'n alliansie met SA was.

Die Sowjet-Unie en sy geallieerdes (hoofsaaklik Kuba) het militêre operasies uitgevoer in Suider Afrika en Afrika se vryheidsvegters opgelei met die doel om dié lande te help om onafhanklikheid te kry van die apartheid regering of om hulle te beskerm teen SA. Sowjet ondersteuning aan die Suid-Afrikaanse vryheidsvegters en die ander vryheidsvegters van Suider Afrika was 'n bron van kommer vir beide die VSA en SA. Gevolglik het die VSA die Suid-Afrikaanse regering aangemoedig en ondersteun om buurlande aan te val onder die voorwendsel om die kommuniste te verhoed om wêreld dominansie te verkry. Teen die einde van die Koue Oorlog kon die VSA nie meer voorhou dat SA regmatiglik in beheer was van Namibië nie en nog minder kon hulle SA se aanvalle op Angola regverdig nie. Ironies genoeg het die VSA toe die rol van mediator vervul om sodoende die konflik in Suider Afrika tot 'n einde te bring nadat die VSA vir jare lank die konflik aangehits het. Met behulp van die VSA kon SA daarin slaag om 'n hoeveelheid kernwapens te vervaardig. Onder die grootste geheimhouding natuurlik. Alhoewel SA se paar kernwapens nooit 'n bedreiging vir die groter moonthede sou wees nie, het die bestaan daarvan die VSA to aksie aangespoor. Deur middle van politieke druk kon die VSA daarin slaag om SA te laat afsien van sy kernprogram.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Title</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Declaration</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Opsomming</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of abbreviations</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>1. Chapter 1</b>	
<b>1.1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Research Statement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 Research Objectives</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.4 Purpose and Significance of Research</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.5 Literature Review</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.6 Methodology</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.7 Outline of the Study</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.8 Ethics and Limitations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.9 Introduction: USA-SA Relations 1939 – 1960: A Short Overview</b>	<b>13</b>
1.9.1 The Second World War (1939 – 1945)	<b>13</b>

1.9.2 The Berlin Airlift (1948 – 1949)	14
1.9.3 The Korean War (1950 – 1953)	15
<b>1.10 The Importance of National Interest in the USA-SA Relationship</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.11 US Foreign Policy towards SA</b>	<b>17</b>
1.11.1 South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique – The unholy three	19
1.11.2 Factors that influenced US foreign policy towards SA	20
<b>1.12 SA Foreign Policy towards the USA</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>1.13 Conclusion</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2. Chapter 2</b>	
<b>2.1 Introduction: USA-SA Relations from 1960 – 1974</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>2.2 Political Relations between the USA and SA</b>	<b>25</b>
2.2.1 Apartheid	27
2.2.2 The Sharpeville Massacre	29
2.2.3 US Public Opinion on Apartheid	31
<b>2.3 USA-SA Economic Relations</b>	<b>36</b>
2.3.1 The USA's Ambivalent Economic Relations with SA	36
2.3.2 The Effect of the Sharpeville Massacre on Economic Relations	37

2.3.3 The USA's Contribution to the Growth of SA's economy	38
2.3.4 Economic Sanctions against SA	39
<b>2.4 US Military and Strategic Interests in Southern Africa</b>	<b>42</b>
2.4.1 The 1963 Arms Embargo	42
2.4.2 American Long-range Missile Tracking Facilities in SA	45
2.4.3 The use of South African Military Facilities	49
2.4.4 Military Equipment provided by the USA	51
2.4.5 Intelligence Exchange between SA and the USA	54
<b>2.5 Conclusion</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>3. Chapter 3</b>	
<b>3.1 Introduction: USA-SA Relations from 1975 – 1989</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>3.2 Political Relations</b>	<b>57</b>
3.2.1 The Information Scandal: The Secret War of Words	60
3.2.2 The Reagan Era (1980s)	62
3.2.3 Constructive Engagement	63
3.2.4 The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) of 1986	66
<b>3.3 American Public opinion on SA</b>	<b>68</b>

<b>3.4 Economic Relations</b>	<b>72</b>
3.4.1 The Sullivan Principles	74
3.4.2 Strategic Minerals: The Persian Gulf of Minerals – SA	76
<b>3.5 USA-SA Military Relations</b>	<b>77</b>
3.5.1 Arms Embargoes against SA	78
3.5.2 The 1979 Spy Plane Incident	80
3.5.3 Intelligence Exchange between SA and the USA	82
<b>3.6 Conclusion</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>4. Chapter 4</b>	
<b>4.1 Introduction: USA-SA Relationship with Regards to the Border War</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>4.2 The USA-SA Relationship with Regards to Namibia</b>	<b>87</b>
4.2.1 Background	87
4.2.2 South Africa’s Illegal Occupation of Namibia	88
4.2.3 Namibia: The Protracted Road to Independence	93
<b>4.3 The USA-SA Relationship with Regards to Angola</b>	<b>94</b>
4.3.1 Background	94



4.3.2 Role Players	96
4.3.2.1 UNITA	96
4.3.2.2 MPLA	97
4.3.2.3 FNLA	97
4.3.2.4 Cuba and the USSR	98
<b>4.4 The Evolution of the Border War and the USA's Involvement</b>	<b>100</b>
4.4.1 Opening Salvo's	100
4.4.2 An Escalation in the Fighting	101
4.4.3 Nearing the End	115
<b>4.5 Conclusion</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>5. Chapter 5</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction: SA's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Involvement of the USA</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>5.2 The Development of SA's Nuclear Laager</b>	<b>123</b>
5.2.1 Early Beginnings	123
5.2.2 South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Programme Gains Momentum	126
5.2.3 The Vastrap Incident	128

5.2.4 In Search of New Allies	131
5.2.5 The 1979 Nuclear Blip: Did SA Test “The Bomb”?	132
5.2.6 SA’s Nuclear Programme During the 1980s	136
<b>5.3 The Termination of SA’s Nuclear Programme</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>5.4 The USA-SA Nuclear Relationship</b>	<b>140</b>
5.4.1 The USA’s Role in the Development of SA’s Nuclear Capability	140
5.4.2 Getting SA to Sign the NPT	141
5.4.3 Keeping an Eye on SA’s Nuclear Programme	142
5.4.4 The Revival of the USA-SA Nuclear Relationship	144
<b>5.5 Conclusion</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>6. Chapter 6</b>	
<b>6.1 Summary</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Illustrations</b>	
<b>1.1: Sabre Aircraft</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.2: Racial segregation in the USA</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1.3: Racial segregation in SA</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.1: The Bear</b>	<b>26</b>

<b>2.2: The Sharpeville Massacre</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>2.3: The Vela-Hotel Satellite</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>3.1: Two Strongmen – Botha and Vorster</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>3.2: The Beechcraft C-12</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>4.1: Role players in the Border War</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>4.2: Bodies of women and children at Cassinga</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>5.1: Vastrap layout</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>5.2: The Jericho Missile</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>5.3: The South African version of the Jericho missile</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>Maps</b>	
<b>4.1: Map of Namibia</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>4.2: Map of Angola</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Tables</b>	
<b>2.1: Pros and Cons of Option 2 of NSSM 39</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>2.2: US Aircraft Sales to SA, 1965 – 1972</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>2.3: Major US Weapon Systems Delivered to SA after 1970</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>3.1: US Trade with SA (in millions of Dollars) from 1960 – 1974</b>	<b>72</b>

### **3.2: Percentage Share of World Chromium, Manganese, Platinum Group**

**Metal and Vanadium Production and Reserves by Country, 1979** 77

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AEA	Atomic Energy Act
AEB	South African Atomic Energy Board
AEC	US Atomic Energy Commission
AFB	Air Force Base
ANC	African National Congress
BOSS	Bureau of State Security
CAAA	Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CFR	Committee on Foreign Relations
CSIR	Council for Science and Industrial Research
DOD	Department of Defence
FAPLA	Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
JMC	Joint Monitoring Commission
LEU	Lightly Enriched Uranium
MK	Umkhonto We Sizwe
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSSM	National Security Study Memorandum

OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
RAF	Royal Air Force
SA	South Africa
SAAF	South African Air Force
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SWA	South West Africa
SWAPO	The South West African People's Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNF	United Nations Forces
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UNTAG	United Nations Transitional Assistance Group
USAUS	United States of America
USAF	United States Air Force
USSR	Soviet Union

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Tjaart Barnard  
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2015

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The United States of America (USA) has had diplomatic representation in South Africa (SA) since 1799, when the first American consulate opened in Cape Town.<sup>1</sup> Since then the USA has built a good relationship with SA, a relationship that lasted throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and both world wars, although it was unclear whether it would hold through the Cold War era, because of SA's apartheid policies.

Apartheid laws were enacted in SA after the National Party victory in 1948. These laws were created to ensure white-minority rule in SA by social engineered rule over people of colour. Racial segregation guaranteed white economic and political rule and in cases of resistance was fiercely enforced by the government security forces. International condemnation of human rights abuses in SA soon followed. The USA publicly opposed SA's apartheid laws. However, simultaneously the USA did not want to lose a potential strategic ally such as SA during the Cold War.<sup>2</sup>

In 1963, as a result of international and domestic pressure against the apartheid regime, the USA announced an arms embargo against SA. This firstly prohibited new sales of military equipment to SA and, secondly the selling of equipment that SA might use to build new weapons.<sup>3</sup> From 1963 through to 1994, Washington initiated and supported a number of embargoes against SA to demonstrate their disagreement with the apartheid policies. Even though the American government condemned apartheid throughout the Cold War, they generally opposed the economic sanctions that were placed against SA by the United Nations (UN).<sup>4</sup>

The USA maintained good relations with SA during the Cold War, because SA was an important ally in an unstable region where communism was seen to expand rapidly from the viewpoint of the American political elite.<sup>5</sup> As criticism against apartheid increased during the early 1960s, the South African government made the case with some success that all black activists in SA were supported and even manipulated by the communists in general and from Soviet Russia in particular.<sup>6</sup> The notion of a "Total Onslaught" against SA by the communist forces – especially forces manipulated by the USSR - became a central part of the South African government discourse and propaganda. Resultantly the government successfully

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of State. 2006. US Consulate General Cape Town celebrates July 4<sup>th</sup> for the first time at new location. <http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/news060704.html> (accessed 18 January 2010).

<sup>2</sup> R. Goldstone. 2005. Ambiguity and America: South Africa and US Foreign Policy. *Social Research*, Vol 72, Nr 4. p.813.

<sup>3</sup> Study Commission on US Policy toward Southern Africa. 1981. *South Africa: Time running out*. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press. p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> N.D. Howland. 1995. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1961-1963*, Vol XXI, Africa. Washington: Department of State. p.623.

<sup>5</sup> US Library of Congress. 1996. South Africa: Relations with non-African states. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12187.html> (accessed 14 January 2010).

<sup>6</sup> W. Walker. 1978. *The Bear at the Back Door: The Soviet threat to the West's lifeline in Africa*. Sandton: Valiant Publishers. p. 9.



portrayed itself as a defender of Western values because they were fighting the “red danger” on the African continent on behalf of the West.<sup>7</sup>

Within this context the USA maintained diplomatic relations with SA throughout the Cold War, despite Pretoria’s apartheid policies. Militarily the two countries remained close allies. The apartheid military relied on the USA for assistance throughout the Cold War and the USA was willing to assist SA even if covertly or under the cloak of plausible deniability because the South Africans were playing a role in the USA’s fight against Communism.<sup>8</sup> Initially the USA did not hesitate to supply SA with conventional weapons as well as some of the nuclear technology and skills to build atom bombs.<sup>9</sup> In view of international opinion such a close relationship in due time saw some permutations.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2 RESEARCH STATEMENT

The USA was pressured both domestically and internationally to break diplomatic ties with SA during the Cold War.<sup>11</sup> However, the American government resisted breaking all ties with SA. Over the years the USA’s relationship with SA became increasingly covert as a result of the domestic and international pressures on successive American governments.

From a literature search, it seems that the broad USA-SA relationship, from 1960-1990, has not yet been documented substantially in dedicated studies and there remains a gap in the literature on USA-SA foreign policy in the Cold War era. The research project here poses the question: Were the relationships between the USA and SA ambiguous for public consumption or were these realistic strains that could not be resolved because of the Cold War mythology?

## 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study intends to analyse the relationship between SA and the USA during the Cold War with the aim of explaining why the USA continued to covertly support SA. In order to answer the research question, the research objectives are:

- a. To study the USA-SA relationship in alignment with their Cold War national interests.

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<sup>7</sup> C. Alden. 1998. *Apartheid Last Stand: The Rise and Fall of the South African Security State*. New York: St Martin’s Press. pp. 37-41. A. Urnov, 1982. *South Africa Against Africa*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. p.131.

<sup>8</sup> N. Barnard. 2015. *Secret Revolution: Memoirs of a Spy Boss*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers. p. 133. Howland, op cit. p.649.

<sup>9</sup> A. Van Wyk. 2007. Ally or critic? The United States’s response to South Africa’s Nuclear Development 1949-1980, in *Cold War History*, Volume 7, No 2, May 2007. p. 197.

<sup>10</sup> A. J. Venter. 2008. *How South Africa Built Six Atom Bombs and then Abandoned its Nuclear Weapons Program*. Kyalami Estate: Ashanti Publishing. D. Albright. 1994. South Africa and the Affordable Bomb. *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1994. p. 38.

<sup>11</sup> F.N. Nesbitt. 2004. *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994*. Indiana: Indiana University Press. p. 36. E. Rhodie. 1983. *The Real Information Scandal*. Pretoria: Orbis SA. pp. 28-29. A. Thomson. 2008. *U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 31.

b. To scrutinise USA-SA military relations during the Cold War and its political consequences.

c. To investigate through the available data whether the USA supported SA's occupation of South West Africa and SA's military interventions in Angola.

#### 1.4 PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The number of studies on USA-SA relations is limited and there is space for enlarging the current literature on the topic. The study will explore the nature and content of near constant diplomatic interaction between Washington and Pretoria during the Cold War, even at times when the USA publicly both denounced SA and discouraged other states to have ties with SA. Conversely diplomatic contact between Washington and Pretoria seemingly remained constant even though the rest of the world condemned the USA-SA relationships.

This study covers thirty years of USA-SA contact and aims to be a supplement to the available literature on USA-SA relations which may be of use for historians, diplomats, political scientists, expert practitioners, think tanks and other parties interested in Cold War diplomacy, foreign policy and security studies.

#### 1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

A thorough review of scholarly literature plays an important role in the research process. Berg argues that it is important to examine how other scholars have thought and researched the chosen topic.<sup>12</sup> Researchers should organise their search for literature around the key concepts that they wish to study.<sup>13</sup> Therefore a wide reading is relevant and important to this study.

Cold War Studies is a new and expanding field that deserves more research. The *Cold War History* journal helps to fill the void in Cold War Studies by publishing research on the origins and development of the Cold War, its impact on nations, alliances, regions and in areas such as diplomacy, security, economy, intelligence, the military and society pertaining to the Cold War. There are many books that deal with the Cold War in broad, but South African related studies during the Cold War need more attention. Dockril and Hopkins in *The Cold War 1945-91*<sup>14</sup> provide a broad explanation of the Cold War. They deal with issues such as the emergence of the Cold War, the historical debate on the Cold War as well as the legacy of the Cold War. This book is just one of many<sup>15</sup> that give an overview of the Cold War. Sue

<sup>12</sup> B.L. Berg. 2009. *Qualitative Research Methods: For the Social Sciences (7<sup>th</sup> edition)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> E. Babbie. 2010. *The Practice of Social Research (12<sup>th</sup> edition)*. Belmont: Wadsworth, p. 506. W.L. Neuman. 1997. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. p. 490.

<sup>14</sup> M. Dockril and M.F. Hopkins. 2006. *The Cold War 1945-91*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>15</sup> M.P. Leffler and O.A. Westad (Eds). 2010. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. M. Thomas. 2009. *The Cold War: A Beginners Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld. B. Frankel. 1992. *The Cold War: 1945-1991*. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research.

Onslow in *Cold War in Southern Africa: White power, black liberation*<sup>16</sup> provides important literature on Southern Africa during the Cold War. Her book, an edited collection, draws on the expertise of a number of leading scholars who did research on the topic of Southern Africa during the Cold War in countries such as Russia, Cuba, the United States, Britain and SA.

There are some recent studies on South African foreign relations with other countries that might provide insight with regards to methodology. Victor Moukambi completed an interesting doctoral study on the military relationship between SA and France from 1960 to 1990.<sup>17</sup> Another important study on the topic of foreign relations during the Cold War is Piero Gleijeses's *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-1976*, which focuses on the relationships between Pretoria, Havana and Washington.<sup>18</sup>

In 1973 John Barber produced the first book on SA's foreign policy. This covered the period from 1945 through to 1970 and contains interesting information on USA-SA relations during the early Cold War.<sup>19</sup> In 1990 this was updated in collaboration with John Barrat as *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The search for status and security 1945-1988*.<sup>20</sup> This is a vital source on South African foreign policy during the Cold War. It addresses the internal and external factors that influenced SA's foreign policy during the Cold War and is a comprehensive and authoritative account of SA's foreign policy from the end of the Second World War through to 1988. *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making*<sup>21</sup> by Deon Geldenhuys is another important source of South African foreign policy making during the Cold War. In this book Geldenhuys deals with the setting and formulation of South African foreign policy. The most important contributions to the literature is that Geldenhuys explores the role that personalities of the presidents played in South African foreign policy making as well as the influence of public opinion on foreign policy.

There is a vast amount of literature on American foreign policy during the Cold War, although little has specific focus on SA. Kegley and Wittkopf provide a good insight into the formulation of American foreign policy with their book *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process*.<sup>22</sup> In this work they explore how American foreign policy evolved from 1945 through to 1986, while Noam Chomsky provides a fact based criticism of US foreign policy with his book *American Power and the New Mandarins*.<sup>23</sup> Another good piece of literature on

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<sup>16</sup> S. Onslow (Ed). 2009. *Cold War in Southern Africa: White power, black liberation*. London: Routledge.  
<sup>17</sup> V. Moukambi. 2008. Relations between the South African Defence Force and France, 1960-1990. Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History at the University of Stellenbosch.  
<sup>18</sup> P. Gleijeses. 2003. *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-1976*. Alberton: Galago Books.  
<sup>19</sup> J. Barber. 1973. *South Africa's Foreign Policy: 1945-1970*. London: Oxford University Press.  
<sup>20</sup> J. Barber and J. Barrat. 1990. *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The search for status and security 1945-1988*. New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.  
<sup>21</sup> D. Geldenhuys. 1984. *The Diplomacy of Isolation: South African Foreign Policy Making*. Johannesburg: Macmillan Publishers.  
<sup>22</sup> C.W. Kegley and E.R. Wittkopf. 1987. *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. New York: St Martin's Press.  
<sup>23</sup> N. Chomsky. 2002. *American Power and the New Mandarins*. New York: Pantheon Books.

American foreign policy is Hastedt's *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, Future*.<sup>24</sup> Cerf and Pozen's *Strategy for the 60's*<sup>25</sup> is another good source on American foreign policy during the early stage of the Cold War. The book is especially valuable in painting a picture of how the perceived threat of communism influenced American foreign policy.

*South Africa and the United States: The declassified history*<sup>26</sup> edited by Kenneth Mokoena and *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid years*<sup>27</sup> by Robert Massie both follow USA-SA relations from the 1960s through to 1990. These books were key sources for this research, as they cover a variety of topics that are discussed in this thesis. The most significant aspect of Mokoena's book is that it contains copies of declassified CIA and other government documents that provide the reader with previously secret information on USA-SA relations. Massie on the other hand focuses more on how the USA placed sanctions on SA, but in the process also touches upon matters such as the USA-SA nuclear relationship. Another book that further covers USA-SA relations during the Cold War is Thomson's *U.S. Foreign policy towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests*.<sup>28</sup> This book does well to discuss each American president from Truman through to Clinton's foreign policy towards SA and addresses contradictions in USA foreign policy towards SA. Lulat's *United States Relations with South Africa: A Critical Overview from the Colonial Period to the Present*<sup>29</sup> does the same by treating each USA president separately and analysing how they approached foreign policy with SA. The controversial Wikileaks was also browsed for more secret information on USA-SA relations.

*South Africa: Time running out*<sup>30</sup> is another essential source. The book was essentially a report by the study Commission on U.S. Policy toward Southern Africa. The commission was ordered to do exhaustive fact gathering and analysis on SA. In their report the commission discusses issues such as US interest in Southern Africa, apartheid and the influence of communism on SA. *South Africa and the United States: The erosion of an influence relationship*<sup>31</sup>, by Bissel, also describes USA-SA relations during the period from 1960-1980. This book manages to explain in detail how the USA and SA interacted on political, military, economic, nuclear and socio-cultural issues.

One of the strengths of the study is that the author succeeded to access material from American archives via the American Embassy. During the twentieth century the US Department of State compiled and presented in book form a large number of telegrams and

<sup>24</sup> G. P. Hastedt. 2000. *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, Future (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

<sup>25</sup> J. H. Cerf and W. Pozen. 1961. *Strategy for the 60's*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publisher.

<sup>26</sup> K. Mokoena. 1993. *South Africa and the United States: The declassified history*. New York: The New Press.

<sup>27</sup> R.K. Massie. 1997. *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid years*. New York: Nan A. Talese.

<sup>28</sup> Thomson, op cit.

<sup>29</sup> Y. G-M. Lulat. 2008. *United States Relations with South Africa: A Critical Overview from the Colonial Period to the Present*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

<sup>30</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit.

<sup>31</sup> R.E. Bissel. 1982. *South Africa and the United States: The erosion of an influence relationship*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

memorandums from a variety of diplomatic actors from all over the world. These volumes are all entitled: *Foreign Relations of the United States*. The collection is divided into chronological annual editions and each of these year groupings is again divided geographically to form different volumes. The volumes of the books that will be used for this project relate to Africa. Each of these volumes contains a number of telegrams and memorandums, which was obtained from various archives in the USA, between diplomatic actors in SA and the USA. These sources provided a fuller perspective and insights by tapping information on the eras under discussion from previously classified sources. They are valuable primary sources to the study.<sup>32</sup> These books are accessible at the US Embassy in Pretoria.

Morris Price's *The Nixon years (1961-1974): Duplicity in United States policies toward Southern Africa*<sup>33</sup> provides a good understanding of US foreign policy during the Nixon presidency. The focus of the book is to highlight how the Nixon administration made public statements which condemned apartheid, but at the same time strove to maintain white rule in SA. The book also discusses how the USA preferred white governments in Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia. *Southern Africa and the United States*<sup>34</sup> by William Hance (Ed) also attends to USA-SA relations during the 1960s. The most important contribution by this book to the existing corpus of material is the chapter in which Hance investigates the case for and against US disengagement from SA.

With regards to President Carter's foreign policy toward SA, Martin Spring's book *Confrontation: The approaching crisis between the United States and South Africa*<sup>35</sup> is definitely an important source. Spring predicts what Carter's foreign policy towards SA would be. He describes issues such as why SA was such an important ally to the USA at the time and what Carter might have done to better relations with SA.

Reagan's policy of constructive engagement towards SA was a controversial topic with authors who praised the policy and others who criticised the policy. Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Reagan administration and architect of the constructive engagement policy is an authoritative source on the thinking behind constructive engagement. Crocker lays out the logic of the policy in an article published in the *Foreign Affairs* in 1981<sup>36</sup>, in which he expounds on what the US objectives and interests in Southern Africa were during the 1980s. He also explains the reasons why the USA

<sup>32</sup> H. D. Schwar and A.V. La Fantasie (Eds). 1992. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*. Vol XIV. Africa. Washington: Department of State. N.D. Howland. 1995. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1961-63*. Vol XXI. Africa. Washington: Department of State. N.D. Howland. 1999. *Foreign Relation of the United States: 1964-1968*. Vol XXIV. Africa. Washington: Department of State.

<sup>33</sup> M. Price.1977. *The Nixon years (1969-1974): Duplicity in United States policies toward Southern Africa*. PhD dissertation, St John University. Ann Arbor: University Microfilm International.

<sup>34</sup> W. A. Hance (Ed). 1968. *South Africa and the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>35</sup> M. C. Spring. 1977. *Confrontation: The approaching crisis between the United States and South Africa*. Sandton: Valiant Publishers.

<sup>36</sup> C. Crocker. 1981. South Africa: Strategy for Change. *Foreign Affairs*. Winter 1980/81.

decided on the policy of constructive engagement towards SA. Davies, Ungar and Vale<sup>37</sup> are some of the authors who criticise constructive engagement and argue that the policy was a failure. They are all of the opinion that Ronald Reagan's policy towards SA did not try to abolish apartheid, but rather accepted apartheid as long as American interests in SA were not endangered. Manzo published an article in the *Policy Studies Review* (1986) in which she severely criticises constructive engagement and argues that the majority of the American people were totally against the policy and she highlights instances of popular opposition to constructive engagement.<sup>38</sup> Coker's book *The United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and its critics*<sup>39</sup> is also a good source that explains the criticism against constructive engagement. The book not only focuses on constructive engagement, but also explains USA-SA relations in a more comprehensive sense.

On the topic of America's position on sanctions against SA, Anna-Mart Van Wyk can be regarded as an authoritative source. The topic of her doctoral thesis was: *The 1977 United States arms embargo against South Africa: Institution and implementation to 1997*. She subsequently published numerous articles in academic journals. Her articles regarding sanctions against SA, which are particularly relevant to this study, are:

- 'The Kennedy Administration and the institution of an arms embargo against South Africa, 1961-1963' in *Historia*, 46, no 1 (May 2001), and
- 'The Carter Administration and the institution of the 1977 arms embargo against South Africa: Rhetoric or active action?' in *Historia*, 51, no 1 (May 2006).

Van Wyk's thesis and her two articles examine how a succession of American presidents responded to the growing call for sanctions against SA. It is evident from her work that some presidents were more willing to implement sanctions against SA, others not. In July 1986, in a speech entitled 'US economic relations with SA: Apartheid, some solutions'<sup>40</sup> President Reagan explained his administration's reluctance to implement economic sanctions against SA. Eric Morgan in an article in *Diplomacy and Statecraft*<sup>41</sup> has examined President Nixon's approach to SA's apartheid laws. He discusses Nixon's "Tar Baby" policy that condemned apartheid, but still continued to build ties with the apartheid government, because of American economic interests in SA. His articles focus on American and South African opposition to Nixon's foreign policy towards SA. *Race for sanctions: African Americans*

<sup>29</sup> J. E. Davies. 2008. South Africa and Constructive Engagement: Lessons learned. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 34, Nr. 1, March 2008. S.J. Ungar and P. Vale. 1985. South Africa: Why Constructive Engagement Failed. *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1985.

<sup>38</sup> K. Manzo. 1986. U.S. South Africa Policy in the 1980's: Constructive Engagement and beyond. *Policy Studies Review*, November 1986, Vol. 6, No. 2. pp. 212-220.

<sup>39</sup> C. Coker. 1986. *The United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and its Critics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

<sup>40</sup> R. Reagan. 1986. US Economic Relations with South Africa: Apartheid, some solutions. *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol LII, No 21, August 15, 1986. pp. 642-645.

<sup>41</sup> E. J. Morgan. 2006. Our Own Interests: Nixon, South Africa, and Dissent at Home and Abroad. *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 17, pp.475-495.

*against Apartheid, 1946-1994*<sup>42</sup> is an excellent source on how a significant portion of American civil society condemned apartheid and how they appealed to their government to take a stance against SA's apartheid policies. The focal point of the book is to explore how the anti-apartheid movement among African-Americans grew from being a small group of people to being an entity that influenced US foreign policy.

Allan D. Cooper (1988) dedicated a chapter in his book *Allies in Apartheid: Western Capitalism in Occupied Namibia*<sup>43</sup> to America's role in the independence of Namibia. With this chapter Cooper explores the USA's economic foreign policy towards South West Africa (SWA) now known as Namibia. The author touches on the style of different US presidents and how they approached the Namibian issue with regards to getting independence from SA and vested financial interests in Namibia. The chapter highlights how American foreign policy towards Namibia was directly related to the American foreign policy towards SA.

The debate is taken forward by Piero Gleijeses in an article published in *Diplomatic History*<sup>44</sup> in which he investigates President Jimmy Carter's actions on the issue of Namibia's independence. This article encompasses most of the issues that surrounded the independence of Namibia during the 1970s. An interesting article with regards to the USA's support for SA in Namibia is Leo Grande's article in the *New York Times*, in which he argues that the Reagan administration could have possibly allowed the South African government to not withdraw from Namibia because they were fighting communism in the form of the Cubans in Angola.<sup>45</sup> Gleijeses' book<sup>46</sup> is another important piece of literature on the topics of Namibia's independence and USA involvement in Angola.

Military contact between SA and the USA was not a new phenomenon in the 1960s. Even though this study will focus on the time from 1960 onwards, it is still important to have an understanding of the historical background of USA-SA military relations. Neil Orpen with his book *South African Forces World War II: Victory in Italy*<sup>47</sup> tells the story of SA's 6<sup>th</sup> armoured division that fought in Italy side by side with American forces during the Second World War. There are also a few sources that explain SA's participation in the Korean War, where 2 Squadron of the South African Air Force (SAAF) formed part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing

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<sup>42</sup> F. J. Nesbitt. 2004. *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

<sup>43</sup> A. D. Cooper. 1988. *Allies in Apartheid: Western Capitalism in occupied Namibia*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

<sup>44</sup> P. Gleijeses. 2010. A Test of Wills: Jimmy Carter, South Africa, and the Independence of Namibia. *Diplomatic History*, Vol.34, No.5, November 2010, pp. 853-891.

<sup>45</sup> W. M. LeoGrande. 1982. Cuba Issue blinds U.S. in Namibia. *The New York Times*, July 29, 1982. <http://american.edu/faculty/leogrande/cuba-namibia.htm> (accessed 12 March 2011).

<sup>46</sup> P. Gleijeses. 2002. *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.

<sup>47</sup> N. Orpen. 1975. *South African Forces World War II: Victory in Italy*. Cape Town: Purnell.

of the United States Air Force (USAF).<sup>48</sup> Once again South Africans were fighting by the side of their American allies.

Good research has been done on USA-SA military co-operation during the apartheid years. Stephen Talbot published a chapter in *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa*<sup>49</sup> where he explains how America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) supported the South African government extensively since 1969 when SA's Bureau of State Security (BOSS) was formed. In this chapter Talbot discusses issues such as the Muldergate scandal and the Border War, where the CIA worked in close collaboration with the South African government. Eschel Roodie was the Secretary of information during the Muldergate scandal and with his book *The Real Information Scandal*<sup>50</sup> he gives the reader a behind the scenes look at what really happened with the Muldergate scandal according to Rhodie's account. The Muldergate scandal is also discussed in Les de Villiers's book *Secret Information*.<sup>51</sup> Les de Villiers was the former Deputy Secretary of Information. As a result of his post, he formed part of the inner circle of men who were in charge of SA's secret propaganda offensive. In this book he explains how the USA covertly assisted SA in their propaganda war.

Chester Crocker with his book *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood*<sup>52</sup> gives the reader insight into eight years of American participation in the war in Angola and Namibia. Jannie Geldenhuys's book *A General's Story: From an era of war and peace*<sup>53</sup> is a good supplement to Crocker's book. Where Crocker tells the story from an American point of view, Geldenhuys provides a South African perspective. A chapter of Geldenhuys's book is dedicated to how the Americans participated and tried to broker peace during the Border War. General Magnus Malan's autobiography<sup>54</sup> and Pik Botha's biography<sup>55</sup> are both good supplements to the two previously mentioned books as they also touch the topic of the USA's involvement in the Border War.

South Africa's nuclear build up during the Cold War has been a topic of discussion for a long time. As a result there is a reasonable body of work on the topic. Anna-Mart van Wyk is again indicative on this topic. Her articles that will be used for this thesis on the topic of nuclear relations between SA and America are:

- 'Ally or critic? The United States' response to South African nuclear development, 1949-1980'. in *Cold War History*, 7, no 2 (May 2007)

<sup>48</sup> P. M. J. McGregor. 1978. The History of No 2 Squadron, SAAF, in the Korean War. *Military History Journal*, Vol. 4, No 3. D.M. Moore. 1982. The Role of the South African Air Force in the Korean War, 1950-1953. Unpublished D Litt et Phil thesis. UNISA.

<sup>49</sup> S. Talbot. 1982. The CIA and BOSS: Thick as Thieves in E. Ray et al (Eds). *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa*. London: Zed Press.

<sup>50</sup> Rhodie, op cit.

<sup>51</sup> L. E. S. De Villiers. 1980. *Secret Information*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers.

<sup>52</sup> C. Crocker. 1993. *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood*. Johannesburg: Ball.

<sup>53</sup> J. Geldenhuys. 1995. *A General's Story: From an era of war and peace*. Jeppesstown: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

<sup>54</sup> M. Malan. 2006. *My lewe saam met die SA Weermag*. Pretoria: Pretoria Boekhuis.

<sup>55</sup> T. Papenfus. 2010. *Pik Botha en sy tyd*. Pretoria: Litera.



- 'Sunset over Atomic Apartheid: US-South African nuclear relations, 1981-1993' also in *Cold War History*, 10, 1 (January 2010)
- 'Apartheid's Bomb: Cold War perspectives', in *South African Historical Journal* 62, 1 (April 2010).

Van Wyk's chapter in *Cold War in southern Africa: white power, black liberation*<sup>56</sup> edited by Sue Onslow, will also be a vital source for the thesis. The chapter in the book is entitled: 'The USA and Apartheid South Africa's nuclear aspirations, 1949-1980'. A.J. Venter's book *How South Africa Build Six Atom Bombs and Then Abandoned its Nuclear Weapons Program*<sup>57</sup> is a very important source as it explains SA's nuclear program during the apartheid years in detail. Venter provides the reader with a wealth of inside information on SA's nuclear weapons program. *Armament and Disarmament: South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Experience*<sup>58</sup> by Steyn et al also gives the reader a broad overview of SA's nuclear program. The book is rather technical seeing that the three authors were involved with the building of SA's nuclear bombs. They focus more on the technical aspects than on the political dynamics of the time. David Allbright's article in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*<sup>59</sup> entitled "South Africa and the Affordable Bomb" gives a broad overview of SA's nuclear weapons project. The article does discuss a lot of technical details, but he does well to capture the history of the nuclear program. Malan, who served as the Chief of the Army (1973) then Chief of the South African Defence Force (1976) and finally as Minister of Defence (1980) also touches on the topic of USA-SA nuclear relations.<sup>60</sup> A chapter of the book is dedicated to SA's nuclear capabilities during the apartheid year and in this chapter he mentions a number of times how the USA was pressurised into placing sanctions on SA, but they still helped SA to obtain better nuclear capabilities. Barbara Rogers's chapter in *Dirty Work: the CIA in Africa*<sup>61</sup> is also a good supplement to the topic of SA's nuclear weapon build up. In her chapter entitled "South Africa Gets Nuclear Weapons – Thanks to the West" she focuses her attention on how SA was able to get the necessary components to build nuclear bombs with the help of Western countries.

## 1.6 METHODOLOGY

The study will investigate the relationship between SA and the USA during the Cold War. This will be an exploratory study with descriptive elements using largely a qualitative approach. It will take the form of a literature study and declassified documents from the military archive in SA to garner factual data. A state-centric approach will be followed and

<sup>56</sup> A. Van Wyk. 2009. The USA and Apartheid South Africa's nuclear aspirations, 1949-1980 in S. Onslow. *Cold War in southern Africa: white power, black liberation*. London, Routledge.

<sup>57</sup> Venter, op cit.

<sup>58</sup> H. Steyn, R. Van der Walt and J. Van Loggerenberg. 2003. *Armament and disarmament: South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Experience*. Pretoria: Network Publishers.

<sup>59</sup> D. Allbright. 1994. South Africa and the Affordable Bomb. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1994. pp.37-47.

<sup>60</sup> Malan, op cit.

<sup>61</sup> B. Rogers. 1982. South Africa Gets Nuclear Weapons – Thanks to the West in E. Ray, et al (Eds). *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa*. London: Zed Press.

the units of analysis will be SA and the USA. The variables to be studied will be the foreign policy of these states from approximately 1945 through to 1990.

Primary material will be use from inter alia, the following archives:

Military Archives (Documentation Centre, SANDF), Pretoria:

- Minister of Defence – Erasmus and Fouché.
- Minister of Defence – P.W. Botha.
- Minister of Defence – Malan.
- Chief of the SADF.
- Defence Attaché – Washington.
- Military Advisor – London.
- Department of Military Intelligence

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

The first chapter of the paper deals with the introduction of the research and includes a brief historical background of USA-SA relations covering the era before 1960. The Berlin airlift (24 June 1948 – 12 May 1949), the Korean War (25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953) and other relevant issues will be briefly discussed. This chapter will also set out the research problem and the research question. The aim, purpose and significance of the study will receive attention. The methodology to be used during the research will be clarified. The chapter will provide a basic explanation of the broad foreign policy of the USA toward SA as well as SA's broad foreign policy towards the USA. The chapter will end with a brief conclusion.

Chapter two will focus on the period from 1960 to 1974. This period includes the earlier stages of sanctions against SA. The USA's decision to implement sanctions against SA will be discussed in detail. The chapter will discuss why the USA was so reluctant to implement the sanctions and why the USA at times violated the sanctions in order to help SA. The influence of the American civil society on the government's decision to implement sanctions against SA will also be discussed in this chapter. The three American presidents who held office during this period were: J.F. Kennedy, L.B. Johnson and R.M. Nixon. This chapter will therefore investigate their foreign policies toward SA.

Chapter three will look at the period from 1975 to 1990. This chapter will focus mainly on how President Carter's stance towards SA differed from President Reagan's later stance. The chapter will investigate whether Reagan was more supportive of the apartheid regime than Carter was. In order to do this, Reagan's constructive engagement policy will be closely scrutinised. This chapter will accommodate negative opinions about constructive engagement as well as positive opinions on the policy. The Muldergate scandal also will be

briefly treated in this chapter seeing the USA was also involved in the operation. Lastly, the consequences of constructive engagement in Southern Africa will be addressed.

Chapter four will scrutinize the USA's support and involvement during the Namibia-Angola debacle. The chapter will investigate how US foreign policy towards SA influenced the independence of Namibia. Essentially the chapter will focus on the military co-operation between SA and the USA during the Border War. This chapter will look at covert and overt military support by the USA to SA. The USA's covert support to the Angolan liberation movements will also be discussed.

A fifth chapter will treat the USA-SA nuclear relationship. It is firstly most important to know why SA desired and consciously developed nuclear capabilities. The chapter will explore the reasons behind the development by SA of a nuclear programme and then investigate in detail how SA acquired the nuclear technology in a strict sanctions environment with the help of the USA and other allies.

## **1.8 ETHICS AND LIMITATIONS**

There were no foreseeable ethical dilemmas. Only open sources were used. In all cases where archival materials are used, they are openly sourced. Classified material were only used after the appropriate processes of declassification took place or in cases where such sources have already been declassified.

Financial resources were one of the main limitations to the study. In order to do cutting edge research, it was important for the author to travel around SA, to Cuba and to the USA to do research in a variety of archives. In the course of the study the author was however privileged to visit Cuba and interact with some Cuban people with knowledge and experience of the politics of the time.

Not being able to read French, Spanish, Hebrew and Russian are limitations to the study. This is because the French co-operated closely with the USA in providing SA with nuclear technology. The same applies to SA and Israeli cooperation in the military/security fields and the development of nuclear weapons. There might be sources that could shed light on the issue with some references to French-USA or USA-SA cooperation written in French. Moukambi's thesis will be a great asset in this regard, as he used material in the French archives to complete his thesis. It is also possible that numerous articles are published in Russian, Portuguese, Hebrew and Spanish on the topic of SA during the Cold War, but because the author cannot read any of the mentioned languages, these articles will not be accessible. Consequently, most of the sources used for the study were from Anglo/American or African origin.

The fact that some of the information that could greatly contribute to the study is still classified in the South African Military Archive is another limitation. A number of files were requested at the archives and where possible were declassified. A marked limitation were

that some files that could not be declassified due to non-disclosure agreements that were signed by SA and other countries.

Research is an ongoing process, and in the course of the study the search for, screening of and use of sources remained an integral and conscious part of the process. In this regard, where necessary application was made/authorisation requested to get access to files, once they are declassified on request of the researcher and supervisors.

The researcher should strive to be balanced and aware of the need to consult, compare and cross-check the various sources (data obtained) when reporting his findings. While “objectivity” can never be fully realized the author remained aware of the need to keep a balance and to report findings as honestly as possible – in other words striving towards internal integrity for the final product.

## **1.9 INTRODUCTION: USA-SA RELATIONS 1939-1960: A SHORT OVERVIEW**

In both the first and second world wars SA entered the conflict on the side of Britain. During the second part of both conflicts the belligerents were strengthened by the involvement of the USA on the side of the Allies. This brought about a co-operation born out of military necessity between SA and, among other nations, the USA. At the conclusion of the Second World War SA found itself opposing communism alongside the United Kingdom (UK), USA, and France – the so-called “West”. It was then without hesitation that SA contributed, albeit in a limited way as compared with other nations, to the conflict in Korea. It was here that SA continued its support to the West which began with the Berlin Airlift at the end of the war. In Korea, SA placed its 2<sup>nd</sup> SAAF Squadron under operational command of the USA instead of the British.

### **1.9.1 The Second World War (1939-1945)**

The USA entered the Second World War on 7 December 1941 after the surprise attack on its naval base at Pearl Harbour. By the time Operation Torch<sup>62</sup> was launched, Rommel had been checked at El-Alamein and was the South Africans heading back to the Union, thus missing out on closer co-operation with the Americans, in spite of being allies.<sup>63</sup> The South African 6<sup>th</sup> Armour Division fought under the command of the US 5<sup>th</sup> Army in Italy for a major part of 1944-45.<sup>64</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Armour Division was a composite division which comprised infantry and armour with all its support elements.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore there were South African Artillery, logistical personnel, technical personnel and a Provost Company fighting in Italy with the Allied Forces. In total 20 273 South African soldiers participated in the liberation of Italy during the Italian campaign.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The American Invasion of Vichy-run Morocco and Algeria

<sup>63</sup> J. Black. 2003. *World War Two: A Military History*. London: Routledge. pp 120-122

<sup>64</sup> Moukambi, op cit. p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> Orpen, op cit. pp. 9-10.

<sup>66</sup> J. Bourhill. *Come Back to Portofino: Through Italy with the 6<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division*. Johannesburg: 30<sup>o</sup> South Publishers (Pty) Ltd. pp. 521-522.

The SAAF was heavily involved in bombing missions and reconnaissance flights during the Italian campaign. The SAAF made a huge contribution to the success of the Allied war effort in Italy.<sup>67</sup> By the end of the Italian campaign on 8 May 1945, 711 South Africans were killed, 2 675 were wounded and 157 South Africans were unaccounted for.<sup>68</sup>

On 12 March 1947, US President Truman proclaimed that a catastrophe awaits the world if the USA would not fight communism abroad. He further said that if any enemy dared to attack an ally of the USA it would be regarded as an attack on the USA itself.<sup>69</sup> The USA also expected its allies to help protect each other against the so called communist onslaught. It can be argued that with the initial backing of the USA, Pretoria intended to be the protector of the free world in Southern Africa. In reality this translated to being the defender of white privilege, a fact which would eventually drive the erstwhile allies from each other.

### 1.9.2 The Berlin Airlift (1948-1949)

During the last week of the Second World War, Berlin was captured by the Soviet Army. After negotiations the Western Powers took over their sectors of Berlin in July 1945. So Berlin was divided into East and West Berlin. After a disagreement about currency reforms (initiated by the Americans)<sup>70</sup>, the Soviets closed all routes into Berlin on 11 June 1948.<sup>71</sup> Newspaper correspondents were of the opinion that West Berliners were going to run out of food and other necessities by the end of July 1948. But because of the team work between the British Commonwealth, which included SA until 1961, and the USA, they overcame the blockade.<sup>72</sup>

South Africa sent aircrews to help with the Berlin airlift.<sup>73</sup> The SAAF provided 20 aircrews to fly as part of the Royal Air Force (RAF). The South African crews flew 2500 sorties into Berlin during the airlift. A total of 8 333 tons of humanitarian aid was delivered to Berlin by the South African crews.<sup>74</sup> This showed SA's commitment to the USA and the rest of the Western world to help in whichever way they could.

George F. Kennan (1947-1989) a Foreign Service officer formulated the policy of "containment" in 1947 which became the basis of ideas on the USA's dealings with the USSR. The essence of this policy was centred on a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. In spite of being criticised for its defensive posture Kennan's policy sought to counter any Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world.<sup>75</sup> South Africa eagerly bought into policy and when communist backed

<sup>67</sup> Orpen, op cit. p. 14.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. pp. 308-309.

<sup>69</sup> T. Weiner. 2007. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*. New York: Doubleday. p. 22.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 30

<sup>71</sup> A. Speir. 1998. The Berlin Airlift. *Military History Journal*, Vol 11, No 2, December 1998.

<sup>72</sup> D. Barker. 1949. *The Berlin Airlift*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office. Pamphlet 2515, Box 44, South African Military Archives. p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 50.

<sup>74</sup> D. Wingrin. 2008. Berlin Airlift Exhibition Opened. <http://www.saaiforce.co.za/news-and-events/686/berlin-airlift-exhibition-opened> (accessed 12 March 2011)

<sup>75</sup> M. Walker. 1994. *The Cold War*. London: Vintage. p. 31. R.J. Bloomfield. U.S. Policy: Doctrine Versus

North Korea invaded its southern neighbour, Pretoria wasted no time in aligning itself with the West.

### 1.9.3 The Korean War (1950-1953)

When North Korea invaded South Korea in a surprise attack on 25 June 1950<sup>76</sup> the UN demanded that North Korea cease its aggression. The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to assist South Korea to repel the attack from its neighbour.<sup>77</sup> During August 1950, following direct requests from Washington, SA announced that it would make a squadron of the SAAF available to the United Nations Forces (UNF) in Korea.<sup>78</sup> The USA provided the majority of the forces for the UNF and Washington also provided the high command.<sup>79</sup> No 2 Squadron of the SAAF was selected and was detached to the 12<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing of the USAF.<sup>80</sup> Later in the war it was detached to the 18<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing. In December 1952, 2 Squadron was re-equipped with American Sabres. These were the SAAF's first jet aircraft.<sup>81</sup>



**Illustration 1.1:** Sabre Aircraft<sup>82</sup>

During its three year stint in Korea, some 800 men of 2 Squadron served with the USAF. The "Flying Cheetahs", as 2 Squadron became known, made a lasting impression on the USA. In order to show their appreciation the following policy directive is was issued by the Officer Commanding of the 18<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing:

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Interest in R.J. Bloomfield (Ed). 1988. *Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique*. Michigan: Reference Publications. p. 208. US department of state. Milestones: 1945-1952. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/> Kennan and Containment, 1947 (accessed 16 October 2015).

<sup>76</sup> P.M.J. Mc Gregor. 1978. The History of No2 Squadron, SAAF, in the Korean War. *Military History Journal* Vol 4 No 3 – June 1978. <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol043pm.html> (accessed 15 October 2015)

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 50.

<sup>79</sup> US Department of State. 2015. Milestones: 1945 – 1953. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945/Korean-War> (accessed 15 October 2015).

<sup>80</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 50.

<sup>81</sup> Moukambi, op cit. p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> Illustration found at <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol063dm.html>

In memory of our gallant South African comrades, it is hereby established, as a new policy, that all Retreat Ceremonies held by this Wing, the playing of our National Anthem shall be preceded by playing the introductory bard of the South African Anthem, “Die Stem van Suid Afrika”. All personnel of this Wing will render the same honours to this anthem as our own.<sup>83</sup>

## 1. 10 THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE USA-SA RELATIONSHIP

In order to understand why the USA and SA maintained a relationship throughout the Cold War, it is important to understand what national interest is and the influence that national interest have on the foreign policy of a country. Hartmann contents that in the environment of national foreign policy there remains a tension between moral formulas and national interest.<sup>84</sup> He refers to this tension where in almost all cases national interest became a greater priority in the case of the USA. As examples he uses the American bias in the Ethiopian conflict of 1935 and during the Spanish Civil War from 1936 onwards. Cold War examples include the interaction with Communist China (1949 onwards), Korea and Asia especially the Vietnam War.<sup>85</sup>

According to Papp a country’s “...interests are called the national interest, and the methods and actions it employs to attempt to achieve its national interests are called national policy.”<sup>86</sup> There are various different definitions for national interest but there are certain criteria that a state considers when defining its own national interest.

Economic interest was one of the main criteria for the USA during the Cold War. If a state follows a policy that seeks to enhance its economic standing then it can be seen to be in the national interest.<sup>87</sup> The USA maintained a relationship with apartheid SA throughout the Cold War in pursuit of its own economic interest. The world condemned SA for its apartheid policies, but the USA did not want to lose its economic benefits in SA.<sup>88</sup> The USA saw an opportunity in Southern Africa to replace Britain and the other imperialist European countries which had interests and “provinces” in Southern Africa.<sup>89</sup> Ideological criteria played an important role in the national interests of the USA and SA during the Cold War. The US and South African national interests were both centred on the ideological criterion. Both the USA and SA used the ideology of anti-communism to justify their policies and their relationship.<sup>90</sup> Military security and/or advantage are further criteria that shaped the national interests of the USA and SA. The USA saw SA as a strategic military partner in Southern Africa.<sup>91</sup> South

<sup>83</sup> SA Air Force. 2011. 2 Squadron. [http://www.af.mil.za/bases/afb\\_makhado/2sqn.htm](http://www.af.mil.za/bases/afb_makhado/2sqn.htm) (accessed 12 March 2011).

<sup>84</sup> F. H. Hartmann. 1978. *The Relations of Nations (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers. p. 433.

<sup>85</sup> Hartmann, op cit. pp. 422, 433, 435, 436 and 437 and further.

<sup>86</sup> D.S. Papp. 1994. *Contemporary International Relations: Frameworks for Understanding (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*. New York: Macmillan College Publishing Company. p. 43.

<sup>87</sup> Papp, op cit. p. 44.

<sup>88</sup> J. A. Marcum. 1972. Southern Africa: Problems and U.S. Alternatives. *Intercom #70*. Center for War/Peace Studies. September 1972, p. 18. R. Robinson. 1993. Preface, in Mokoena op cit. p. xv. Lulat, op cit. p. 70. Thomson, op cit. p.41.

<sup>89</sup> M. Wolfers and J. Bergerol. 1983. *Angola in the Frontline*. London: Zed. p. 192.

<sup>90</sup> Goldstone, op cit. p. 814. Thomson, op cit. p.6. Bissel, op cit. p. 38.

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, op cit. p. 477. Davies, op cit. p. 8. Howland (Ed), op cit. p.591.

Africa on the other hand felt that if they have the military support of the USA, then communist forces would not be able to invade SA and SA would be able to maintain its white minority rule.<sup>92</sup>

The national interest of a state changes constantly especially when new leadership takes power in a country. Therefore national interest should be “viewed less as a constant set of national objectives than as a changing approximation of what the leaders of a country or other significant individuals or groups within a country view important.”<sup>93</sup> Throughout the study it will be seen that the criteria forming the national interest of either the USA or SA changed, but there was always at least one criterion of national interest that the two countries had in common. As can be seen in this dissertation, moral formulae are despite the professed idealism thereof regularly replaced by actions aimed at the maintenance or expansion of interests.

### 1.11 US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SA

By 1960, the USSR had diplomatic missions in Libya, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Ghana. The USSR was also busy to provide training on Marxist-Leninist theories in Moscow to more leaders from West Africa.<sup>94</sup> The obvious next step for the Soviets would be to extend their influence to Southern Africa. The USA predicted that Africa was going to play a much more important role in international politics from 1960 onwards. The independence of most African states from the late 1940s through to the early 1960s meant that there was a whole new theatre where the US and the rest of the super powers could get resources to maintain their economies and militaries. The newly independent actors also acquired a growing voice in the UN.<sup>95</sup> It was soon to become a global race to build relationships with the newly independent state in Africa as well as in Asia.

These newly independent African states started many debates in the UN about human rights and racial equality which could not be ignored by the USA. This new significance of Africa held implications for the USA domestically and with regards to its foreign policy, because the USA did not want to lose authority in the UN, but also did not want to lose SA as a strategic partner.<sup>96</sup> Therefore the USA pledged to pursue a more energetic approach towards Africa than before 1960. A study done by the Committee on Foreign Relations (CFR) of the United States Senate in 1959 recommended that the USA had a new responsibility towards the African continent and in order to meet the new found responsibility the USA had to do the following:

<sup>92</sup> F.A. Guimarães. 1998. *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict*. New York: St Martin's Press. pp. 122-123. Massie, op cit. p. 128. Mokoena, op cit.p. xx.

<sup>93</sup> Papp, op cit. p. 46.

<sup>94</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds). op cit. p.8.

<sup>95</sup> R.M. Irwin. 2009. A Wind of Change? White Redoubt and the Postcolonial Moment, 1960-1963. *Diplomatic History*. Vol 33, No 5, November 2009. p. 898. P.H. Katjavivi. 1990. *Namibia: A History of Resistance in Namibia*. New Jersey: Africa World Press Inc. p. 52. A. S. Minty. South Africa's military build up in P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1986. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House. p. 173.

<sup>96</sup> Irwin, op cit. p. 898.



- The USA had to preach its own values of racial tolerance and self-determination to Africa.
- The USA had to provide African countries with the necessary support in the economic, social, educational and any other spheres where they might need support.<sup>97</sup>

The CFR study left a loophole in order to also sympathise with countries like SA who refused to adopt a democratic system. The study stated that “The U.S can work with the new African states whether or not they develop democratic institutions which follow Western models.”<sup>98</sup> So the study actually recommended that the USA should have relations with all African countries. The USA mostly tried to base its foreign policies around doing everything possible to promote democracy and prevent crimes against humanity; but the South African case was much more complex.<sup>99</sup> There was one issue more important to US foreign policy than democracy and crimes against humanity – the fight against communism. Already on 12 March 1947, President Truman made a speech where he warned that “the world will face disaster unless the United States fought communism abroad.”<sup>100</sup> The global containment of communism was the primary US foreign policy objective during the Cold War and SA masterly played in on this concern.<sup>101</sup>

Sources differ on whether the USA was eager to have a diplomatic relationship with SA during the Cold War. According to Barber the USA tended to take a hostile diplomatic stance against SA whenever possible and they never had a really close relationship.<sup>102</sup> Barber argued that SA was initially on the low-priority list for the USA. He further argues that SA was simply an annoyance, and one that embarrassed the USA in the General Assembly.<sup>103</sup> Most of the literature agrees that the USA-SA relationship was a healthy relationship that was pursued by both sides. From the diplomatic cables that were sent between American diplomats, it is clear that they did not want to do anything that would turn SA against the USA, because SA was regarded as a valuable ally in their war against communism.

Anti-communism in essence determined USA foreign policy toward SA during the Cold War.<sup>104</sup> The Free World (of which SA was part) saw communist domination as one of the greatest threats to mankind.<sup>105</sup> Leonid Brezhnev, a senior USSR leader from 1964 to 1982, acknowledged that one of the main objectives of the USSR was to take away Western control over the mineral wealth in central and Southern Africa.<sup>106</sup> Consequently one of the major challenges that the USA faced from 1960 to 1990 was the perceived communist threat from the East. The USA was prepared to fight the communist menace at all levels. In 1960,

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<sup>97</sup> Cerf and Pozen op cit. p.63.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Mokoena op cit. p. xv.

<sup>100</sup> Weiner, op cit. p. 22.

<sup>101</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 15. Lulat, op cit. p. 157. Thomson, op cit. p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> Barber, op cit. p. 290.

<sup>103</sup> Barber and Barrat, op cit. p. 48.

<sup>104</sup> Guimarães, op cit. p. 177.

<sup>105</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 26. Malan, op cit. p.67.

<sup>106</sup> Malan, op cit. p. 67.

Cerf and Pozen (like many other foreign policy experts) recommended to the USA government that the primary foreign policy goal of the USA should be to spread democracy and freedom in order to curb the spread of communism.<sup>107</sup> In the case of SA, the USA was unable to strive for democracy and freedom for all because of apartheid. Yet the USA maintained good relations with SA. According to Thomson, "...whatever Washington DC thought of the racial policies of the South African government, it could not fault Pretoria in its commitment to prevent 'communists' from coming to power in the Republic, or anywhere else in the region."<sup>108</sup>

Racial issues were also certainly influential in constructing the USA foreign policy towards SA. The USA constantly had to make the difficult choice of whether to fight against communism or racism - communism mostly won. Levi explained this phenomenon when he wrote that "...national interest overpower morality."<sup>109</sup>

It is very important to consider the interconnectedness of the unholy three as SA, Rhodesia and Mozambique were known at the time when studying USA foreign policy towards SA during the Cold War. The unholy three were only interconnected until 1974.<sup>110</sup> The Portuguese withdrawal from Africa in 1974 changed the situation in Southern Africa and will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

### 1.11.1 South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique – The Unholy Three

South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique were important to the USA, in view of their ability to generate profits by using grossly underpaid black labourers. The unholy three had similar interests and came to realise that an attack on one was an attack on all.<sup>111</sup> These three Southern African countries stood together as far as possible. The alliance was confirmed when South African Prime Minister B.J. Vorster said in September 1968:

South Africa and her friend Portugal understand each other very well and I need say no more on that subject. No treaties are needed between friends: they know their duty when a neighbour's house is on fire.<sup>112</sup>

Washington in many cases regarded the three countries as one and the same when they developed their foreign policy. Namibia was also included as part of these three, because SA administered Namibia as one of its provinces at the time. Therefore one will find that many books focusing on USA foreign policy during the era before 1974 do not describe US foreign policy towards the three countries separately, but rather describe it as US foreign policy towards Southern Africa.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Cerf and Pozen, op cit. pp.1-2.

<sup>108</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.7.

<sup>109</sup> W. Levi. 1969. 'The Relative Irrelevance of Moral Norms in International Politics' in J. Rosenau. *International Politics and Foreign Policy*. New York: Free Press. pp. 191-8.

<sup>110</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 13. Price, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.7.

<sup>112</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.7.

<sup>113</sup> D.A. Dickson.1985. *United States foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa*. Lanham: University

This study will focus only on US foreign policy toward SA, because only a limited amount of pages are allowed and if USA foreign policy towards Southern Africa had to be studied, the limit would easily be exceeded.

### 1.11.2 Factors that Influenced US Foreign Policy towards SA

There are many factors that influenced US foreign policy toward SA, but there were five main factors. The first factor was the amount and type of investments that were made in SA. Many of the major companies in the USA had interests in SA. Businesses which were involved in manufacturing and raw material procurement were especially interested in SA, because of the cheap black labour that could increase their profits tremendously. The region is also very rich in valuable minerals such as gold, platinum and uranium, which were all very important commodities to the USA.<sup>114</sup>

The second major factor was SA's military-strategic importance to the USA. After the closure of the Suez Canal, the sea route around SA increased in importance.<sup>115</sup> In the next chapter it will also become clear how important it was for the USA to build a missile tracking station in SA. Thomson concurs that SA's geographical location on the African continent increased its value to the USA.<sup>116</sup>

The third major factor that influenced USA foreign policy towards SA was the USA's relationships with other African countries. Whenever the USA showed any friendly signs towards SA, the rest of the African continent accused Washington of supporting the apartheid regime and everything it stood for. For this reason the USA also supported black states like Zaire. Resultantly the USA had to carefully balance their relationship between SA and the rest of the African continent.<sup>117</sup>

The fourth major factor was the racial situation in the USA. The African-American population in the USA had a big influence on US foreign policy toward apartheid SA. The US politicians had to keep the votes of the African-American population in mind when they took decisions with regards to SA.<sup>118</sup> It is important to remember that the USA also had a history of racial segregation and inequality in some parts of the USA until the early 1960s.<sup>119</sup> So the anti-racism sentiment was pertinent in the USA at the time.

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Press of America. M.A. El-Khawas and B. Cohen, op cit. P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1989. *Frontline Southern Africa*. Ryan Publishing: Peterborough. Kitchen, H. 1987. *Angola, Mozambique and the West*. New York: Praeger.

<sup>114</sup> Price, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. Bissel, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>116</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.7.

<sup>117</sup> Price, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>118</sup> Nesbitt, op cit. p. 38.

<sup>119</sup> See figure 1.1



**Illustration 1.2:** Racial segregation in the USA.<sup>120</sup>



**Illustration 1.3:** Racial segregation in SA.<sup>121</sup>

The fifth major factor was the attitude of the various bureaucracies within the USA. Price names the Black Caucus, the Southern Bloc and the Commerce Department as just a few that influenced the USA's foreign policy toward SA.<sup>122</sup> Barber confirms this when he writes that the South African ministers found it difficult to distinguish which of the many bureaucracies influenced the formulation of US policy the most.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Illustration found at <http://www.myconfinedspace.com/2014/07/08/whites-only/>

<sup>121</sup> Illustration found at <http://v1.sahistory.org.za/pages/library/onlinebooks/luli/place-in-the-city/images/white>

<sup>122</sup> Price, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>123</sup> Barber, op cit. p. 293.

## 1.12 SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE USA

According to Barber and Barrat, the apartheid government's foreign policy was based on three themes. The first theme was the regional context of Southern Africa in Africa. The second theme was SA's relationship with the West and the third theme was SA within the broader world context including membership of international organisations.<sup>124</sup>

Communism was rationalised as the main enemy by the apartheid regime. They identified that the communist threat was internal and external, so they had to do anything possible to stop the so called red danger of communism.<sup>125</sup> In Pretoria it was believed that everyone who did not support white minority rule in SA were communists and a threat to the country and the world.<sup>126</sup> As a result of the open hostility towards the communist East, SA "...assumed a natural identity of interests with West."<sup>127</sup> Seeing the USA was the superpower of the West, it was inevitable that the SA would go out of its way to build and maintain good relations with the USA.

The South African government recognised the vital importance of having the USA as an ally, but were at the same time unsure as to how the USA felt about SA. According to Barber and Barrat, the USA had few ties with SA and Africa, so by the early 1960s the South Africans were uncertain whether the USA would be supportive of SA.<sup>128</sup>

South Africa had a few problems with the USA that influenced its foreign policy towards the USA. Firstly, the SA government did not appreciate it when the USA declared its abhorrence of apartheid and constantly criticised the apartheid regime.<sup>129</sup> Even when the criticism came from other countries, SA expected the USA to stand up for them, but the USA rarely did so in public. Secondly, the SA government did not appreciate it when the USA and the rest of the West did not support SA within the context of international organisations, especially within the UN. The USA was also at the time trying to build a multi-racial society where everyone was equal and that was another drawback for SA.<sup>130</sup> In short the USA was attempting to "forget" their recent past of segregation – a form of collective forgetfulness that made it difficult to rationalise around apartheid and/or give it qualified support

## 1.13 CONCLUSION

SA and the USA have had many years of diplomatic interaction. SA had demonstrated her unwavering support for the USA and the West by providing forces during the Second World War, the Berlin Airlift and the Korean War. There is clear evidence that the USA government supported the SA government throughout apartheid. The USA supported SA in all spheres. SA's economic and strategic value to the USA should have resulted in a very strong

<sup>124</sup> Barber and Barrat, op cit. p. 5.

<sup>125</sup> Guimarães, op cit. p. 122.

<sup>126</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 26.

<sup>127</sup> Barber and Barrat, op cit. p. 45.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p. 48.

<sup>129</sup> F. R. Metrowich. 1977. *South Africa's New Frontiers*. Sandton: Valiant Publishers. p. 103.

<sup>130</sup> Barber and Barrat, op cit. p. 48.

relationship between the two countries, but the international condemnation of apartheid did not allow the two countries to proclaim their relationship. The USA supported the apartheid government overtly and covertly at various times. At other times public statements contradicted positive/concrete support of the apartheid's regimes' actions. The USA did during certain periods of the Cold War support apartheid and even helped to keep the apartheid government in power.

As SA was an important ally during the Cold War, the USA hovered between public criticism and material assistance. Instead of building its foreign policy towards SA around human rights and poverty, the foreign policy was instead dictated by the Cold War ideological struggle of anti-communism and the USA's self interest. South Africa's controversial apartheid policies prevented the USA from announcing to the world that SA was an ally of the USA and the West while in reality it was at least seen as a strategic asset.

South Africa's apartheid leadership in turn was desperate to form part of the Western identity. That is why SA was willing to maintain diplomatic relations with the USA even when the USA condemned the apartheid government. This was also why SA committed military forces, to operate with UN forces, at a time when criticism of SA and the apartheid policies was becoming increasingly vocal, and especially at the UN. Both the USA and SA had disagreements with each other, especially on racial issues, but they never totally broke diplomatic ties. Both countries had too much to lose from such a break-up. Their staunch dedication to the eradication of communism served as a glue to keep them together. The rest of the world condemned the relationship, but they were able to uphold it throughout the Cold War.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION: USA-SA RELATIONS FROM 1960-1974

The period from 1960 to 1974 saw the climax of the Cold War as the USA was willing to try all avenues to contain the worldwide spread of communism. The US government was deeply concerned that the African continent could come under influence of the USSR. As Jesse Holmes, the Special Assistant to the US Secretary of State described the situation in Africa in 1958 “there will be plenty of troubled waters for Communist fishing.”<sup>131</sup> Walker<sup>132</sup> was of the opinion that the USSR wanted to absorb Southern Africa to deprive the West from the valuable minerals in the region.<sup>133</sup> The West also kept in mind that access to the Cape sea route would be of crucial importance if the Suez Canal should ever become unusable.<sup>134</sup> It was therefore important to the USA to maintain good relations with SA.<sup>135</sup> South Africa was arguably the African country that received the most focus from the USA during the Cold War.<sup>136</sup>

The USA had to publicly criticise apartheid as not to do so “would hurt long-term U.S. interests within the context of the Cold War.”<sup>137</sup> Lulat describes the USA-SA relationship as:

a story of the contradiction between, on one hand, the ideological dictates of historically-rooted notions (of support for freedom and democracy and opposition to imperialism) that abound in a country that itself had once fought a war of liberation, and, on the other hand, the reality of the demands of waging a global ‘cold’ war with the former communist nations of Eastern Europe over the Western world’s need to continue to preserve at all costs the dominance of capitalism with the international economic system-but set against the ideology of whiteness.<sup>138</sup>

Coker, Cooper and Mokoena agree with Lulat.<sup>139</sup> Thomson writes that USA foreign policy toward SA was a very difficult balancing act that the USA tried to master.<sup>140</sup> The USA portrayed itself as a country that would assist any nation to free itself from its oppressors and

<sup>131</sup> H. D. Schwar and A.W. La Fantasie (Eds). 1992. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960*, Vol xiv, Africa. Washington: Department of State. p .2. F.A. Guimarães. 1998. *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict*. New York: St Martin’s Press. p. 125.

<sup>132</sup> General Sir Walter Walker was the retired NATO Commander in Chief Allied Forces in Northern Europe

<sup>133</sup> W. Walker. 1978. *The Bear at the Back Door: The Soviet threat to the West’s lifeline in Africa*. Sandton: Valiant Publishers. p. 9.

<sup>134</sup> R.M. Irwin. 2009. A Wind of Change? White Redoubt and the Postcolonial Moment, 1960-1963. *Diplomatic History*. Vol 33, No 5, November 2009. p. 911. P. Hounam and S. McQuillan. 1995. *The Mini-Nuke Conspiracy: Mandela’s Nuclear Nightmare*. London: Faber and Faber. p. 213.

<sup>135</sup> F. R. Metrowich. 1977. *South Africa’s New Frontiers*. Sandton: Valiant Publishers. p. 103.

<sup>136</sup> A. Thomson. 2008. *U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> Y. G-M. Lulat. 2008. *United States Relations with South Africa: A Critical Overview from the Colonial Period to the Present*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. p.152.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. p.155.

<sup>139</sup> C. Coker. 1986. *The United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics*. Durham: Duke University Press. p. 77. A.D. Cooper. 1988. *Allies in Apartheid: Western Capitalism in occupied Namibia*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd. K. Mokoena (Ed). 1993. *South Africa and the United States: The declassified history*. New York: The New Press.

<sup>140</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.5.

become a democracy. Furthermore the USA vowed to do anything to stop the spread of communism.<sup>141</sup> As a result the USA received two pleas for assistance from SA:

- White South Africans requested assistance to fight communism although this would inevitably help to maintain white minority rule.
- Black South Africans pleaded to the USA to help them in their struggle against what the disenfranchised saw as white oppression in their country of birth.

The USA then chose to act in its own best interest by supporting the apartheid government.<sup>142</sup> The South African government convinced the USA through its Cold War rhetoric of being staunchly anti-communist. In the process, the USA undermined the struggle for the freedom and democracy of black South Africans (ironically the ideology that defined the USA during the Cold War) in order to preserve Western interests in Southern Africa.<sup>143</sup> From 1960 to 1974 three US presidents were responsible for either the maintenance or the cancellation of ties with SA. They were J.F. Kennedy (1961-1963), L. B. Johnson (1963-1969) and R. Nixon (1969-1974). Each had different views with regards to relations with SA.

## 2.2 POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USA AND SA

By 1960, the USSR had diplomatic missions in Libya, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Ghana. The USSR was influencing more leaders from West Africa by providing training in Moscow.<sup>144</sup> The obvious next step for the USSR would be to extend its influence to Southern Africa. The banning of South African liberation movements in 1960 provided the communist powers with a potential new theatre. The African National Congress (ANC), which decided to follow an armed struggle against the apartheid regime, and was in need of arms and military training, offered the perfect opportunity for the USSR to gain a foothold in Southern Africa. The USSR never forced the ANC to use violence in their campaign, but the USSR did respect the ANC's decision to embark on a violent liberation struggle.<sup>145</sup> The USA concluded that in all probability a communist government would take over in SA should the apartheid government be overthrown by one of the liberation movements, especially if it was ANC and its ally, the South African Communist Party (SACP).<sup>146</sup> According to the USA, the hand of Moscow was ready to interfere with the crucial interests of the USA in Africa, Asia and Latin America.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>141</sup> J. E. Davies. 2007. *Constructive Engagement? Chester Crocker & American Policy in South Africa, Namibia & Angola 1981-8*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. p. 6.

<sup>142</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.157.

<sup>143</sup> R. Goldstone. 2005. Ambiguity and America: South Africa and US Foreign Policy. *Social Research*, Vol 72, Nr 4. p. 814. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 63.

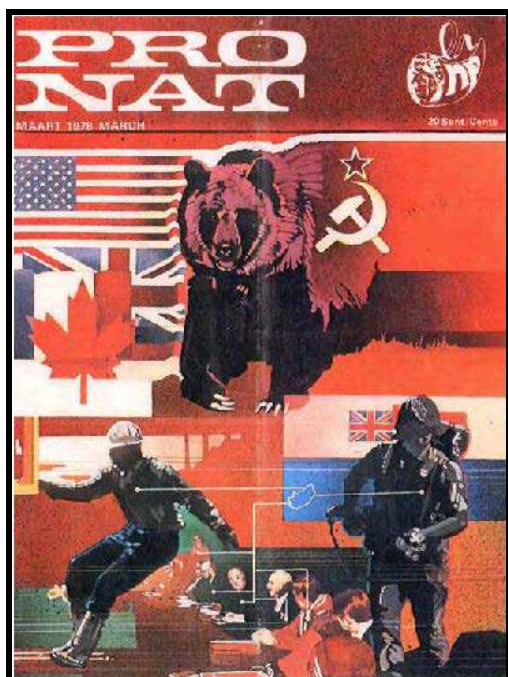
<sup>144</sup> Schwar, H.D. & A.W. La Fantasie (Eds). op cit. p.8.

<sup>145</sup> V. Shubin. 2008. *The Hot "Cold War": The USSR in Southern Africa*. London: Pluto Press. p. 241.

<sup>146</sup> A. Urnov, 1988. *South Africa Against Africa*. Moscow: Progress Publishers p. 215. Thomson, op cit. p.6. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 195.

<sup>147</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 215.





**Figure 2.1: The Bear<sup>148</sup>**

The USA recognised the importance of SA in the fight against communism but the practice of apartheid hampered relations between the two countries. As apartheid became known to the international community, it became difficult for the world and especially the USA to ignore apartheid legislation and its practical outcomes.<sup>149</sup> Special Assistant Holmes described apartheid as a dead-end policy.<sup>150</sup> In response, Prime Minister Verwoerd told the US Ambassador that he did not think the USA understood the importance of SA in the defence against communism on the African continent. The Ambassador responded that the USA wanted friendly relations with SA but that it would be difficult until SA changed its racial policy.<sup>151</sup>

The USA agreed with other Western countries that SA was abusing the human rights of the black citizens. The fact that the USA also had a history depriving African-American citizens of their human rights contributed to its negative stance towards SA's apartheid policy.<sup>152</sup> The USA realised that it was not possible, nor right, to suppress a group of people based on skin colour and wanted to convey this message to SA's political leaders. The USA was aware that by suppressing blacks, SA, under Prime Minister Verwoerd was driving blacks to seek

<sup>148</sup> Terrible Twins – Cold War and Total Onslaught: Cover page of the *Pro Nat*, National Party mouthpiece, March 1978. The Red Bear – and Moscow – as omnipresence. Source: I. Liebenberg personal archive (Reprinted in I. Liebenberg, J. Risquet and V. Shubin. 2015. *A far-Away War in Angola, 1975 – 1988*) Stellenbosch: Sun Media.

<sup>149</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.14.

<sup>150</sup> H. D. Schwar and A.W. La Fantasie (Eds), op cit. p.6.

<sup>151</sup> N.D. Howland (Ed). 1995. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-63, Vol xxi, Africa*. Washington: Department of State. p.593.

<sup>152</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.14.

moral support and later material assistance from the communist world.<sup>153</sup> In this context the USA found itself within the nexus of moral responsibilities or professed moral standpoints and the imperative to serve its national interests akin to earlier situations as pointed out by Hartmann.<sup>154</sup>

In 1966 the US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Affairs, Mennen Williams, announced during a meeting with the House Subcommittee on Africa that “the broad aims of U.S. policy towards South Africa are essentially political. We support freedom, equality, and justice for the people of South Africa... These political aims are paramount.”<sup>155</sup>

### 2.2.1 Apartheid

Apartheid posed a potential risk to the moral and political fibre as well as the international interests of the USA.<sup>156</sup> By 1960, the USA’s attitude to SA was that it did not want the world to think that the USA supported apartheid and so publicly denounced the policy yet did whatever it could to protect SA from international criticism. Here duplicity, ambiguity and double standards are apparent in the USA’s relations with the apartheid government from the outset - it was important for the USA to criticise apartheid whilst still maintaining cordial political, military and economic relations with SA.<sup>157</sup>

On 21 March 1960, members of the South African Police (SAP) fired live ammunition on black people demonstrating against the Pass Laws in Sharpeville, a township, south of Johannesburg. At least 65 people were killed and more than two hundred were wounded.<sup>158</sup> This event became known as the Sharpeville massacre and would play a significant role in the political history of SA and affect relations between the USA and SA which will be discussed later in the chapter. In SA the massacre increased alienation and deepened tensions between those in favour of a one-person-one vote democracy and those who wished to uphold white minority rule, albeit with the promise of limited rights for black people.<sup>159</sup>

After the Sharpeville massacre a number of American officials and broader public began to espouse their opinions on apartheid in the international media.<sup>160</sup> Statements such as “apartheid is repugnant to us in the United States of America” and that apartheid is “a wrong-headed policy fraught with dangers not alone to the people of South Africa but to

<sup>153</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 24. Shubin, op cit. pp. 241-242.

<sup>154</sup> F. H. Hartmann. 1978. *The Relations of Nations (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers. p. 433.

<sup>155</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.50. Metrowich, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>156</sup> R. Robinson 1993. Preface, in Mokoena, op cit. p. xv.

<sup>157</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.151.

<sup>158</sup> P. Walshe. 2003. The Sharpeville Massacre: Levels of Causation. *The Journal of African History*. Vol 44, No 3. p. 541. Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit.p.741. Thomson, op cit. p.28. R. Kasrils. 2004. *Armed and Dangerous*. Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball. p. 18.

<sup>159</sup> G. M. Carter and P. O’Meara (Eds). 1979. *Southern Africa: The Continuing Crisis*. Indiana: The Macmillan Press. pp. 104-105

<sup>160</sup> F. N. Nesbitt. 2004. *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994*. Indiana: Indiana University Press p. 36. Irwin, op cit. p. 905.

international peace and security” were frequently voiced by senior US officials.<sup>161</sup> An US representative in the UN also noted in 1962 that “[w]e are unalterably and irrevocably opposed to apartheid in all its aspects. Our traditions and our values allow no other position.”<sup>162</sup> These statements were typical of what the USA promoted to the international community with regard to apartheid.

The increase in Africa’s membership in the UN and SA’s disregard for UN resolutions regarding apartheid and its mandate over SWA led the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution in November 1962. This demonstrated that the UN was determined to end apartheid. The Resolution requested UN member-states to “...break diplomatic relations, close ports to ships flying the South African flag, boycott South African goods, and refuse landing and passage facilities. It also requested the Security Council to call for economic sanctions and an arms embargo.”<sup>163</sup> The Kennedy administration voted against the Resolution, but it was adopted due to the overwhelming support of the rest of UN member-states.

Even though the USA publicly increased its criticism of SA, a number of officials in the Kennedy administration argued that the USA should not threaten SA openly but rather use discreet methods to persuade South African officials to change apartheid policies.<sup>164</sup> During the early 1960s the USA assessed that “[o]rdered change would minimise violence, limit opportunities for Soviet encroachment, and protect U.S. material interest” in SA.<sup>165</sup>

South Africa anticipated cordial relations with the Kennedy administration. The Ambassador of SA to the USA, Dr W.C. Naudé, told the US First Secretary, A.G. Dunn, that SA regarded President Kennedy as being a very intellectual kind of leader. Resultantly SA expected that the USA would understand SA’s position with regards to apartheid under Kennedy’s rule.<sup>166</sup>

During a meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of SA, Mr Eric Louw, and USA Ambassador Satterthwaite on 30 June 1961 the US Ambassador reiterated the USA’s stand on apartheid. Satterthwaite told Louw that the USA will not forget SA’s support during the First and Second World Wars, the Berlin blockade and its assistance in the fight against communism in Korea. He then said that he wanted to be frank with the Minister that the USA is concerned about evidence of increasing racial tension in SA. Satterthwaite said that he was concerned that increasing racial tension could eventually lead to the total isolation of SA from the international community. The Ambassador then told the Minister; “the US would agree that there is much misunderstanding and misrepresentation in the world concerning South Africa’s racial problem, and an unwillingness to give credit for what is being done for the benefit of the Republic’s non-white population.”<sup>167</sup> The Ambassador emphasised that the

<sup>161</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.32.

<sup>162</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.34.

<sup>163</sup> Mokoena, op cit. p. xx.

<sup>164</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa. 1981. *South Africa: Time Running Out*. Berkeley, Ca: University of California Press. p. 348. Metrowich, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>165</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.40. Shubin, op cit. p. 10.

<sup>166</sup> Howland, op cit. p.587.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p.599.

USA was aware of the importance of the white population in SA to the future well-being of the country. The conversation during this meeting indicates that the USA did not want to offend SA with its criticism of apartheid, but that it had to keep face with the rest of the world in condemning apartheid.<sup>168</sup>

The swearing in of L.B. Johnson as US President after Kennedy's death in 1963 witnessed a decline in relations between SA and the USA. Naudé the SA Ambassador in Washington was bluntly told that he should not try to convince Americans to accept apartheid because it was impossible to do so. Naudé was told that President Johnson was a disciple of Franklin Roosevelt who was the first US President to abolish segregation in the USA.<sup>169</sup> In 1968 the Johnson administration made the USA's stance towards apartheid very clear to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) when Vice President Hubert Humphrey addressed the organisation in Addis Ababa:

Let us be clear where America stands. Segregation: we oppose it. Discrimination: we oppose it. Exploitation: we oppose it. Social injustice: we oppose it. Self-determination: we support it. Majority rule-one man, one vote: we support it.<sup>170</sup>

### 2.2.2 The Sharpeville Massacre

The Sharpeville massacre placed SA in the international spotlight.<sup>171</sup> According to Thomson, the shooting at Sharpeville "...sealed the tone of the language that future U.S. administrations would use with respect to apartheid."<sup>172</sup> The Sharpeville massacre was the first time that the USA government verbally condemned apartheid.<sup>173</sup> The American media also voiced its outrage at the atrocity,<sup>174</sup> while the USA State Department released a press briefing the day after the massacre. The briefing stated:

The United States deplores violence in all its forms and hopes that the African people of South Africa will be able to obtain redress for legitimate grievances by peaceful means. While the United States, as a matter of practice, does not ordinarily comment on the internal affairs of governments with which it enjoys normal relations, it cannot help but regret the tragic loss of life resulting from the measures taken against the demonstrators in South Africa.<sup>175</sup>

During the morning of 24 March 1960, a day after the press release, President Eisenhower met the US Secretary of State, Christian Herter. Eisenhower was annoyed because he was unaware that a press briefing had been released regarding the massacre. Secretary Herter said that the mistake had occurred as a result of miscommunication within the State Department. Apparently the press office released the statement "without checking at the top

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<sup>168</sup> Howland, op cit. p.600. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 220.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. p.964.

<sup>170</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.51.

<sup>171</sup> Guimarães, op cit. p. 123. The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 173.

<sup>172</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.28.

<sup>173</sup> Price, op cit. p. 10.

<sup>174</sup> Nesbitt, op cit. p. 36.

<sup>175</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit. p.741.

policy level, and without investigating the facts of the matter.”<sup>176</sup> President Eisenhower phoned the South African Ambassador to inform him that the US government regretted the statement but remained concerned about the violence against protesters in SA. President Eisenhower’s call to the SA Ambassador was kept secret to save the USA from criticism by other countries. Eisenhower also asked that the Bureau Chief, who was responsible for the release of the press briefing be replaced.<sup>177</sup>

The US Secretary of State for African Affairs, James Penfield, was also concerned by the Sharpeville press release. In a telephone conversation with Secretary Herter, Penfield said that “we had jumped awfully fast on this one and made a real mistake” and that “we had clearly taken sides and might be accused of inciting a revolution.”<sup>178</sup> The US Department of Defence also objected to the press release.<sup>179</sup> However, a positive result of the press release was that the Afro-Asian group at the UN expressed its gratitude to the USA for criticising the SA government. The liberal opposition in SA was also pleased about the press statement.<sup>180</sup>

In a telegram from the US Embassy in SA to the Department of State on 25 March 1960, the US Ambassador to SA wrote that he believed that the Afrikaner people might feel that the USA had turned its back on them because of the criticism regarding the Sharpeville incident. He was further worried that the Pretoria government might cool its relations with the USA. The Ambassador was of the opinion that the members of the SAP in Sharpeville had no choice other than to shoot the protesters in self-defence. He theorised that the US police may have been able to stop the protest with a smaller loss of life because it used different riot control techniques compared to their South African counterparts.<sup>181</sup>

Even though the USA apologised to SA for the statement, the USA continued to criticise the Sharpeville massacre in the UN. Henry Cabot Lodge, the US Ambassador at the UN, proposed that the incident should be debated in the Security Council. He said that the USA “deeply deplore[d] the loss of life which has taken place in South Africa.”<sup>182</sup> He further argued that apartheid was responsible for the death of the Sharpeville victims. As a result of the USA’s condemnation of apartheid, Security Council Resolution 134(1960) was drafted and passed on 1 April 1960. Resolution 134(1960) called on SA to abandon its apartheid legislation and end racial discrimination.<sup>183</sup> The USA voted in favour of the Resolution in spite of having apologised to SA a week earlier.

During a visit by Minister Eric Louw to the USA in October 1960, he told Satterthwaite that SA was unhappy about the position the USA adopted with regard to the Sharpeville incident. According to Louw, a mob of more than 18 000 attacked a small police force and that teargas was ineffective because of the windy conditions. As a result the police had to fire live

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid. p.742.

<sup>177</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit. p. 72. Irwin, op cit. p. 912.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.29.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit. p.743.

<sup>182</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.28.

<sup>183</sup> Nesbitt, op cit. p. 37.

ammunition to protect them from the angry mob. The Ambassador of SA to the UN, Cabot Lodge, supported Louw's version that residents of Sharpeville had threatened the police who had no other choice than to shoot at them.<sup>184</sup>

American public opinion of SA was heavily influenced by the Sharpeville incident and the US State Department subsequently adopted a hostile posture towards SA. Rhoodie<sup>185</sup> argues that after the Sharpeville incident "US policy towards South Africa eventually came to be predetermined by the attitude which the Organisation of African Unity and the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted, not by what its own Congress believed."<sup>186</sup>



**Illustration 2.2: The Sharpeville Massacre**<sup>187</sup>

### 2.2.3 US Public Opinion on Apartheid<sup>188</sup>

With regards to the public opinion on apartheid, Lulat had the following to say:

There was a significant body of opinion in the United States that was sufficiently strong to prevent an outright support of apartheid South Africa by the administration: ranging from U.S. African Americans like Paul Robeson and Martin Luther King, Jr. To labour leaders like Walter

<sup>184</sup> Nesbitt, op cit. p. 37.

<sup>185</sup> Eschel Rhoodie was the Secretary of the South African Department of Information. He would later be involved in the Information Scandal

<sup>186</sup> E. Rhoodie. 1983. *The Real Information Scandal*. Pretoria: Orbis SA. pp. 28-29.

<sup>187</sup> Illustration found at <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/magazine/article3944900.ece>

<sup>188</sup> Nesbitt's book, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994*, should be used for further reading to get a comprehensive understanding of what impact the US public had on US foreign policy toward SA.

Reuther (president of the Congress of Industrial Organisations [CIO]; from church officials in organisations such as the Methodist Church Board of Mission to liberal Democrats such as Chester Bowles (former U.S. ambassador to India) and Adlai Stevenson (defeated Democratic candidate for the presidency in the 1952 elections); and from liberal senators such as John F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey to key opinion makers in the media such as John Gunther.<sup>189</sup>

The American presidential election in 1960 was possibly influenced by US foreign policy towards SA as there was a definite growth in civil rights movements in the USA and many focused on the anti-apartheid struggle. Nixon and Kennedy were the two main contenders for the presidency - Nixon supported Eisenhower's sympathetic stance towards SA, whilst Kennedy focused on helping anti-apartheid movements and referred to development in Africa in almost every speech to win the votes of African-Americans and members of civil rights movements.<sup>190</sup> It is possible that Kennedy's stance on Africa may have won him crucial votes during the elections although he was later uncomfortable with the idea that he became president because of the black vote.<sup>191</sup> Africans, African-Americans, members of civil rights movements and other liberals were optimistic about Kennedy's win but were to be disappointed in due course. Critics of the Kennedy administration argue that the Cold War kept Kennedy too busy to pay the necessary attention to apartheid.<sup>192</sup>

Kennedy argued that the best way to counter communism was to support African and Asian countries that requested assistance from the USA<sup>193</sup>. Kennedy also promised a harsher stance on colonial oppressors in Africa and especially in SA.<sup>194</sup> A method that Kennedy used to satisfy civil rights movements and liberals was to have personal meetings with African leaders. He furthermore focused on anti-racism in the USA and SA in his earlier speeches. To emphasise that he was serious about anti-racism, President Kennedy appointed a number of prominent civil rights activists and anti-colonialist liberals in the State Department who dealt with foreign policy and also appointed ambassadors who were sympathetic to the cause of freedom for Africans.<sup>195</sup>

Few Americans were aware of the developments in SA and conflicts in the rest of Southern Africa. According to Crocker, opposition to apartheid by US citizens was mostly confined to religious and academic pressure groups. He further argues that neither the Sharpeville massacre nor the Rivonia trials made any significant impact on US mainstream opinion about SA.<sup>196</sup>

Racial tension within the USA fuelled the US public's opposition to apartheid legislation as racial violence was still widely present in some southern states of the USA during the

<sup>189</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.151. Metrowich, op cit. p 105.

<sup>190</sup> Metrowich, op cit. p. 123. Lulat. p.153.

<sup>191</sup> K.L. Massie. 1997. *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc. p. 130.

<sup>192</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.31.

<sup>193</sup> Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 10.

<sup>194</sup> Metrowich, op cit. p. 103.

<sup>195</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.162.

<sup>196</sup> C. A. Crocker. 1993. *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood*. Parkland: Jonathan Ball Publishers. p. 21.

1960s.<sup>197</sup> African-Americans who criticised the USA on its duplicity regarding apartheid were in constant danger of arrest - a famous case was when the actor Paul Robeson, who was harassed and punished after he criticised the US government.<sup>198</sup>

The Sharpeville massacre reinvigorated the anti-apartheid movement in the USA. Prominent American figures such as Martin Luther King Jr, Eleanor Roosevelt and Harry Belafonte publically protested against the massacre.<sup>199</sup> The American Committee on Africa organised a lecture tour by Oliver Tambo, Deputy President of the ANC, during mid-960. Tambo was also invited as key note speaker at the Emergency Action Conference on SA to be held in New York from 31 May to 1 June 1961. However, the US government refused to grant Tambo a visa for the proposed visit to the USA. The Conference subsequently called on US consumers to boycott South African diamonds, lobster tails, wool, metal and furs in reaction and also called on US companies to divest from SA until the SA government ended apartheid. The Conference furthermore appealed to US labour unions not to offload ships carrying South African goods.<sup>200</sup>

According to Price, President Nixon won the election in 1968 due to his ability to satisfy the concerns of liberals and African-Americans on the one hand and the US business community on the other. He did this by publically criticising apartheid to satisfy the former while covertly supporting white minority rule to meet the needs of the latter.<sup>201</sup> Nixon's policy was thus to criticise apartheid publicly, but at the same time maintain relations with SA to preserve US economic, strategic and scientific interest in SA.<sup>202</sup>

In 1969 President Nixon requested that a study be done on the possible options his administration could take with regard to the USA's relations with SA. The National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Africa, under the guidance of Henry Kissinger, then the National Security Advisor, compiled a comprehensive review of US policy toward Southern Africa. The objectives of the study were to "cover the history and the future of major area problems, US interests and options for strategy and policy. The emphasis was to be on broadening the range of views and presenting alternatives."<sup>203</sup> The review, National Security Study Memorandum 39 (NSSM 39)<sup>204</sup> was a secret document that provided Nixon with five different policy options that the USA could take towards Southern Africa. President Nixon accepted Option 2<sup>205</sup> which detailed US strategic and economic interest as paramount whereas Options 1, 4 and 5 provided "context and intellectual balance."<sup>206</sup> Option 1 held that

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<sup>197</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.14.

<sup>198</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 129.

<sup>199</sup> Nesbitt, op cit. p. 38.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. p. 39.

<sup>201</sup> M. Price. 1977. *The Nixon years (1969-1974): Duplicity in United States policies toward Southern Africa*. PhD dissertation, St John University. Ann Arbor: University Microfilm International. p. 12.

<sup>202</sup> E. J. Morgan. 2006. *Our Own Interests: Nixon, South Africa, and Dissent at Home and Abroad*. *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 17. p. 477.

<sup>203</sup> E. Lockwood. 1974. National Security Study Memorandum 39 and the Future of United States Policy toward Southern Africa. *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*. Vol 4, No.3p.63.

<sup>204</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 41.

<sup>205</sup> Metrowich, op cit. p. 117. Davies, op cit. p. 8.

<sup>206</sup> Lockwood, op cit. p.63.



the USA was on the side of the white states of Southern Africa to protect and increase US economic and strategic interests while Option 4 proposed that the USA openly side with black states disregarding the economic and strategic benefits that this would entail. Option 5 proposed that the USA support no side at all, although potential inter-state, racial conflict could escalate. Option 3 on the other hand was just a “codification of the policy inherited from the Kennedy and Johnson era.”<sup>207</sup>

The US State Department was embarrassed when NSSM 39, a secret document, was leaked to the public and initially downplayed it as a preliminary study in order to convince the American public and the international community that USA policy had not changed in favour of apartheid.<sup>208</sup> According to Price, “[d]eception of the American public and of the world was boldly advocated in NSSM 39 and secretly contrived by the Nixon administration.”<sup>209</sup> By choosing Option 2, Nixon showed that he was in favour of a different approach toward SA compared to his two predecessors as Option 2 allowed his administration to “rebuild Washington’s friendship with SA that had become somewhat tarnished by the verbal denunciations of the apartheid system during the period of the Kennedy/Johnson administrations.”<sup>210</sup> Nixon acknowledged that the white minority in SA was an integral part of the country and that it was impossible to ignore them.<sup>211</sup> The only way to modify SA’s policies would have to be through the white-ruled government. This table indicates the pros and cons of option 2 of NSSM 39.

	<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
1.	It might reduce tensions between the black and white states in Southern Africa.	The relaxation in the USA’s stance might be interpreted by SA as a sign that the USA agreed with apartheid.
2.	US economic, scientific and strategic interests will be preserved.	Pro-Western leaders of black states might turn to the communist bloc for support.
3.	A section of white society might start to form friendships with the rest of black Africa.	SA would probably not change its racial policies.

<sup>207</sup> Lockwood, op cit. p.63. An important book to read if one requires more information on NSSM 39 is M.A. El-Khawas and B. Cohen. 1976. *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa: National Security Study Memorandum 39 (Secret)*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill.

<sup>208</sup> A. Seidman and N. Seidman. 1977. *U.S. Multinationals in Southern Africa*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House. p. 75.

<sup>209</sup> Price, op cit. p. iv.

<sup>210</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.178.

<sup>211</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 18.

4.	Communism will be curbed because of US aid to black states.	Extensive economic and diplomatic relations had to be cemented before SA could consider changing its policies.
5.	The increase in US aid to black states would give the USA leverage to influence decisions to attack SA.	Additional aid to black states might not convince them to support US policy.

**Table 2.1:** Pros and Cons of Option 2 of NSSM 39<sup>212</sup>

The 1970s saw a resurgence of US public criticism against apartheid. The South African Defence Attaché in Washington wrote in his June 1970 report that the media campaign against SA was increasing in the USA. He attributed the increase in criticism to US newspapers seeking to impress the UK government, that apartheid was deplorable and that the UK should reconsider selling military equipment to SA.<sup>213</sup> The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* wrote more negative articles about SA than about human rights violations in Cuba, North Korea, Cambodia, Uganda combined.<sup>214</sup>

In 1972 the American Committee on Africa, which had been organising anti-apartheid campaigns since the early 1950s, joined a number of US church groups to establish the Washington Office on Africa “a development that provided the U.S. anti-apartheid movement with [a] permanent institutional capacity with the capital.”<sup>215</sup> On the anniversary of African Liberation Day in May 1972 several thousand anti-apartheid supporters protested in front of the State Department in support of the Southern African nationalist movements<sup>216</sup> and were indicative that the average American was more aware of the atrocities that were happening in Southern Africa. The USA’s involvement in Southern Africa divided its people, but national interest was more important than morality and not even public opinion would change Washington’s foreign policy towards SA.<sup>217</sup>

<sup>212</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen, op cit. pp. 108-109.

<sup>213</sup> Report for June 1970: The Defence and Armed Forces Attaché, Washington, D.C. 1970. File nr MV 51/7 (Confidential). South African Military Archives. SAW Verdedigingsbeleid met ander lande van die wereld: Amerika.

<sup>214</sup> Rhodie, op cit. p. 31.

<sup>215</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.65.

<sup>216</sup> Crocker, op cit. p.20.

<sup>217</sup> F. H. Hartmann. 1978. *The Relations of Nations (5<sup>th</sup> edition)*. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers. p. 418.

## 2.3 USA-SA ECONOMIC RELATIONS

*“We have a clear and compelling interest in the natural resources and markets of Africa on terms consistent with Africa’s independence. We need energy fuels and minerals. We get little credit for our contributions to the multi-national organisations.”* David Newsom.<sup>218</sup>

### 2.3.1 The USA’s Ambivalent Economic Relations with SA

The USA took advantage of SA’s pro-capitalist attitude towards foreign investment.<sup>219</sup> By 1960, the USA was SA’s second largest trading partner and exports to the USA amounted to more than US \$3 billion per annum. Imports from the USA were just a little less than the amount of exports.<sup>220</sup> While the USA and SA tried to keep their economic relations as quiet as possible, US investments in SA were criticised throughout the 1960s.<sup>221</sup> The USA did not want to be seen as a country that enabled SA to flourish economically even though international economic sanctions were placed on SA and for its part SA did not want to publicise its economic relations with the USA out of concern that USA could be forced to disinvest if it did.<sup>222</sup>

On 22 March 1961, McGeorge Bundy wrote to the Secretary of State that the action by the Union of South Africa to withdraw from the British Commonwealth required a review of US policy towards SA. Bundy viewed SA’s withdrawal as an opportunity for the USA to seek investment outlets in SA in order to support the South African economy.<sup>223</sup> As SA was regarded as favourable for USA companies to invest in, its political stability, cheap labour and booming economy drew the attention of many US firms, through the 1960s.<sup>224</sup>

Scholars like Thomson argue that the Kennedy administration did not really want to promote economic trade and investment with SA and advised its officials involved in building economic relations not to engage in long-term trade and investment, because of the unstable political situation in SA. In essence the USA neither encouraged nor discouraged economic relations with SA, a phrase frequently used by subsequent US administrations during the apartheid era.<sup>225</sup>

From 1960 to 1970, US companies which invested in the South African economy posted average profits of around 16 percent per year compared to an average of 9,4 percent profits for the same period in the rest of the world.<sup>226</sup> Exports from the USA to SA increased from US\$ 288 million in 1960 to US\$ 563 million by the end of 1969.<sup>227</sup> On 18 January 1967 the US Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs, John McNaughton,

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<sup>218</sup> Price, op cit. p. 34.

<sup>219</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.11.

<sup>220</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.64.

<sup>221</sup> Coker, op cit. p.77. Guimarães, op cit. p. 126.

<sup>222</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.71.

<sup>223</sup> Howland (Ed), op cit. p.589.

<sup>224</sup> Seidman, and Seidman, op cit. p. 76.

<sup>225</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.41.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. p.59.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

wrote a memorandum to US Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara, wherein he explained how extended economic sanctions against SA would negatively impact on the USA. McNaughton argued that the USA would lose about US\$ 250 to US\$ 300 million per annum if extended economic sanctions were imposed on SA.<sup>228</sup> It would not be economically profitable for the USA to place further economic sanctions against SA.

NSSM 39 as discussed earlier in the chapter is a pertinent example of how Nixon favoured US economic and strategic interests in SA to the detriment of the ideals of democracy and human rights.<sup>229</sup> The Nixon administration disposed of Johnson's neutral economic policy towards SA in favour of a more aggressive investment approach and trade restrictions were lifted to make it easier for US companies to invest in SA.<sup>230</sup> According to NSSM 39, an increase in US business in SA "would permit the United States to undermine the apartheid system through enlightened business practices."<sup>231</sup> The USA thus tried to rationalise its increasing interest in SA's economy as a means to undermine apartheid, but in practice strengthen apartheid. This policy was nicknamed 'Tar Baby' from the "famous Joel Chandler Harris fable in which Brer Rabbit becomes stuck in Brer Fox's sticky trap, and from the beginning the doublespeak flourished."<sup>232</sup>

During March 1973, David Newsom, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, said that US investments in SA accounted for 16 percent of all foreign investment in SA and that the USA only invested one quarter of its total African investments in SA.<sup>233</sup> By 1973 US investment in SA totalled US\$ 1,240 million.<sup>234</sup> Based on these figures he argued that the USA would not go to extreme measures to protect its investments in SA, because it totalled so small an amount. He noted that "[t]he US government neither encourages nor discourages investment in South Africa."<sup>235</sup>

### 2.3.2. The Effect of the Sharpeville Massacre on Economic Relations

SA experienced a significant loss of foreign investment directly after the Sharpeville massacre. From March 1960 to June 1961, R248 million left SA, while gold and foreign exchange reserves fell from R315 million in January 1960 to R142 million by January 1961.<sup>236</sup> It was obvious that foreign investors had lost confidence in SA and that its economy would crumble. However, the USA helped revive SA's economy at this critical stage in its history.

The Sharpeville incident did not have a negative effect on economic relations between the USA and SA. While other countries withdrew their investments from SA after 21 March

<sup>228</sup> J.T. McNaughton. 1967. Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs to Secretary of Defence McNamara in Howland, op cit. p.695.

<sup>229</sup> Lockwood, op cit. p.63.

<sup>230</sup> Lockwood, op cit. p.179.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Morgan, op cit. p. 476.

<sup>233</sup> R. Davenport and C. Saunders. 2000. *South Africa: a modern history*. Basinstoke: Macmillan. p.415.

<sup>234</sup> Seidman and Seidman, op cit. p. 76.

<sup>235</sup> Price, op cit. p. 31.

<sup>236</sup> Davenport and Saunders, op cit. p.415.

1960, American “businesses increased their direct investments by \$23 million, and U.S. banks provided SA with \$85 million in emergency loans.”<sup>237</sup> South Africa’s economy could have experienced a heavy recession in the aftermath of Sharpeville was it not for the financial support of the USA.

A group of American investors prevented an economic recession in SA and Chris W. Engelhard in particular played a significant role in saving the South African economy from a recession. Engelhard had investments in SA before Sharpeville and to protect his interests arranged with other associates a private loan of US\$ 150 million. Engelhard, who was also a major donor to the Democratic Party in the USA, was able to convince the Kennedy administration to allow SA to withdraw US\$ 18, 8 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The personal loan from Engelhard and associates, the money from the IMF and another loan of US\$ 25 million from the World Bank was able to rescue SA’s economy during the early 1960s and restore investor confidence in SA.<sup>238</sup>

It was probably difficult for Kennedy to decide whether to cut diplomatic ties with SA after Sharpeville as he had to choose between reality and morality. As Marcum puts it:

To expect American business firms voluntarily to abandon the high profits of the South African economy to foreign competitors because of moral principle is, of course, to expect the improbable.<sup>239</sup>

### 2.3.3 The USA’s Contribution to the Growth of the South African Economy

According to Lulat, US businesses contributed to the growth of SA’s economy and the industrialisation of SA in three important ways: “by providing capital at economically critical times; by investing in economically strategic sectors, such as heavy industry and defence and by exporting crucial high-level technology and machinery to South Africa”<sup>240</sup>.

The American banking sector also played a crucial role in the growth of the SA economy. The First National City Bank of New York provided the South African Industrial Development Corporation with US\$ 5 million of revolving credit. Chase, First National and Dillon, Read and Co., provided SA with another US\$ 40 million during the early 1960s.<sup>241</sup> Not only the American banking sector supported the SA economy, as the petroleum industry also played a major role. Robinson argues that US companies supplied up to 40 percent of SA’s oil.<sup>242</sup> Caltex, Mobil and Exxon controlled almost half of SA’s petroleum market and SA allowed these companies to operate on condition that a large portion of their earnings be used to develop SA’s petroleum industry.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>237</sup>

Lulat, op cit. p.70.

<sup>238</sup>

Thomson, op cit. p.41.

<sup>239</sup>

J. A. Marcum. 1972. Southern Africa: Problems and U.S. Alternatives. *Intercom #70*. Center for War/Peace Studies. September 1972, p. 18.

<sup>240</sup>

Lulat, op cit. p.71.

<sup>241</sup>

Thomson, op cit. p.42.

<sup>242</sup>

Robinson in Mokoena (Ed), op cit. p. xv.

<sup>243</sup>

Lulat, op cit. p.71.

General Motors, Ford and Chrysler were the major US automotive corporations with interests in SA. These companies controlled at least a third of SA's automotive industry between 1960 and 1980 and their investment in SA rose from US\$ 19 million in 1960 to US\$ 200 million in 1970.<sup>244</sup> John Deere, Kodak, Kimberley Clark, General Electric, Goodyear, Motorola, Caterpillar and Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M) all provided South Africans with a variety of intermediate capital goods. Some of these companies were also involved in providing SA with military equipment and technology.<sup>245</sup>

In the information technology sector, companies like International Business Machines (IBM), Hewlett-Packard and Mohawk Data Sciences made large investments in the South African economy. The technology provided by these and other American technology companies allowed SA to run its apartheid bureaucracy successfully. American IT technology was also used by the SA Army, the BOSS and the SAP.<sup>246</sup>

By the end of the 1970s, more than half of the Fortune 500 companies had direct investments in SA.<sup>247</sup> There were numerous other American businesses in SA at the time. President Kennedy received complaints from US business owners that even verbal attacks on SA could damage their business interests in the country. On 4 July 1963 USA businessmen in SA boycotted an Independence Day function held at the US Embassy in SA. This function, which was to be multi-racial as ordered by Washington, blatantly juxtaposed South African racial policies of the time.<sup>248</sup> The businessmen feared that this function could anger the apartheid government and consequently then influence their businesses.

John Grimond, a British journalist, wrote that "American firms behave neither better nor worse, in general, than other foreign investors, they benefit from wage costs kept low by the restrictions on black labour unions and collective bargaining."<sup>249</sup> American companies were thus not really concerned about the atrocities of apartheid, as long as they had access to cheap labour to make larger profits.<sup>250</sup> As a result of the American investments in the South African economy, SA was regarded economically as the most powerful country on the African continent.<sup>251</sup>

### 2.3.4 Economic Sanctions against SA

Economic sanctions are potent means to coerce a country to change its policies. Sanctions can be defined as "The denial of customary interactions (strategic, economic, social); they are intended to promote social, political or economic changes [or all three simultaneously] in the target state; imposition of sanctions communicates the threat of more sanctions [or the

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Lulat, op cit. p.71.

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Thomson, op cit. p.59. Lulat, op cit. p.72.

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Lulat, op cit. p.73.

247

Ibid. p.64.

248

Lulat, op cit.p.164.

249

J. Grimond. 1975. *New York Times*, 12 September 1975.

250

Lulat, op cit. p.73. Thomson, op cit. p.59. Price, op cit. p.168.

251

Urnov, op cit. p. 14.

release of the embargo if the target state meets certain conditions.”<sup>252</sup> Those in the USA who supported economic sanctions against SA argued that sanctions would send a clear message to SA on how the USA felt over apartheid and persuade SA to abandon its apartheid policies.<sup>253</sup> Economic sanctions were also raised concerning the status of Namibia.<sup>254</sup>

However, the Kennedy administration was reluctant to implement economic sanctions against SA and several possible reasons are given as to why Kennedy refused to withdraw investments and trade with SA:

- The USA would lose an export market for its goods;
- The USA would lose income from investments in SA;
- Economic sanctions won't work; and
- Black people of South Africa would also be disadvantaged by economic sanctions.<sup>255</sup>

A more ominous reason for not implementing economic sanctions against SA was the military-strategic fall-out that sanctions could cause. A study by a Charles St. Thomas Group in 1969 found that only 10 percent of US businessmen with interests in SA felt that apartheid was immoral.<sup>256</sup>

President Johnson was just as reluctant to impose economic sanctions on SA as he was of the opinion that sanctions would be to the detriment of everyone.<sup>257</sup> His only attempt to impose economic sanctions against SA was given in the National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 295. NSAM 295 was a series of measures put in place by the USA to make contingencies for its strategic and economic interests<sup>258</sup> in SA if the country was to be placed under severe sanctions by the UN for the violation of human rights in Namibia. NSAM 295 stated that “[e]xisting policy regarding military sales to South Africa will be continued.”<sup>259</sup> With regards to the submarine deal that was initiated under the Kennedy administration<sup>260</sup>, NSAM 295 recommended that the deal be postponed in order to give the USA chance to evaluate the developments in SA before making any further choices.

<sup>252</sup> N. Crawford. 1999. Trump card or theatre? An introduction to two sanction debate in N. Crawford and A. Klotz *How Sanctions work: lessons from South Africa*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 5

<sup>253</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.164.

<sup>254</sup> F. De Wet and I. Liebenberg. 2014. Ideologies (new), economics, defence and people: Five decades in the state of South Africa. *Politeia* Vol 33, No 1. pp. 5-6. I. Liebenberg in C. Manganyi, I. Liebenberg and T. Potgieter (Eds). 2013. The Arms Industry, Reform and Civil-Military Relations in South Africa in *South Africa and Romania: Transition to Democracy and Changing Security Paradigms*. Durban: Just Done Publishing. p. 240.

<sup>255</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.39.

<sup>256</sup> Price, op cit. p.168.

<sup>257</sup> L. Grubbs. 2008. Workshop of a continent: American representation of whiteness and modernity in 1960's South Africa in *Diplomatic History*, Vol 32, Nr 3, June 2008. p. 420.

<sup>258</sup> See chapter 3 for more information about the USA's strategic and economic interests in SWA and SA.

<sup>259</sup> M. Bundy.1964. National Security Memoranda: NSAM 295: U.S. Policy Toward South Africa. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/nsams/nsam295.asp> (accessed 01 September 2011)

<sup>260</sup> This issue will be discussed in the section on military relations.

According to NSAM 295, the US government would also suspend applications for loans or investments from SA for the time being, but “[n]o policy of warning private investors not to invest in South Africa will be undertaken pending further developments.”<sup>261</sup>

President Johnson was criticised by factions in his administration with the issuing of NSAM 295. The Joint Chiefs of Staff for example regarded NSAM 295 as counter-productive to US interests and asked that the document should be revised. In order to show his real desire to at least restrain apartheid, Johnson ignored the criticism and continued with NSAM 295.<sup>262</sup>

The official stance of the Johnson administration regarding economic relations with SA was that the USA “neither encourages nor discourages investment in South Africa.”<sup>263</sup> The reasons for not implementing economic sanctions were outlined by US Assistant Secretary Williams:

- “The problems of the legal basis of such actions” (the USA did not regard apartheid as a threat to international peace);
- “The problem of economic effectiveness” (the USA thought that the SA economy was too strong to feel the effect of economic embargoes, so it would be useless);
- “The problem of psychological effectiveness” (economic sanctions would harm the good relations between the USA and SA so the USA would have less influence on SA to change its apartheid laws);
- It would be very expensive to enforce economic sanctions against SA.<sup>264</sup>

President Nixon was also not in favour of economic sanctions against SA. His opinion was that “...we do not believe that isolating them from the influence of the rest of the world is an effective way of encouraging them to follow a course of moderation and to accommodate change”<sup>265</sup> The Nixon administration however supported the notion that SA’s mandate over Namibia should be regarded as ‘illegal occupation’ and to show its support for the independence of Namibia, the USA discouraged businesses from investing there.<sup>266</sup> In sum, all the US administrations relevant to the period were aware that any form of reprimand against SA could influence US economic interests in SA.<sup>267</sup>

The next section of the chapter will explain in more detail why SA was an important strategic and military ally to the USA from 1960 to 1974. It will also show how the USA circumvented the arms embargo which it officially implemented against SA.

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<sup>261</sup> Bundy, op cit.

<sup>262</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.54.

<sup>263</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.57.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid. p.28.

<sup>265</sup> Price, op cit. p. 32. Morgan, op cit. p. 476.

<sup>266</sup> Seidman, and Seidman, op cit. p. 73.

<sup>267</sup> Morgan, op cit. p. 482. Thomson, op cit. p.12.



## 2.4. US MILITARY AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The USA was concerned that an outbreak of violence in SA would lead to a full blown interracial war. The USA was even more concerned that if racial violence broke out in SA, African-Americans could follow the example of their African counterparts in the areas of the USA where racial tensions were still strong. When the CIA learned that Umkhonto we Sizwe (the military wing of the ANC, also known as MK) was being supported by communist countries the implication was clear.<sup>268</sup> This, together with the possibility of communism gaining a foothold in Southern Africa, persuaded US decision makers to support SA militarily.<sup>269</sup>

American policy makers came to the conclusion that “[t]he defence of the free world required both continued military cooperation with South Africa and the appeasement of the new African nations’ anger about apartheid.”<sup>270</sup> The USA decided to cooperate militarily with SA on condition that SA’s security forces be used only to combat communism and not against SA’s freedom fighters.<sup>271</sup>

During mid-1963 Kennedy was pressed to make a difficult decision regarding to SA, namely whether or not to support an arms embargo against SA as laid out in UN Security Council Resolution 181.<sup>272</sup> On the one hand Kennedy had the support of the Pentagon to oppose the Resolution because of SA’s military-strategic value, especially SA’s agreement to have a missile tracking station in SA. The Pentagon felt that the tracking station was of such military importance to the USA that it had no other choice but to support SA as far as possible.<sup>273</sup> The USA State Department also advised him to decline to vote on the Resolution and USA Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was also cautious about announcing an arms embargo against SA. He acknowledged that SA was not respecting the human rights of black people in SA, but that Kennedy should not forget that far worse human rights violation were taking place in some communist countries or in countries with authoritarian rule with which the USA has friendly relations.<sup>274</sup>

### 2.4.1 The 1963 Arms Embargo

The Sharpeville massacre brought the violent nature of apartheid to the attention of the international community. Afro-Asian member countries of the UN consequently demanded an arms embargo against SA to avoid any further loss of life. At first the USA was not keen to support an arms embargo against SA and used its veto to avoid the embargo against SA but by November 1961 the USA came to the conclusion that by supporting SA militarily, it

<sup>268</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. pp. 169-170.

<sup>269</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 128.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Walker, op cit. p. 142.

<sup>272</sup> Liebenberg in Manganyi, Liebenberg and Potgieter (Eds), op cit. p. 240. A.S. Minty. South Africa’s military build up in P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1986. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House. p. 190.

<sup>273</sup> Howland, op cit. p.604.

<sup>274</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.36.

was creating a gap between the USA and the rest of the world. Pressure even came from the American public to break military ties with SA.<sup>275</sup>

The SA government made it clear that the USA would not be able to build and use a missile tracking station in SA if it did not help to establish SA's arms industry. This left American decision makers with a difficult choice regarding the imposition of an arms embargo against SA. If it was not for the tracking station, the USA would not have participated in naval exercises with the SA Navy during late 1961 or would not have considered SA's request for licenses for Lockheed aircraft.<sup>276</sup>

The US State Department released a memorandum in May 1962 which laid out American economic and military interests in SA, namely that the USA should continue to supply SA with military equipment that could oppose the communist agenda.<sup>277</sup> SA had the USA exactly in the position it wanted because SA portrayed itself as the opponent of communism in Africa and used the missile tracking station as leverage to continue obtaining military supplies from the USA.<sup>278</sup>

However, the international community and the US public became more and more persistent in their advocacy of an arms embargo against SA. The *Guardian* newspaper published in the UK for example made a case for the institution of an arms embargo while African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana criticised the USA for its duplicity in criticising apartheid yet provided SA with weapons to implement apartheid.<sup>279</sup> The USA did not feel it could implement an arms embargo against SA without hurting its economic and military interests in the region, and as a corollary economic and military sanction would not be the best way to force SA to end apartheid. Furthermore, the US government was of the opinion that sanctions would hurt black South Africans more than the whites. However, by November 1962 the USA realised it could no longer protect SA from international sanctions and embargoes.<sup>280</sup>

In November 1962 "the General Assembly by a huge majority recommended that member states take effective measures against South Africa, including the imposition of an arms embargo."<sup>281</sup> The USA again vetoed the resolution but by June 1963 was under increasing pressure to implement an arms embargo against SA. Even though Kennedy did not support an arms embargo, he realised that he would have to take a stand on apartheid if he wanted to maintain relations with the newly independent African countries that formed the OAU in May 1963.<sup>282</sup> The American Under Secretary of State, Mennen Williams, felt that "the time had come for a review of the United States' arms supply policy towards South Africa, as the

<sup>275</sup> A. Van Wyk and J. Grobler. 2001. The Kennedy administration and the institution of an arms embargo against South Africa, 1961-1963. *Historia* 46 (2), May 2001. p. 111.

<sup>276</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 59.

<sup>277</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 113.

<sup>278</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 126.

<sup>279</sup> Van Wyk, and Grobler, op cit. p. 114.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid. p. 115

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 349.

partial arms embargo policy was equivocal, not an effective measure against South Africa and considered as inadequate by the African countries.<sup>283</sup> He thought that an arms embargo would be the only way to demonstrate to the world that the USA disapproved of the apartheid government.

Not everybody in the Kennedy administration supported an arms embargo against SA. Alexis Johnson, the US Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, argued that the USA should remember that SA continued to support the USA in a number of military affairs and that a total arms embargo against SA could force Pretoria to develop ties with the communist world. He furthermore argued that the USA should only consider a total arms embargo if the all other arms suppliers agreed to the embargo, otherwise it would be a waste of time.<sup>284</sup>

From mid-1963 reports were circulating that the USA was considering an arms embargo against SA. On 3 July 1963, a South African newspaper, *Die Burger*, reported that the USA was considering a total arms embargo on SA.<sup>285</sup> At the same time the US Department of Defence undertook a study on the potential impact of an arms embargo on SA that concluded that it would severely harm relations between the USA and SA and could place US interests in SA at risk.<sup>286</sup>

However, on 17 July 1963 Kennedy decided that the tracking station and SA's ports were not as important as democracy and freedom in SA and approved the recommendation that no arms would be sold to SA after 31 December 1963.<sup>287</sup> The announcement of the arms embargo was to be kept secret until Kennedy saw an appropriate time to inform the UN on his decision.

Pretoria accused the USA of taking sides with Afro-Asian countries after it heard that the USA intended to ban the sale of arms to SA. The SA Ambassador to the USA, Willem Naudé, was of the opinion that "it was ironical that the United States and South Africa were fighting side by side during the Second World War, and now the latter would be refused the supply of arms against a common enemy."<sup>288</sup> The SA government also speculated that the reason why the USA was willing to impose an arms embargo was because other African countries that hosted US military bases had threatened to expel the USA if it kept supporting SA. Kennedy's response was that the embargo was to ensure that communism will not gain a foothold in Africa by keeping potential targets for communism happy.

On 7 August 1963 Washington announced that American companies were no longer permitted to sell military equipment to SA.<sup>289</sup> However the USA would still honour

<sup>283</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 118.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Anon. 1963. Wapens vir S.A.: V.S.A. dink aan verbod – Rooi inmenging gevrees. *Die Burger*, 8 July 1963. p. 1.

<sup>286</sup> Van Wyk, A. and J. Grobler, op cit. p. 118.

<sup>287</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 349.

<sup>288</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 122.

<sup>289</sup> G. Cawthra. 1986. *Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine*. London: International Defence and Aid

agreements on the sale of military equipment such as air-to-air missiles and torpedoes made before the arms embargo. The USA also stated that the embargo would be lifted immediately if SA was required for a combined defence effort.<sup>290</sup> The aim of the arms embargo was to force SA to re-evaluate its apartheid policies. The arms embargo was also implemented to demonstrate the USA's seriousness about ending apartheid to the Afro-Asian bloc in the UN. Soapy Williams confirmed this when he wrote to Dean Rusk that "[a] complete arms embargo is the least the U.S. can do to maintain our position of influence with the Africans."<sup>291</sup> Thus the implementation of the arms embargo portrayed the USA as the international leader in taking a stance against apartheid. According to Van Wyk and Grobler, "the United States embargo on the shipment of arms and military equipment to South Africa was not the product of an arms control objective, but rather an expression of United States anti-apartheid sentiment."<sup>292</sup>

During August 1970, the South African Defence Attaché in Washington wrote in his report to the Chief of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that there was a possible slackening in the application of the arms embargo. According to the Attaché, three of his sources close to the US administration had mentioned that the USA was prepared to sell VIP transport aircraft to SA. But one of his sources noted that the USA's willingness to sell the aircraft to SA was not a sign that the USA supported apartheid.<sup>293</sup> In his report in June 1970, the Attaché wrote that an official of the US Department of Commerce had mentioned that SA could bypass the restrictions of the arms embargo by getting a private firm like SA Airways to buy the aircraft and then the SADF could lease the jets from the private firm.<sup>294</sup>

Morgan argues that Nixon was willing to sell the aircraft to SA because Lear Jets, the manufacturer of the proposed aircraft, was in financial difficulty. If Lear Jets did not secure the South African contract it risked retrenching more of its employees. As Nixon was sympathetic towards jobless middle-class Americans he was adamant that the jets should be sold to SA to stave off further unemployment.<sup>295</sup>

#### 2.4.2 American Long-range Missile Tracking Facilities in SA

The issue surrounding tracking stations is an indication of the extent to which the USA was willing to break military ties with SA.<sup>296</sup> In August 1960 the US State Department agreed to a Department of Defence (DOD) proposal regarding the building of an American missile and satellite tracking station in SA. The American DOD regarded the establishment of such a

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Fund for Southern Africa. p. 90. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 138. Thomson, op cit. p.35.

<sup>290</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 128.

<sup>291</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.36.

<sup>292</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit.p. 129.

<sup>293</sup> Report for August 1970: The Defence and Armed Forces Attaché, Washington, D.C. 1970. File nr MV 51/7 (Confidential). South African Military Archives. SAW Verdedigingsbeleid met ander lande van die wereld: Amerika.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Morgan, op cit. p. 479.

<sup>296</sup> Bissel, op cit.p. 54.

missile and space vehicle tracking station essential to the security of the USA.<sup>297</sup> The US Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Raymond Hare, informed the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Hayden Williams, that the USA would not change its policy towards SA to secure the deal with SA. If SA insisted that the USA changed its policy, then the USA would abandon its plan to build the site in SA.<sup>298</sup> The USA wanted an agreement from Pretoria before 1 July 1961.<sup>299</sup>

Hare reiterated that the negotiations over the proposed missile site in SA should be kept secret from the public although he knew that the existence of the site would become public knowledge at some point and that the proposed building of the site would be criticised by the public. He recommended that a public information policy be implemented in case the public found out about the site. He insisted that the public information policy should be based on the following points:

- (a) “the purpose of the facility is research and development related to military purposes;
- (b) it is in no sense a military operational installation; and
- (c) a civilian contractor manages the facility which is maintained and operated by civilian personnel.”<sup>300</sup>

Foreign Affairs Minister, Eric Louw, raised three questions regarding the proposed site during a visit to the USA in October 1960. His first question was whether the facilities would be handed over and become South African property after the USA finished its research and operations at the site?<sup>301</sup> Secondly, Louw wanted to know if the facilities would be operated by South Africans and, lastly whether the USA intended to train South Africans to operate the facilities?<sup>302</sup> Louw moreover indicated that SA was wary to permit an American missile facility in SA because it would influence SA’s neutrality in the war between the USA and the USSR. Louw made it clear that SA would only take that risk if the USA gives the assurance that the facilities will be handed over to SA once US operations were finished.<sup>303</sup>

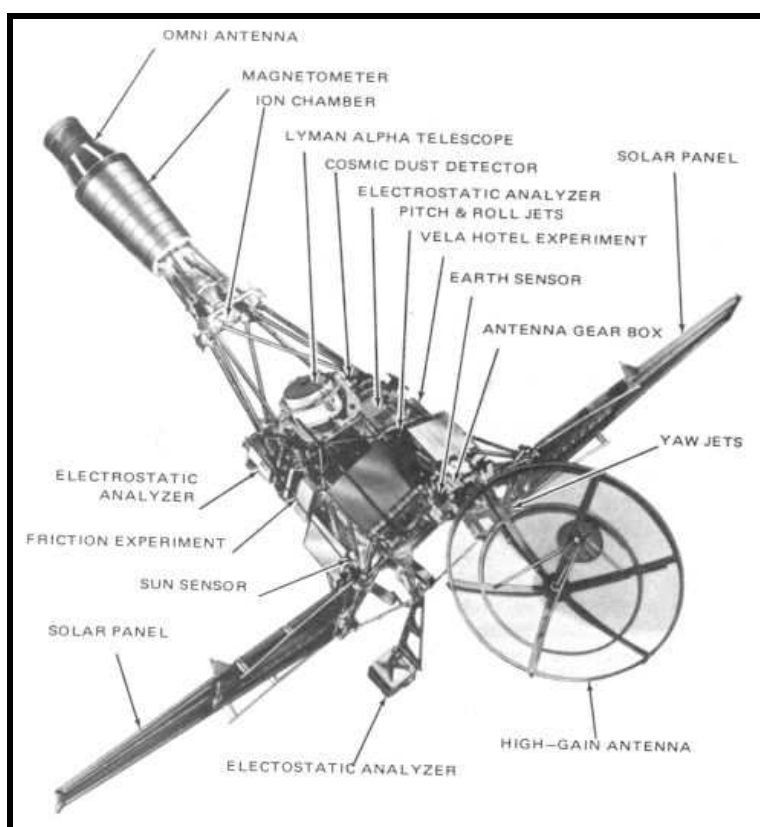
In early 1961 the USA began negotiations with the South African government over the establishment of the missile and space vehicle tracking station nearby Pretoria.<sup>304</sup> In a letter written on 16 March 1961, from the US Deputy Secretary of Defense, Gilpatrick, to the Under Secretary of State, Bowles, Gilpatrick contended that it would be inexorable to establish a missile and space vehicle tracking station in SA.<sup>305</sup> The facility would be critical to test US missiles that had a range in excess of 8050 kilometres. The site would furthermore be

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<sup>297</sup> Howland, op cit. p.586.  
<sup>298</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit. p.756.  
<sup>299</sup> Howland, op cit. p.590.  
<sup>300</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit. p.756.  
<sup>301</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 54.  
<sup>302</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit.p.758.  
<sup>303</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie (Eds), op cit.p.758.  
<sup>304</sup> Howland (Ed), op cit. p.586.  
<sup>305</sup> Bissel, op cit.p. 54.

critical for tracking test satellite launchings.<sup>306</sup> The American satellite operations that were dependant on the station in SA included Midas (which was of very high national priority), Advent, Ranger, Vela Hotel<sup>307</sup> and Saint.<sup>308</sup>

The other option that the USA considered was to use instrumentation vessels as an alternative to missile sites, although the vessels could not provide as reliable and precise readings as the land sites could. Furthermore, the vessels would not be able to "...support the specially equipped aircraft whose participation is also essential in the long-range missile tests."<sup>309</sup> It would take the USA three years to deliver the necessary equipment if it chose a maritime option, a delay which was unacceptable. The vessel option would cost the USA an additional US\$ 75 to US\$ 100 million in expenses.<sup>310</sup>



**Illustration 2.3:** The Vela-Hotel Satellite<sup>311</sup>

Although the USA considered building the missile facility either in Zanzibar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, SA was the only country able to satisfy all the requirements related to building the missile site. Most of the other countries would have required greater logistic operations than

<sup>306</sup> Howland (Ed), op cit.p.588.

<sup>307</sup> See figure 2.3

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.p.590.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid. p.589.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. p.590.

<sup>311</sup> Illustration found at [http://history.nasa.gov/SP-4210/pages/Ch\\_4.htm](http://history.nasa.gov/SP-4210/pages/Ch_4.htm)

in the case of building the site in SA. The US DOD thus did not have any viable alternative than to build the site in SA even if the USA differed on its racial policies.<sup>312</sup>

South Africa frequently used the missile tracking station as leverage when it needed support or aid from the USA.<sup>313</sup> On 16 September 1961, the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs, Williams, wrote in a memorandum to Gilpatric, that SA was pressurising the USA to co-operate on two matters or it may decide against the USA to build the missile tracking station. The first matter was the possibility that SA might need more funds from the IMF than originally expected. The USA initially agreed that SA could borrow US\$ 37, 5 million, but SA requested a further US\$ 37, 5 million.<sup>314</sup> Louw argued that SA needed more money to improve the economy and the welfare of South African blacks. It is important to remember that at this point, many countries disinvested from SA, because of the Sharpeville incident. Louw mentioned that he had heard a rumour that the USA would oppose the request and if that was the case SA would regard it as detrimental to their good relations. The second matter concerned SA's request to buy seven C-130 aircraft from the American company, Lockheed. According to Ambassador Satterthwaite, if the USA refused to sell the aircraft, it could influence negotiations on the missile tracking station negatively.<sup>315</sup> According to Bowles, the US public would assume that the aircraft would be used by SA to suppress internal disorder although the USA could not afford to lose the tracking station.<sup>316</sup>

The USA also felt compelled to participate in naval exercises with the SA Navy because it would openly publicise SA as an ally of the USA. However, if it were not for the leverage of the tracking station, the USA would not even consider the exercises.<sup>317</sup> South Africa also used the tracking station as leverage to gain American support for them to become a member of the UN Outer Space Committee. The USA realised that even with all its influence, it was impossible for SA to be elected as part of the Committee, yet the USA felt that if it did not support the SA in this regard it might jeopardise the tracking station.<sup>318</sup>

On April 24 1964, Washington distributed NSAM 295<sup>319</sup> to a number of state entities, including the administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NSAM 295 provided the USA with alternative plans if SA reacted to the 1963 arms embargo. NSAM 295 ordered NASA and the DOD to start the planning and construction phases for an alternative missile tracking station immediately if the facilities in SA be evacuated at short notice. NSAM 295 further stated that the DOD give priority to “accomplishing required site surveys and negotiating necessary base agreements and assisting in needed land acquisition recommended by the DOD and NASA.”<sup>320</sup> NSAM 295 urged that the negotiations and possible construction of a new site be kept secret from the American public for as long

<sup>312</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen, op cit. p. 170.

<sup>313</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 54.

<sup>314</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 126.

<sup>315</sup> Howland (Ed), op cit. p.602.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid. p.603.

<sup>317</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 126.

<sup>318</sup> Howland (Ed), op cit. p.604.

<sup>319</sup> NSAM 295 was discussed earlier in the chapter under the section of sanctions against SA.

<sup>320</sup> Bundy, op cit.

as possible. When NSSM 39 was released in 1969 the USA still regarded the tracking station as vital for future US planetary missions.<sup>321</sup>

By 1971 NASA had tracking stations in SA, but the US Congress pressurised NASA to withdraw from SA. Most of the pressure came from the Congressional Black Caucus after one of its co-founders, Charles Diggs, was appointed Chair of the House Subcommittee on Africa. Diggs organised a number of public debates on the USA's relationship with SA including topics on American business interest in SA and the implementation of the arms embargo against SA. These debates forced US government officials to explain American foreign policy towards SA in public. Another member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Charles Rangel, who also had a seat in the House Subcommittee on Aeronautics and Space Technology, organised a public hearing where NASA was requested to explain its ongoing use of the facilities in SA even though the SA government was suppressing the majority of its population. Although the Congressional Black Caucus generated public support for the anti-apartheid movement, it failed to force NASA to close the tracking station in SA as the required legislation did not garner enough support in the US Senate.<sup>322</sup>

### 2.4.3 The Use of South African Military Facilities

The USA was dependent on the use of South African infrastructure like airfields, harbours, communication, transportation and logistical facilities. In a message from Gilpatric to Bowles he said that:

[W]e must preserve the good will of the Union to assure the availability of its airfields and ports for the aircraft and ships which must operate in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans if long range missile tests are to be conducted effectively.<sup>323</sup>

On 7 June 1961 Bundy wrote a memorandum to Gilpatric to explain how important SA was to US naval and maritime interests. Bundy explained that SA had some of the best equipped harbours in the world and that SA ports would be able to accommodate up to 250 vessels if necessary. These harbours would be important to the USA if repair work needed to be done to damaged American vessels in the area. He reiterated that SA ports would be extremely valuable to the USA if the Suez Canal should ever be closed.<sup>324</sup> This was proved true when the Suez Canal was closed for American use from 1967 to 1975.<sup>325</sup> The ports would furthermore be able to support anti-submarine forces when necessary and for general navy operations by the US Indian Ocean Fleet.<sup>326</sup> Apparently SA also allowed the US Navy to

<sup>321</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen, op cit. p. 122.

<sup>322</sup> Bundy, op cit.

<sup>323</sup> Howland (Ed), op cit. p.591.

<sup>324</sup> Irwin, op cit. p. 911. Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit.110.

<sup>325</sup> V. Moukambi. 2008. Relations between the South African Defence Force and France, 1960-1990.

Unpublished dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History at the University of Stellenbosch. p. 18. Thomson, op cit. p.7.

<sup>326</sup> Howland (Ed), op cit. p.597.



conduct secret military operations at the naval base in Simon's Town.<sup>327</sup> South Africa's port facilities were thus important to the USA's Cold War strategy.<sup>328</sup>

Until 1967 USA used the port of Cape Town extensively during the Vietnam War as it became an important stop-off point for US Navy vessels that could not traverse the Suez Canal en-route to South East Asia.<sup>329</sup> Cape Town's port facilities saved American aircraft expensive at-sea refuelling when on the way to Vietnam.

The majority of the West's oil was also transported around the Cape of Good Hope. In 1972 Air Vice-Marshal S.W.B. Menaul advocated that NATO forces should make use of the ports at Simon's Town and Durban to enhance the security of the sea lanes around SA. A number of senior US Navy staff agreed that the ports of Simon's Town and Durban were crucial to protect the sea lanes.<sup>330</sup>

The use of SA's naval facilities was not without diplomatic controversy between the USA and SA. In 1965 the US State Department requested assurance from SA that the crew of the *USS Independence*, a US Navy aircraft carrier, would not be subject to apartheid laws when the vessel docked in Cape Town. After negotiations SA approved to provide multiracial entertainment to the crew but could not guarantee the USA that airports would be able to accommodate the needs of the black pilots aboard the aircraft carrier. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Muller, subtly suggested that the USA use only white air crews. The USA was reconsidering the visit when Muller said that in future "where groups of Americans wished to use SA facilities they would be required to observe SA rules..." The USA cancelled the visit of the *USS Independence*.<sup>331</sup> The USA made it clear that the incident had negatively influenced the relations between SA and the USA.

In 1967, SA convinced the USA that the *USS Independence* incident was in retaliation to the USA's decision to impose the arms embargo on SA in 1963 and that such an incident would not happen again. The USA accepted the explanation in good faith and scheduled the *USS Franklin D. Roosevelt* to dock in Cape Town in February 1967. On 1 April 1966 the Ambassador of SA to the USA elucidated in a top secret letter to the US Secretary of Foreign Affairs that the visit by the *USS Franklin D. Roosevelt* would be extremely valuable to strengthen ties with the USA.<sup>332</sup> The American News Digest reported in February 1967 that SA placed no racial conditions on the visit of the vessel to Cape Town. The article stated that all crew members would be able to go ashore.<sup>333</sup>

<sup>327</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 116.

<sup>328</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 56.

<sup>329</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 70. Thomson, op cit. p.52.

<sup>330</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 234. Thomson, op cit. p.8.

<sup>331</sup> Metrowich, op cit. p. 106 .Thomson, op cit. p.52.

<sup>332</sup> Besoek aan Kaapstad van V.S.A. – Vliegdekskepe. 1966. File nr MV 51/7 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. SAW Verdedigingsbeleid met ander lande van die wereld: Amerika.

<sup>333</sup> United States Information Services. 1967. Pretoria Puts No Racial Bar on U.S. Vessel's Visit. *American News Digest*. Vol 6, No 5. p. 14.

However, this developed into a diplomatic incident that drew widespread international interest once the vessel docked on 4 February 1967. South African officials explained that “the extent of the multiracial entertainment permitted by the South African government amounted only to a bus tour of Cape Town. American sailors would be subject to apartheid legislation at all other times.”<sup>334</sup> The USA negated the shore leave of the entire crew for the duration of the tour in SA and the incident ended all US naval visits to SA for the rest of the apartheid era.

#### 2.4.4 Military Equipment Provided by the USA

The 1960s saw a great expansion in the size and power of the SADF and military expenditure multiplied more than six times during the 1960s.<sup>335</sup> During June 1961, the Minister of Defence of SA, J.J. Fouché, gave three reasons why the SADF should be expanded:

- The SADF had to ensure the internal security of SA;
- A larger SADF would be a better ally to the West in its fight against communism; and
- A bigger defence force would be able to guard SA from any external invasion.<sup>336</sup>

To expand the SADF, SA needed a substantial amount of additional military hardware and it started to build up a competitive military-industrial complex that could deliver the required material.<sup>337</sup> However, SA still had to import weapons to protect SA from an external threat. During June 1962, the USA approved to provide SA with military equipment to counter the looming communist threat and the USA promised to consider other requests for military equipment. This was in exchange for SA’s permission to permit the USA to keep its deep-space tracking facility in SA.<sup>338</sup>

During March 1963, SA probed the possibility of purchasing submarines from the USA when the Chief of Naval Staff of the SA Navy requested the US Naval Attaché in Pretoria to ask the Kennedy administration about selling two to three attack submarines to SA. Ambassador Satterthwaite recommended that the submarines should be sold to SA if the USA had them available.<sup>339</sup> However, the deal eventually fell through when Kennedy was assassinated and his more liberal advisors were substituted while the arms embargo in December 1963 ended any hope for SA to purchase the submarines.

American corporations played a crucial role in providing SA with military materiel. Narmic wrote that “Pretoria is indebted to U.S. multinationals for much of its military prowess. The South African government today presides over a flourishing military-industrial complex that

<sup>334</sup> Thomson, op cit. p.52. Metrowich, op cit. p. 107.

<sup>335</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 201.

<sup>336</sup> Barber, op cit. p. 190.

<sup>337</sup> Cawthra, op cit. p. 89. Minty, op cit. pp. 184-185.

<sup>338</sup> Mokoena (Ed), op cit. p. xx.

<sup>339</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 117.

has been built and is being expanded with an array of hardware and know-how provided by U.S high-tech corporations.”<sup>340</sup> Lockheed, an American company also provided the SADF with Hercules aircraft whilst the embargo was in place<sup>341</sup> under the guise that they were civil aircraft.<sup>342</sup>

General Motors, Ford and Chrysler were involved in the manufacturing of “arms, such as rifles and artillery, jet engines for military aircraft, and tanks and armoured military trucks.”<sup>343</sup> General Electric produced a variety of armaments ranging from machine guns to missiles while American Information Technology (IT) companies provided SA with leading edge technology. IT systems were described as civilian equipment and so avoided the arms embargo.<sup>344</sup>

On 13 November 1969, the Chief of the SADF wrote to the South African Minister of Defence about a newspaper article published in Washington that the USA had sold military equipment to SA in total disregard of the arms embargo. The article stated that from 1962 to 1968 the USA had sold US\$ 35, 5 million in equipment to SA and US\$ 3, 1 million in 1969 alone. The Chief of the SADF pointed out that the precise figures of US military equipment sales to SA for 1962 to 1968 was US\$ 48,5 million for the SAAF and US\$ 663 193 for the SA Army while the correct figure for 1969 was US\$ 6.8 million. The equipment included C-130 aircrafts and equipment and spares for Dakota, Sabre, DC-4 and Harvard aircrafts. The USA also sold radio equipment and 200 Sidewinder missiles to SA during this period.<sup>345</sup>

The announcement by the Nixon administration in 1970 that the USA was willing to accept licence applications for the sale of VIP jets to SA signalled that the USA was more flexible on the arms embargo.<sup>346</sup> The VIP jets, which were small unarmed civil aircraft, could be modified to military specifications<sup>347</sup> and could be used in a reconnaissance role or even be used as light bombers if fitted with the necessary modifications.<sup>348</sup> In 1971 the USA agreed that the SADF could purchase light US aircraft for reconnaissance and training purposes, regardless of the embargo against SA. When the news became public, the US government issued a denial and David Newsom explained to the American public that the USA had not changed its policy with regard to the arms embargo. According to Newsom, the aircraft

<sup>340</sup> NARMIC.1984. *Automating Apartheid: U.S. Computer Exports to South Africa and the Arms Embargo*. Philadelphia, PA: NARMIC < American Friends Service Committee. p.49.

<sup>341</sup> Liebenberg in Manganyi, Liebenberg and Potgieter (Eds), op cit. p. 239.

<sup>342</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 159. H. Steyn, R. Van der Walt and J. Van Loggerenberg. 2003. *Armament and disarmament: South Africa's nuclear weapons experience*. Pretoria: Network Publishers. p. 2.

<sup>343</sup> Lulat, op cit. p.72.

<sup>344</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 161.

<sup>345</sup> Letter from C SADF to Minister of Defence: VSA Wapenverkope aan RSA. 1969. File nr MV 51/7 (Confidential). South African Military Archives. SAW Verdedigingsbeleid met ander lande van die wereld: Amerika.

<sup>346</sup> Lockwood, op cit. p.63.

<sup>347</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 160. Bissel, op cit. p. 51.

<sup>348</sup> Price, op cit. p. 149

would be used by SA for non-military purposes and not strengthen SA's military capacity.<sup>349</sup> Table 2.2 shows the number of aircraft that the USA sold to SA.

<b>1965</b>	235	<b>1969</b>	284
<b>1966</b>	208	<b>1970</b>	180
<b>1967</b>	333	<b>1971</b>	135
<b>1968</b>	300	<b>1972</b>	144

**Table 2.2:** US Aircraft Sales to SA, 1965 – 1972.<sup>350</sup>

It is clear that American companies were not excessively concerned about the arms embargo against SA as they provided the SADF with military equipment and technology under false pretences or plausible denial as it was known.<sup>351</sup> Table 2.3 depicts some of the major weapon systems delivered to SA by the USA after 1970 in violation of the UN arms embargo.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Approximate date of delivery</b>
Lockheed F-104 G/Interceptor	1973
Lockheed L-100 transport	post 1971
Augusta Bell 205A helicopter	post 1970
M-47 Patton I Tank	1971
M-113A1 armoured personnel carrier	1973-74
V-150/200 Commando personnel carrier	post 1971
M-109 155mm self-propelled gun	1972-73

**Table 2.3:** Major US weapon systems delivered to SA after 1970.<sup>352</sup>

<sup>349</sup> Price, op cit. p. 157.

<sup>350</sup> Coker, op cit. p. 104

<sup>351</sup> NARMIC, op cit. p.71.

<sup>352</sup> US arms transfers to South Africa in violation of the U.N. voluntary arms embargo. UN

### 2.4.5 Intelligence Exchange between SA and the USA

The USA and SA were on good terms concerning intelligence sharing from 1960 to 1974 as the USA regarded this as an imperative part of its strategic collaboration with SA. After SA withdrew from the Commonwealth in 1961, the USA observed a decline in the quality of intelligence on Southern Africa that they received from the UK. To remedy the situation the USA decided to increase its intelligence collection effort in Southern Africa and began to monitor events and individuals in Southern Africa which it deemed important to the national security of the USA. As a result American and South African intelligence agencies formed a close bond to the extent that Ambassador Naudé noted that in 1961 SA had many friends within the CIA. There was also speculation that a CIA operative had played an important role in arresting Nelson Mandela.<sup>353</sup>

In 1970 Project Advokaat was started at Silvermine in Cape Town “which was essentially a data collection centre, with sensor hook-ups, for monitoring traffic around the coasts of South Africa.”<sup>354</sup> Project Advokaat was initiated to construct a military communications network that “...covers the Cape sea route and also the African continent and the oceans west to South America and east to Bangladesh.”<sup>355</sup> There is evidence that the USA delivered military equipment to SA in support of Project Advokaat though the USA supported the arms embargo against SA at the time. Siemens and Telefunken were the two main companies that provided equipment as part of the project. The equipment provided by the two companies included short-wave transmitters, relay stations, telephones, telex stations and computers that could analyse collected data.<sup>356</sup> Project Advokaat was exceedingly important to the USA intelligence services because it could monitor all the movements of the Soviet Navy around the Cape as the Suez Canal was closed at the time.<sup>357</sup> Project Advokaat were not just used for naval purpose but was also used to identify and monitor the movements of the black population of SA. It was basically an early warning system.<sup>358</sup> “The Advokaat military communications system was inaugurated in March 1973.”<sup>359</sup>

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

The Kennedy administration collaborated with SA as far as it was politically possible and although the arms embargo implemented by the Kennedy administration was a setback to SA it merely confirmed that the USA wanted to demonstrate its opposition to apartheid. The Kennedy administration followed a dual strategy with regard to SA: the USA tried not to assist SA in enforcing apartheid and to voice its condemnation of apartheid, although it still needed SA as a strategic and economic partner. Kennedy’s intention to sell the submarines to SA even though SA was under an arms embargo is evidence to this. The Kennedy

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<sup>353</sup> Centre Against Apartheid, Notes and Documents 27/78, September 1978.

<sup>354</sup> Grubbs, op cit. p.432. Thomson, op cit.p.43.

<sup>355</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 57. Cawthra, op cit. p. 91.

<sup>356</sup> Price, op cit. p. 38.

<sup>357</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 182.

<sup>358</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>359</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. pp. 182-183.

<sup>359</sup> Minty, op cit. p. 180

administration tried to balance its relationship with SA by voicing its abhorrence of apartheid yet cooperated with SA on economic, strategic and military issues whenever it thought that they would be beneficial to the USA.

Although Johnson did not make many changes to Kennedy's foreign policy towards SA he was more consistent in his policies to protect the human rights of Africans in SA. Strategic interests were sacrificed to demonstrate that the USA was serious about human rights violations in SA and Johnson made a more concerted effort than Kennedy to end apartheid especially with his introduction of NSAM 295.

The USA changed its policy from advocating a pro-black government in SA to supporting the apartheid government covertly during three successive American presidential terms. In particular, the Nixon administration deceived the American public about USA foreign policy towards SA. NSSM 39 shaped Nixon's policy toward SA which recognised that whites were to stay in power in SA. In short, the Nixon administration went out of its way to protect USA interests in SA and ignored human rights violations against the black population of SA. Nixon's official foreign policy of non-violence was hypocritical and was a ruse to placate the rest of the world about USA involvement in SA. Under Nixon the USA "recognized the violence inherent in apartheid, but it would not support the violence necessary to end it."<sup>360</sup>

American companies provided the apartheid government with the necessary IT technology for computers for nuclear research as well as to monitor the black population of SA. American banks provided SA with the necessary loans and finances to support the economy of the apartheid government while US vehicle manufacturers assisted South Africa's security forces with the means to oppress the majority of its inhabitants. American transnational corporations also helped to maintain the SA's military-industrial complex. The profits that American businesses made in SA also played an important role in influencing USA foreign policy towards SA. As a result, the USA remained cautious when the international community called for economic sanctions against SA.

During this period the USA favoured good relations with SA as economic considerations were more important than political and moral considerations. As the USA viewed the apartheid debate through the lens of the Cold War SA's "racial policies were not so much morally reprehensible as they were strategically inconvenient."<sup>361</sup>

From the South African perspective the arms embargo was a mixed blessing. The ban on the import of weapons allowed SA to become self-sufficient in arms as the arms embargo spurred SA to develop its own production capacity. The result was that the arms embargo prompted SA to develop a world-class military capacity in a short period of time.

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<sup>360</sup> Price, op cit. p. 166.

<sup>361</sup> Irwin, op cit. p. 911.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION: USA-SA RELATIONS FROM 1975-1989

The Cold War between the superpowers had reached its climax by 1975 and US foreign policy toward SA was largely formulated in the context of the Cold War.<sup>362</sup> Cuba's military presence in Angola further increased concerns of a communist takeover in Southern Africa. Bissel argues that for the USA 'the concerns about the future of South Africa remained largely as they were in the 1960s: racial conflict leading to instability, the security of the South African contribution to Western economic strength and continuing puzzlement over the real geostrategic value of South Africa in the East-West contest.'<sup>363</sup>

The Watergate scandal and Nixon's subsequent resignation from office, combined with Portugal's withdrawal from its colonies in Africa signalled a new era in US foreign policy toward SA. The Democratic Party in the USA expected to win the 1976 elections, and then prepared to implement a new policy for SA after the elections. One of the most prominent Democrats, Anthony Lake, who would be given the post of Head of the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department in 1977, had the following view on USA foreign policy towards SA:

Kissinger's implementation of NSSM-39 had failed dismally; South Africa was becoming more 'enlightened', with promises of loosening the reins of apartheid, but those promises had nothing to do with U.S. policy, rather the threat of increased pressure on Rhodesia and South Africa from black-ruled Mozambique has been the key to these changes in southern Africa; the United States cannot force change in South Africa and should simply "set clear limits on the scope of our relations with South Africa" until blacks obtain full rights; and in the meantime, U.S. policy should respond to the views of concerned blacks in America.<sup>364</sup>

American foreign policy toward SA was expected to change, but Washington was also concerned about what their electorate and potential voters would think about the USA's relations with SA. The opinion of the American public especially the African-American groups and individuals like Jessie Jackson, had to be considered more carefully when deciding on a policy towards SA. There were indications that the USA was going to side with black South Africans in an increasing fashion. South Africa's perception on its relations with the USA from 1975 to 1990 was influenced by the USA media's increasingly negative stance on SA. Although SA wanted to change this perception, Pretoria did not want to alter apartheid policies to counter the negative publicity in the USA. By the end of 1977 the USA-SA relations became more strained as a result of the Carter administration's foreign policy approach towards SA and Vorster and Botha began to rebuke the USA for this change.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> J.L. Gaddis. 2005. *The Cold War*. London: Allan Lane. p. 14. F.A. Guimarães. 1998. *The Origins of The Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict*. New York: St Martin's Press. pp. 122-123.

<sup>363</sup> R. E. Bissel. 1982. *South Africa and the United States: The Erosion of an Influence Relationship*. New York: Praeger Publishers. p. 15.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>365</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 36.

Relations between Pretoria and Washington were relatively cold during the 1980s. The USA initially supported SA to counter the communist threat in Angola, but left SA on its own. The USA withdrew from Angola after the US Congress accepted the Clark Amendment in terms of which the USA would end assistance to UNITA against the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).<sup>366</sup> USA-SA military relations from 1974 to 1990 centred on the conflict in Angola. This chapter will show how the USA intervened in Angola although the Border War as such will not be discussed in detail. The focus will instead be on more general USA-SA political, economic and military relations over this period and the USA's involvement in SA's nuclear development which will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter.

### 3.2 POLITICAL RELATIONS

*'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...?' (Ronald Reagan)*<sup>367</sup>

Nixon's foreign policy toward SA was based on Option 2 of NSSM 39 and remained the same when Ford took over the presidency in 1974, as Henry Kissinger continued to pursue the policy as USA Secretary of State. President Ford did not immediately focus a lot of attention to the situation in Southern Africa as he had to restore confidence in the Presidency in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal. However, by the end of 1974, the Ford administration came to the conclusion that its policy on Southern Africa could no longer be based on NSSM 39 as the situation in Southern Africa had changed with the withdrawal of Portugal from its colonies in Southern Africa.<sup>368</sup> The withdrawal of Portugal from Angola and Mozambique left SA surrounded by black-ruled countries and as the USA expected that SA and Rhodesia would be attacked from Angola and Mozambique, NSSM 39 could no longer be used as a guideline to determine USA foreign policy towards Southern Africa.<sup>369</sup>

It became clear in June 1975 that the Ford administration would maintain the sympathetic stance towards SA which Nixon initiated when the USA together with the UK and France vetoed a decision in the Security Council to impose a mandatory arms embargo on SA. The aim of the embargo was to force SA to grant independence to SWA.<sup>370</sup> The US Ambassador to the UN explained that the reason why the USA vetoed the arms embargo was because the USA believed that mandatory sanctions should only be placed on countries which are a

<sup>366</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed). 1978. *U.S. Military Intervention in Southern Africa*. Boston: South End Press. p. 45. M. Malan. 2006. *My lewe saam met die SA Weermag*. Pretoria: Pretoria Boekhuis. p.201. A. Urnov, 1988. *South Africa Against Africa*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. p. 238.

<sup>367</sup> President Ronald Reagan interviewed by Walter Cronkite of CBS News, Washington DC, 3 March 1981. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=43497&st=&st1=>. (Accessed 03 December 2011).

<sup>368</sup> F. R. Metrowich. 1977. *South Africa's New Frontiers*. Sandton: Valiant Publishers. p. 79.

<sup>369</sup> M. A. El-Khawas and B. Cohen. 1976. *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa: National Security Study Memorandum 39 (Secret)*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill. p. 60.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid, p. 54. P. H. Katjavivi. 1990. *Namibia: A History of Resistance in Namibia*. New Jersey : Africa World Press Inc. p. 114.



serious threat to peace. He explained that while the USA did not agree with everything that SA did in SWA he was of the opinion that SA was not yet a critical threat to peace.<sup>371</sup>

The election of Jimmy Carter as President of the USA in late 1976 was a turning point in American foreign policy towards SA especially regarding black South Africans.<sup>372</sup> Several factors suggested that Carter would support the black community in SA<sup>1</sup> namely:

- The black community in the USA played an important role in his election victory;
- He was regarded as an advocate of human rights;
- During his election campaign Carter maintained that he would apply open diplomacy;
- Carter was a religious fundamentalist.<sup>373</sup>

Pretoria was concerned that Carter was not serious about countering communism in Southern Africa. As a result SA focused its foreign policy on other countries which also felt rejected by Carter's foreign policy and also feared communist expansion, in particular Israel, Argentina, Chile, Taiwan and Paraguay.<sup>374</sup> During April 1977, the Minister of Information of SA, Connie Mulder, hinted in Parliament that SA was looking for new friends, especially those that were anti-Marxist and anti-American.<sup>375</sup>

In May 1977 the Carter administration proposed that SA adopt a 'one man-one-vote' definition of democracy that would inevitably lead to black majority rule in SA. Carter had made it clear from the beginning that he supported majority rule in SA<sup>376</sup> and SA under majority rule would be less prone to Soviet adventurism than a white-ruled SA.<sup>377</sup> However, many South Africans were of the opinion that the Afrikaners would rather risk the destruction of Afrikanerdom than accept black majority rule in SA.<sup>378</sup> American Vice President, Walter Mondale, informed the South Africans that they should know the three issues of Rhodesia, Namibia and apartheid are linked. Vorster would have to cooperate on all three issues at the same time and could no longer expect the USA to ignore what he was doing in SA in return for cooperation on SWA or Rhodesia.<sup>379</sup>

<sup>371</sup> D. B. Ottaway. 1975. "South Africa Cheered by US Move", *The Washington Post*. 5 June 1975.

<sup>372</sup> J. E. Davies. 2007. *Constructive Engagement? Chester Crocker & American Policy in South Africa, Namibia & Angola 1981-8*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. p. 9.

<sup>373</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 31.

<sup>374</sup> I. Liebenberg in C. Manganyi, I. Liebenberg and T. Potgieter (Eds). 2013. *The Arms Industry, Reform and Civil-Military Relations in South Africa in South Africa and Romania: Transition to Democracy and Changing Security Paradigms*. Durban: Just Done Publishing. p. 239. S. Polakow-Suransky. 2010. *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. p. 103. Bissel, op cit. p. 18. A.S. Minty. South Africa's military build up in P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1986. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House. p. 187.

<sup>375</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 38.

<sup>376</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>377</sup> A. Thomson. 2008. *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994: Conflict of Interest*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 99.

<sup>378</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 34.

<sup>379</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 93.

To convince the American public that he was serious about racial equality, Carter appointed vocal advocates of racial equality in SA to senior posts within the US State Department including Andrew Young as US Ambassador to the UN, Cyrus Vance as Secretary of State<sup>380</sup> and Anthony Lake as Director of Policy and Planning.<sup>381</sup> To show his commitment to eradicate racial and social injustices in SA, the Carter administration outlined the following points that SA should follow if it wanted friendly relations with the USA:

- “Take timely steps to eliminate the policy and practice of apartheid and grant to all elements of the population equal rights including a full and free voice in their destiny.
- Terminate all systems and plans under whatever name which forcibly separate elements of the population on the basis of race whether within a unitary state or in the form of separate political units.
- Bring its illegal occupation of Namibia to a speedy conclusion.
- Facilitate the holding in Namibia on a territory-wide basis of free elections under the aegis of the U.N and refrain from any steps inconsistent therewith.
- Comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions on the questions of Namibia and Rhodesia.”<sup>382</sup>

By August 1977, it was evident that Vorster was no longer going to cooperate with the USA on various issues such as SWA and Rhodesia and used various forums to criticise the USA especially during his re-election campaign. The Carter administration took the following measures to maintain pressure on SA:

- The USA withdrew its Naval attaché from SA;
- The USA recalled its commercial officer in SA;
- All exports of spares and the maintenance of past military equipment were barred;
- All exports of grey area military equipment were banned.
- Bank loans and credit to SA were withdrawn.<sup>383</sup>

Even though Carter took these steps against SA, he still maintained that any African sponsored resolutions that were harsher than the above would be vetoed by the USA.<sup>384</sup> While Pretoria was not pleased with the measures that the Carter administration announced

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<sup>380</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 141.

<sup>381</sup> A. Van Wyk and J. Grobler. 2006. The Carter Administration and the Institution of the 1977 Mandatory Arms Embargo against South Africa: Rhetoric or Active Action. *Historia*. Vol 51, No 1, May 2006. p.164. Metrowich, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>382</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 95.

<sup>383</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 166. Davies, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>384</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 36.

it was also not unduly perturbed. The measures simply forced SA to buy military equipment from Israel and France or from clandestine sources. By the end of 1977, it appeared that any type of relationship in the remaining three years of Carter's presidency would be fragile at least.<sup>385</sup>

However, the Carter administration's relations with SA were not without surprises. In one instance it was revealed "that South African sugar interests had been passing favours and money to a number of U.S. congressmen in charge of establishing import quotas for sugar into the United States."<sup>386</sup> The Sugar Association provided some Congressmen with free air tickets and also made contributions to some of their election campaigns a scandal that almost drew as much attention as that of Watergate. Urnov accurately described Carter's relationship with SA as "...a family quarrel whose participants never for a moment forgot their deep mutual interest in each other."<sup>387</sup>

### 3.2.1 The Information Scandal: The Secret War of Words<sup>388</sup>

From late 1978 to mid-1979 revelations of how the South African Department of Information used propaganda to change SA's image domestically and internationally came to light. It was to be known as the Information Scandal or Muldergate; the Department of Information funded 134 secret projects that were supposed to change SA's image in the international community. Newspapers such as the *Washington Star*<sup>389</sup>, the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Citizen* were financed to portray a positive image of SA,<sup>390</sup> while other projects that formed part of the 'Information Scandal' were the funding of "...church organisations in South Africa, the United States, Britain and Germany; two major front organisations in Britain and the US each with more than 30 000 members..."<sup>391</sup>

The aim of the information operation was to penetrate the internal political process of the USA in order to change USA foreign policy toward SA through domestic channels.<sup>392</sup> This type of 'illegal diplomacy' was motivated because President Carter had closed the normal channels of diplomatic bargaining indirect forms of influence were viewed by SA as the only way to change USA foreign policy toward SA.<sup>393</sup> Vorster defended the scandal by arguing

<sup>385</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa. 1981. *South Africa: Time Running Out*. Berkeley, Ca: University of California Press. p. 358.

<sup>386</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 38-39. R. Goldstone. 2005. Ambiguity and America: South Africa and US Foreign Policy. *Social Research*, Vol 72, Nr 4. p. 819.

<sup>387</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 143.

<sup>388</sup> Les de Villiers book, *Secret information* gives the reader an in depth understanding of how he became involved in the Information Scandal. The book is subjective and may be an effort by de Villiers portray himself a victim instead of culprit. De Villiers was Deputy Secretary of the Department of information and was one of the key players of the information scandal.

<sup>389</sup> The operation to purchase part-ownership of the *Washington Star* was known as Operation Cradock. E. Rhodie. 1983. *The Real Information Scandal*. Pretoria: Orbis SA, p. 27.

<sup>390</sup> R. K. Massie. 1997. *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Publishing Group Inc. p. 453.

<sup>391</sup> J. Sanders.2006. *Apartheid's Friends: The Rise and Fall of South Africa's Secret Service*. London: John Murray. p.103.

<sup>392</sup> Sanders, op cit. p. 94.

<sup>393</sup> Rhodie, op cit. p. 58.

that as SA's enemies used unconventional methods against SA, the only way to counter-attack was to use similar means.<sup>394</sup>

During the mid-1960s Eschel Rhoodie (later to be the South African Secretary of Information) was a diplomat in the USA and became close friends with an ex-CIA agent known as Mr Brown.<sup>395</sup> Rhoodie explained to Brown that SA would only survive if Pretoria launched an aggressive propaganda effort. Brown convinced Rhoodie that SA should "use government resources to secretly finance anti-apartheid groups and radical student movements and then infiltrate them."<sup>396</sup> Brown further told Rhoodie that a propaganda campaign could only be successful if the media, or some of the most senior people in the media, were controlled by the government. The scandal was uncovered as a result of investigations on how the Rhoodie, could afford his standard of living on his civil service salary. Internal investigations found that he received major funds with which he enriched himself.

During early 1973, Rhoodie and Connie Mulder (Information Minister) sought to purchase various publications, publishing houses and film studios that could be used to portray SA in a positive light to the broad public. They also helped finance the political campaigns of some USA politicians who would be able to replace anti-apartheid Democrat Party members in the American Congress.<sup>397</sup> In January 1974 Mulder and Les De Villiers (one of Rhoodie's deputies) met Ronald Reagan (who was Governor of California at the time) Vice President Gerald Ford and the editorial board of the New York Times.<sup>398</sup> Between 1973 and 1978 Rhoodie and Mulder spent round about R85 million in their propaganda effort.<sup>399</sup>

When Rhoodie was confronted with the evidence against him, he implicated Mulder. Rhoodie fled to France to avoid prosecution and left Mulder to deal with the scandal.<sup>400</sup> Rhoodie was later apprehended on the French Riviera and extradited to SA where he was sentenced to six years in prison. He appealed, won the appeal case and moved to the USA.<sup>401</sup> An ex-BOSS official was of the opinion that Rhoodie was allowed to immigrate to the USA, because he was involved with the CIA for many years.<sup>402</sup> Les de Villiers also immigrated to the USA.

Mulder was supposed to take over the leadership of the National Party but his involvement in the scandal tarnished the National Party which was renowned for the honesty of its members. Mulder consequently lost his position as Minister of Information and resigned from Parliament. Further investigations implicated the Head of the BOSS, Hendrik van den Bergh,

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<sup>394</sup> L. E. S. De Villiers. 1980. *Secret Information*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers. p. 177.

<sup>395</sup> Sanders, op cit. p. 95.

<sup>396</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. pp. 114-115.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid. p. 115.

<sup>398</sup> Sanders, op cit. p. 97

<sup>399</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 115.

<sup>400</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 40. Massie, op cit. p. 453.

<sup>401</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 117.

<sup>402</sup> Sanders, op cit. p. 113.

and the President of SA, J.B. Vorster.<sup>403</sup> Vorster resigned on 4 June 1979 as a result.<sup>404</sup> According to Rhodie, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of SA P.W. Botha, was well aware of the propaganda war, but was found not guilty.<sup>405</sup>

While many countries embark on propaganda operations to portray a positive image to the world when the scandal broke, the world's attention was focused on the USA and SA at a time when the USA would have preferred to maintain a low profile in its relation with Pretoria.<sup>406</sup>

### 3.2.2 The Reagan Era (1980s)

The South Africans viewed the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the USA in November 1980 as a ray of hope that USA-SA relations would be restored. Reagan was regarded to have a "pro-white" understanding of the South African situation.<sup>407</sup> During his election campaign Reagan often hinted that relations with SA would be high on his priority list.<sup>408</sup> In general, Reagan was determined that the USA should be in alliance with all countries opposed to communist expansionism.<sup>409</sup>

According to Thomson, Reagan's main foreign policy objective was 'to rid the United States of its "Vietnam Syndrome" even if this meant resumption with the confrontation of the Soviet Union.'<sup>410</sup> While his administration would still oppose apartheid<sup>411</sup> Reagan was not afraid to admit in public that he intended to support SA in its war against communism.<sup>412</sup> The Reagan administration constantly proclaimed that the USSR was inflaming the conflicts in Southern Africa and that the liberation movements were attacking Namibia and SA. Instead of admitting that the racist government of SA was preventing the Namibian people from gaining independence as well as oppressing the black people of SA.<sup>413</sup> Though Reagan acknowledged the importance of destroying apartheid and granting SWA independence, his main goal was to curb Soviet influence in Southern Africa.<sup>414</sup>

As a result of the hostility between the USA and SA over the previous years under the Carter administration, the 'first six months of relations between a reform-orientated government in Pretoria and the new conservative establishment in Washington was a pattern of

<sup>403</sup> M. Rees and C. Day. 1980. *Muldergate: The Story of the Info Scandal*. Johannesburg: Macmillan Publishers. p. 1. Sanders, op cit. p. 96.

<sup>404</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 40.

<sup>405</sup> Rhodie, op cit. p. 26.

<sup>406</sup> Sanders, op cit. p. 101.

<sup>407</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 7. Rhodie, op cit. p. 25.

<sup>408</sup> Y. G-M. Lulat. 2008. *United States Relations with South Africa: A Critical Overview from the Colonial Period to the Present*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. p. 74.

<sup>409</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 30. Urnov, op cit. p. 216. K.M. Campbell. Soviet Policy in Southern Africa: Angola and Mozambique in R.J. Bloomfield (Ed). 1988. *Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique*. Michigan: Reference Publications. p. 90.

<sup>410</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 114.

<sup>411</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 42-43.

<sup>412</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 485. W. Minter. USA/SA in the Reagan Era in P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1986. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House. p. 282.

<sup>413</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 217.

<sup>414</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 30.

negotiations reflecting remarkably equal status between the parties.”<sup>415</sup> The first foreign policy objective of the USA was to regain the trust lost during the Carter administration.<sup>416</sup> To regain this trust, Reagan invited Botha to Washington and informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs of SA that his administration will include some constitutional guarantees for whites in SWA and that they will rethink the UN’s plan for SWA. They also agreed to send back the attachés expelled from both countries after the spy plane incident.<sup>417</sup> Reagan’s view on relations with SA was “that even though the two governments may continue to differ on apartheid, the U.S. can cooperate with a society undergoing constructive change.”<sup>418</sup>

Reagan placed emphasis on economic engagement in his foreign policy toward SA. As with the Carter administration, Reagan was also of the opinion that economic sanctions would do more damage than good in the South African situation.<sup>419</sup> Hence he implemented the policy of “Constructive Engagement”, providing the SA leadership and military with space for adventures in Angola and elsewhere. In the section dealing with USA-SA economic relations it can clearly be seen that there was a surge in trade after Reagan became president.

The Reagan administration did little to meet with black leaders in SA and while Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Crocker, often travelled to SA he seldom met with representatives of the black community. The US Ambassador to SA, Herman Nickel, also showed that he preferred to meet with white South Africans instead of black South Africans and in rare instances when he met black representatives he never built any relationship with them. Crocker’s office defended this by arguing that the USA’s focus was on whites so that the USA could influence them to reform SA. Nickel viewed it more important to keep the white government pleased than it was to build relations with blacks.<sup>420</sup> Crocker confirmed that Reagan supported the white minority in SA when Crocker told a South African reporter that ... “[a]ll Reagan knows about southern Africa is that he’s on the side of the whites.”<sup>421</sup>

### 3.2.3 Constructive Engagement

The Africa Bureau of the USA State Department headed by Chester Crocker introduced the policy of Constructive Engagement towards SA. The aim of this policy was to offer “the South African government positive sanctions in an attempt to enhance the ambitions of reforms already underway...”<sup>422</sup> The USA intended to convince Pretoria to accelerate reforms by increasing positive diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>423</sup> Constructive Engagement was supposed to give Pretoria ample time and space to reform society and consequently extended the war in Angola.

<sup>415</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 43.

<sup>416</sup> Davies, p. 31.

<sup>417</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 43. The spy plane incident will be discussed in detail in the military relations section of the chapter.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid

<sup>419</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 120.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid. p. 124-125.

<sup>421</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 485.

<sup>422</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 111.

<sup>423</sup> F. V. Pabian. 1995. South Africa’s Nuclear Weapons Program: Lessons for U.S Nonproliferation Policy, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall 1995. p. 6.

South Africa and the USA's shared commitment to the containment of communism "made strategic contacts between the United States and South Africa an ideal focus for Constructive Engagement."<sup>424</sup> The Reagan administration considered that Constructive Engagement would allow the USA to pursue its Cold War objectives, while at the same time persuading SA to change its apartheid policies. Constructive Engagement would thus provide the USA with a win-win situation. The USA accordingly portrayed itself as a broker between the warring factions in Southern Africa.<sup>425</sup>

Even though Constructive Engagement focused on positive relations with SA, Reagan remained opposed to apartheid but public criticism of apartheid was much less than during the Carter administration. The USA no longer tried to force SA to adopt the one man 'one vote policy' and maintained that under Constructive Engagement the USA would support any reform in SA that would contribute to progressive change. The USA commended SA for introducing its tri-cameral parliamentary system while the white opposition party, the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), argued that the tri-cameral parliament merely cemented apartheid more than the 1910 Union Act. The PFP held that the tri-cameral reform amounted to sham-reform and the centralisation of power.<sup>426</sup> The apartheid government claimed that the tri-cameral reform would mean political participation for all without any domination. It was in fact just cosmetic reform and gave the apartheid government a "moral" justification to prosecute those who were against the "reform" for so called peace and stability in SA.<sup>427</sup> The reason why the USA praised SA for the creation of the tri-cameral parliament was to scam the world into believing that Pretoria was making positive reforms which in turn allowed the USA to provide the apartheid government with more aid for its "transformation" process.<sup>428</sup>

According to Constructive Engagement, SA needed to be given space to reform and the USA had to provide SA with diplomatic protection.<sup>429</sup> To do this the Reagan administration vetoed numerous demands for sanctions against SA in the UN Security Council while the international community demanded sanctions against SA for its illegal occupation of SWA and military operations in Angola. Throughout the early 1980s the USA stood steadfast behind SA whenever the rest of the world called for sanctions.<sup>430</sup>

The policy makers behind Constructive Engagement were of the opinion that "the expansion of capitalism and the development of a free market would hasten an end to total racial discrimination in the Republic."<sup>431</sup> However, SA was sceptical of Constructive Engagement. After a meeting with the USA Secretary of State, Al Haig, in May 1981 the Minister of Foreign

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<sup>424</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 115.

<sup>425</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 125. Massie, op cit. p. 483.

<sup>426</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 220. More info on SA's Tri-cameral parliamentary system can be found in C. Alden. 1998. *Apartheid Last Stand: The Rise and Fall of the South African Security State*. New York: St Martin's Press. pp. 137-42.

<sup>427</sup> C. Schutte, I. Liebenberg, and A. Minnaar, (Eds). 1998. *The Hidden Hand: Covert operation in South Africa*. Revised Edition. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers. pp. 100-101.

<sup>428</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 221.

<sup>429</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 6.

<sup>430</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 118. Urnov, op cit. p. 221.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid, p. 120.

Affairs of SA, Pik Botha, informed the Reagan administration SA's conditions for cooperation. Washington did not acknowledge Botha's correspondence since SA constantly tried to "bypass the official channels of engagement established by the State Department."<sup>432</sup>

Critics argue that Constructive Engagement failed and was a waste of time and money and that even though the USA loosened sanctions on Pretoria there were no measures by SA to change its racist policies. Constructive Engagement allowed SA to accumulate whatever it needed from the USA without really cooperating in ending apartheid.<sup>433</sup> The SA Ambassador to the USA, Donald Sole, confirmed that SA also regarded Constructive Engagement as a failure when he wrote that:

I am convinced that with somewhat more finesse and imagination on our part, Constructive Engagement could have been made to work to the advantage of both South Africa and the United States. But because we ourselves had not sown the seed, we failed to nurture this tender plant and in the crucial first two years of its existence, it was unable to root itself sufficiently firmly.<sup>434</sup>

Although the USA offered SA positive sanctions in return for reforms, SA constantly failed to initiate reform while the USA should have linked a specific, positive sanction with a specific reform but the USA made no specific demands. SA thus exploited the USA policy without feeling compelled to implement reforms. In order to justify Constructive Engagement the USA made "optimistic noises about the scraps of progress that the Republic did produce."<sup>435</sup> Critics argue that Constructive Engagement was served to preserve the status quo in SA instead of bringing about reform. In this view Constructive Engagement gave SA ample military and political manoeuvring space to try and destroy its enemies and defend apartheid policies and white minority rule.<sup>436</sup> By the mid-1980s a consensus had developed outside the Reagan administration that considered Constructive Engagement a failure.<sup>437</sup>

By 1984, members of the Democratic Party in the USA Congress were disenchanted with Crocker's Constructive Engagement policy while some Republican Party members doubted that Constructive Engagement was fruitful. The township uprisings in South Africa in 1984 split the Republicans even further and criticism of Constructive Engagement increased.<sup>438</sup> As the security situation in SA worsened the American public's attention focused on the ineffectiveness of Constructive Engagement.

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<sup>432</sup> Thomson op cit. p. 122.

<sup>433</sup> C. Coker. 1986. *The United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics*. Durham: Duke University Press. p. 259.

<sup>434</sup> D. B. Sole. 1989. *This above all: Reminiscences of a South African Diplomat*. Unpublished memoirs, Cape Town. 455.920SOL. Library. Cape Town Archives Repository. National Archives of South Africa. pp. 429-430.

<sup>435</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 123.

<sup>436</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 492.

<sup>437</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 182.

<sup>438</sup> K. Mokoena (Ed). 1993. *South Africa and the United States: The Declassified History*. New York: The New Press. p. 182.



During the first few years of the 1980s Washington tried to keep the policy of Constructive Engagement as vague as possible to the public as it was regarded as quiet diplomacy but by the mid-1980s Crocker decided to focus more on the public's awareness of Constructive Engagement. His intention was to provide the public with a positive picture of Constructive Engagement to change their perceptions of the policy as Crocker was of the opinion that the American public did not correctly understand the goals of Constructive Engagement. As a result, an ad hoc working group on SA was established in order to portray a positive image of Constructive Engagement to the American public.<sup>439</sup>

### 3.2.4 The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) of 1986

After recognising that Constructive Engagement was faltering, the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) in October 1986 even though Reagan tried to veto it. This was regarded as one of Reagan's worst foreign policy defeats.<sup>440</sup> The CAAA was the broadest array of sanctions that any first world country had ever imposed on SA.<sup>441</sup>

The passing of the CAAA implied that Crocker would have less authority on foreign policy making toward SA for the time being.<sup>442</sup> For the first few years of Reagan's tenure, Crocker was given free rein regarding to US foreign policy toward SA as the White House was focused on the Cold War in other parts of the world. Crocker persuaded the White House that he had the situation in Southern Africa under control and the White House believed him. But the USA Congress had enough of Constructive Engagement and as a result the CAAA was passed.<sup>443</sup>

The purpose of the CAAA was to 'set forth a comprehensive and complete framework to guide the efforts of the United States in helping to bring an end to apartheid in SA and lead to the establishment of a non-racial, democratic form of government.'<sup>444</sup> The CAAA contained the following provisions:

- Imports from SA. American companies were banned from importing any products produced by a South African parastatal organisation. This excluded minerals of strategic importance to the USA.
- Exports to SA. The Act banned the export of computers, crude oil and petroleum products, nuclear materials and military equipment.
- Individual and business taxation. South Africans residing in the USA were no longer allowed to claim certain tax benefits. American businesses were also no longer authorised to avoid double taxation.

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<sup>439</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 62.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid. pp. 48-51.

<sup>441</sup> A.J. Venter (Ed). 1989. *Challenge: Southern Africa within the African Revolutionary Context*. Gibraltar: Ashanti. p. 25.

<sup>442</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 48.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>444</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 315.

- Landing rights for aircraft. USA aircrafts were no longer permitted to land in SA.
- Intelligence sharing. Intelligence sharing between the two countries was no longer allowed except in certain circumstances. Military cooperation was also largely terminated.
- Sanctions. The Act motivated the US president and other countries to impose sanctions on SA. The US President was in addition compelled to report which countries were in violation of the arms embargo against SA.<sup>445</sup>
- Support to the black population in SA. The Act authorised US\$ 40 million to be used to better education, housing etc for black South Africans.
- Fines for violating sanctions against SA. - The Act prescribed that businesses which disregard sanctions against SA could be fined up to US\$ 1 million while individuals could be fined up to US\$ 500 000.
- Congressional oversight. - The US President was to report annually to Congress on the progress of reform in SA.
- Ending of sanctions. – The Act prescribed five conditions that had to be met for sanctions against SA to be lifted. The government had to release Nelson Mandela and the other political prisoners. Pretoria had to end the state of emergency; allow the formation of opposition parties, freedom of speech and freedom of association; abandon the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act; negotiate with the “real” black representatives over the future of the country.<sup>446</sup>

The CAAA demonstrated the concern of USA Congress regarding SA's unwillingness to abolish apartheid. Although the CAAA was seen as a strong attack against apartheid and the South African government in October 1987 Crocker criticised the Act by noting that no significant reform had occurred in SA since the adoption of the CAAA a year before.<sup>447</sup> Figures in the anti-apartheid movement also criticised the CAAA on the grounds that the Act did not force USA business to completely withdraw from SA, the President was not forced to persuade other major investors in SA to withdraw and the President was not mandated to cooperate with the USSR to enforce an air and naval blockade of SA.<sup>448</sup> President Reagan confirmed Crocker's sentiment during a speech on the first anniversary of the implementation of the CAAA when he said “I regret I am unable to report significant progress leading to the

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<sup>445</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 195.

<sup>446</sup> The principles as laid out in this research provide the basic information on the CAAA. A more detailed description of the principles can be found in Lulat, op cit. p. 316. Goldstone, op cit. p. 818.

<sup>447</sup> Report from Defence Attaché in Washington to the Chief of Staff Military Intelligence. 1989. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 57 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 7.4.89 – 5.7. 89. Insameling van Inligting: Eie MA - Washington.

<sup>448</sup> Lulat, op cit. pp. 316-317.

end of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democracy in South Africa"<sup>449</sup> The CAAA was lifted in 1991 under the Bush administration.<sup>450</sup>

On 20 January 1989 George H. Bush was sworn in as President of the USA. On 2 July 1989 the *Washington Post* reported that President Bush had a personal, sympathetic interest in ending apartheid in SA and was in consultation with black anti-apartheid activists and planned to meet President F.W. De Klerk to find a solution to apartheid. According to the newspaper, "The American interest [was] to see – and to help – South Africans of all races to sit down and negotiate a common future."<sup>451</sup> It was under Bush's administration that the Cold War ended and that SA began to make significant reforms to abolish apartheid.

### 3.3 AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ON SA

During August 1975 South African Military Intelligence received a letter from the South African Ambassador in Washington that described proposed changes to US foreign policy towards Southern Africa. The letter was composed by a member of the Black Caucus and proposed a number of measures, namely that: the relaxation of the arms embargo to SA should be ended, good reasons why USA Military Attachés should not be withdrawn from SA and that the USA government stop providing commercial or financial support to SA. The Black Caucus also wanted the US government to end all nuclear cooperation with SA. The group furthermore wanted the USA to support the UN in SWA to ensure a peaceful transfer of power and allow elections on a one man one vote basis.<sup>452</sup> The letter further stated that the Black Caucus had received a sympathetic response from Kissinger, but that Kissinger did not comment on the changes proposed by the Black Caucus. For its part, SA was not overly concerned that Kissinger would pay too much attention to the proposal of the Black Caucus as Washington was not too alarmed about the American public's opinion vis-à-vis USA-SA relations.<sup>453</sup> However, as time went on the American public began to exert more pressure on the US government to change its relations with SA.

The anti-apartheid movement in the USA consisted mostly of academics, students, businessmen, black conscious and church groups – people who had interests in SA.<sup>454</sup> The Soweto riots in 1976 and the death of Steve Biko in 1977 again reignited the USA anti-apartheid movement<sup>455</sup> and there was an increase in the number of protests in Washington

<sup>449</sup> Venter, 1989, op cit. p. 99.

<sup>450</sup> F. De Wet and I. Liebenberg. 2014. Ideologies (new), economics, defence and people: Five decades in the state of South Africa. *Politeia* Vol 33, No 1 p. 16.

<sup>451</sup> *The Washington Post*. 1989. South African Moment. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 57 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 7.4.89 – 5.7. 89. Insameling van Inligting: Eie MA - Washington.

<sup>452</sup> Letter from Defence Attaché in Washington to the Chief of Staff Military Intelligence. 1975. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Lulat, op cit. pp. 297-314.

<sup>455</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 3. G. Cawthra. 1986. *Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine*. London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa. p. 93.

after 1976.<sup>456</sup> The resistance movement in SA was also strengthened by these two events.<sup>457</sup>

The US government was well aware that the foreign policy of a democratic country could not be carried out successfully without considering public opinion. As a result the Public Agenda Foundation conducted a comprehensive survey on USA public opinion on SA in 1978.<sup>458</sup> According to Barron and Immerwahr, two researchers who wrote an article on the survey, most Americans wanted their government to place great pressure on SA to grant freedom to black South Africans. Broad segments of the US public wanted Washington to end all sales of arms to SA and thought that US companies should place pressure on SA.<sup>459</sup>

Even though the majority of the American public at the time was against apartheid, it did not want the US government to take extreme measures against Pretoria. The Public Agenda Foundation's survey found that the majority of those canvassed did not want American businesses to totally withdraw from SA. Indeed the survey found that the USA public strongly supported American business in SA. An overwhelming majority (73 percent) did not want the USA to take military action against SA and did not want black population of SA to revert to guerrilla warfare inside SA.<sup>460</sup> The findings in the article reflected the Carter administration's foreign policy toward SA.

An analysis of the findings of the Public Agenda Foundation's survey reveals that there were three principles that shaped US public opinion during the late 1970s, namely

- The American public did not want its government to become involved in another Vietnam-type military disaster. The US public was concerned that the white minority in SA would lose the war in Angola and did not want to side with the losing regime as was the case with Vietnam.
- The second principle was what Barron and Immerwahr describe as the Cold War psychology. Even though the US public was wary to support another conflict after Vietnam, it remained concerned about communist expansion. In 1977 sixty percent of the US public still regarded the containment of communism as one of the main objectives of US foreign policy.<sup>461</sup>
- The third principle was morality. The American public was of the opinion that US foreign policy should be guided by the moral values of a democratic country.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 21.

<sup>457</sup> Urnov, op cit p. 219.

<sup>458</sup> D. D. Barron and J. Immerwahr. 1979. The Public Views South Africa: Pathways through a gathering storm. *Public Opinion*. Jan/Feb 1979. The Article can be found at Department of Defence Archives, Minister van Verdediging, MV/56/3/1 Vol 5, 22 December 1976 to 15 March 1979.

<sup>459</sup> Barron, op cit. p. 54.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid, pp. 54-58.

On 2 December 1978, Prime Minister P.W. Botha informed his Minister of Foreign Affairs, R.F. Botha, and the Chief of the SADF, General Magnus Malan, that in his meeting with President Carter, the US president confirmed that the American people were criticising SA in the USA. However, Carter told Botha that he was not publicising the criticism against SA.<sup>463</sup>



**Illustration 3.1:** Two Strongmen – Botha and Vorster.<sup>464</sup>

A poll conducted in the USA during 1979 found that only 18 percent of the American public had heard of apartheid.<sup>465</sup> According to Davies, the economic, political and strategic debates on SA that were taking place in the USA were too complicated for the average American citizen to understand. As a result, the US public did not pay too much attention to SA, although the media attention on the failure of Constructive Engagement and the township uprisings made the US public more aware about the situation in SA.<sup>466</sup>

The election of Reagan as president in 1980 was a blow to the anti-apartheid movement in the USA and as the US legislature was under the control of conservatives, anti-apartheid activists were sure that federal action against SA would be minimised. As a result 'the activist leaders concluded that they needed to close ranks and shift attention from the federal

<sup>463</sup> Opsomming van samesprekings op 2 Desember 1978 te Libertas. 1978. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.

<sup>464</sup> Photo from an Afrikaans family magazine. Circa 1977.

<sup>465</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 59.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

to the state and local legislatures.<sup>467</sup> Consequently this led to greater cooperation among the various anti-apartheid groups which had previously acted individually.

In 1984 SA introduced a new Constitution which made provision for a tri-cameral parliament which included representative from the Coloured and Indian population. This led to black protests against the Constitution. Within two days, 33 protesters were killed by members of the SAP. In 1985 a state of emergency was declared in SA.<sup>468</sup> The township uprisings of 1985 rejuvenated the anti-apartheid movement against the USA foreign policy towards SA.<sup>469</sup> In particular the anti-apartheid movement was heavily opposed to Constructive Engagement and was astounded at the Reagan administration's willingness to establish close relations with SA. Accordingly, the anti-apartheid movement did everything possible to promote disinvestment in SA. Uprisings continued until 1987 during which an estimated 3000 South Africans were killed and about 30 000 detained. The international media showed pictures of unarmed civilians being beaten and killed by members of the SAP and security forces and again brought SA to the attention of the US public.<sup>470</sup>

Other groups opposed to apartheid emerged and included Transafrica and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.<sup>471</sup> The establishment of Transafrica in particular was for a concern to the SA government and the SA Ambassador to the USA was of the opinion that prior to the establishment of Transafrica there was no organisation that could mobilise 25 million African-Americans to influence USA policy towards SA. After the establishment of Transafrica, the SA Ambassador was concerned that African-Americans might be able to influence US foreign policy towards SA.<sup>472</sup> The American Committee on Africa in cooperation with the Interfaith Centre on Corporate Responsibility, the American Friends Service Committee, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Connecticut Anti-Apartheid Committee, the United Methodist Church Office and the Washington Office on Africa launched a campaign against American banks that were lending money to SA.<sup>473</sup>

As a result of numerous student campaigns on American campuses, twenty American universities were persuaded to divest from companies associated with SA.<sup>474</sup> As the divestment campaign gained popularity, more and more calls were made on the US government to implement negative sanctions against SA.<sup>475</sup> The movement was particularly successful in its disinvestment campaign as "[b]etween 1985 and 1988, 16 states and 56

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<sup>467</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 479.

<sup>468</sup> Minty, op cit. p. 180. Urnov, op cit p. 226.

<sup>469</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 182

<sup>470</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 180. Davies, op cit. pp. 60-61.

<sup>471</sup> F N. Nesbitt. 2004. *Race for Sanctions: African Americans against Apartheid, 1946-1994*. Indiana: Indiana University Press. pp. 102-4. Van Wyk and Grobler. 2006, op cit. p. 171. Minter, op cit. p. 285.

<sup>472</sup> Letter from SA ambassador in Washington, "Stigting van nuwe swart drukgroep: Transafrica. 1978. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.

<sup>473</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 21. Massie, op cit. pp. 479-481.

<sup>474</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 91.

<sup>475</sup> De Wet and Liebenberg, op cit. pp. 5-7. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 148.

municipal governments divested their public funds from companies that did business with South Africa.”<sup>476</sup>

### 3.4 ECONOMIC RELATIONS

South Africa was viewed by investors as lucrative for foreign investment as labour was cheap and the political situation was relatively stable during the early 1970s.<sup>477</sup> During the Ford administration (1974 to 1976) USA-SA economic trade experienced a constant growth (see tables below) and by 1976 the US investment in SA constituted for 40 percent of all USA investments in Africa. From 1972 to 1976 US investment in SA grew at a rate of 20 percent per annum and the USA was South Africa's second largest investor by 1976.<sup>478</sup>

#### Exports

1960	1965	1970	1972	1973	1974
288	438	563	602	746	1,160

#### Imports

1960	1965	1970	1972	1973	1974
108	226	290	325	377	609

**Table 3.1:** US Trade with SA (in millions of dollars) from 1960 to 1974.<sup>479</sup>

USA-SA economic relations flourished under the Carter administration (1977 to 1980) even though Carter did not have a good political relationship with SA.<sup>480</sup> Direct investment by the USA from 1977 – 1980 stood at R1.5 billion.<sup>481</sup> Carter believed economic sanctions would not convince Pretoria to change its apartheid policies and would also be detrimental to black South Africans. As a result Carter opposed any economic sanctions. Even though the Carter administration was willing to confront SA on human rights, it did not entertain economic sanctions against SA. Officials in the Carter administration frequently threatened that should SA not cooperate, economic sanctions would follow, but this never realised. Carter was of the opinion that good economic relations between the USA and SA could be used to bring about progressive change in SA.<sup>482</sup>

Evidence that Carter was adamant not to impose economic sanctions against SA emerged during October 1977 when the USA vetoed three successive Security Council resolutions

<sup>476</sup>

Davies, op cit. p. 60.

<sup>477</sup>

J. Blashill. 1972. “The Proper Role of US Corporations in South Africa”. *Fortune*, July 1972. p.49.

Metrowich, op cit. p. 127.

<sup>478</sup>

P. Lewis. 1976. “Billion-Dollar Stakes in Africa”. *The New York Times*, 9 May 1976.

<sup>479</sup>

US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, July 1975

<sup>480</sup>

Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 217.

<sup>481</sup>

Urnov, op cit. p. 144.

<sup>482</sup>

Thomson, op cit. p. 102.

against proposed UN economic sanctions against SA. According to Thomson, Carter had four reasons for not supporting economic sanctions against SA, namely:

- Sanctions would be ineffective;
- Isolation would strengthen the nationalist mentality among white South Africans;
- Economic sanctions would inherently affect the black population;
- Sanctions would hamper progress by the SA government towards ending apartheid.<sup>483</sup>

The Carter administration was of the opinion that instead of punishing SA, American businesses in SA would be examples to South Africans. As a result, the Sullivan Plan was formulated.<sup>484</sup> Economic relations between the Carter administration and SA are borne out by the following:

By the end of the Carter term of office, U.S. transnational corporations had US\$ 2,350 million invested in this market, gaining incredible returns of 28 percent. Similarly, U.S. exports to the Republic grew during Carter's watch, measuring US\$ 2,463 million by 1980, while imports to the United States almost quadrupled in the five years leading up to this point.<sup>485</sup>

Ironically some South African politicians were of the opinion that SA was economically too dependent on the USA. During July 1978, the South African Defence Attaché in Washington informed the Chief of the SADF, General Constand Viljoen, that the USA could use economic means to force SA to abolish apartheid. The Defence Attaché was of the opinion that SA's enemies (blacks, liberalists, churches and communists) could use SA's economic dependence on the USA to achieve their ultimate goal – the destruction of the white man. The Defence Attaché recommended that SA start to decrease its trade with the USA and to withhold some of the strategic minerals that the USA needed from SA.<sup>486</sup>

Reagan's election as America's president in January 1981 renewed the economic ties between the USA and SA. His administration demonstrated from the onset that it sought good economic ties with SA when in 1982 SA desperately needed a loan of US\$ 1.1 billion from the IMF. The UN General Assembly voted whether the IMF should decline to give SA the loan, and 121 countries agreed that the IMF should refuse the loan, 23 countries abstained from voting and three countries voted that SA should receive the loan. The three countries in favour of the loan to SA were the UK, West Germany and the USA. As a result, the IMF approved the loan, as the USA was able to override the no vote with 20 percent of

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<sup>483</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 103.

<sup>484</sup> Coker, op cit. p. 153.

<sup>485</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>486</sup> Letter from Defence Attaché in Washington to the Chief of the SADF. 1978. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.



the vote. American bank loans to SA increased by 246 percent between 1981 and 1983.<sup>487</sup> From 1981 to 1983 direct American capital investment in SA doubled to be R3.4 billion.<sup>488</sup>

Reagan shared Carter's view that economic sanctions against SA would do more harm than good for reform in SA. The official US policy during the Reagan administration remained that 'the US neither encouraged, nor discouraged investment in SA'. As Reagan regarded transnational corporations as important tools for change in SA, American businesses operating in SA between 1980 and 1984 increased by about 50 bringing the total to about 400.<sup>489</sup> By 1985 American investment in SA was worth US\$ 15 billion which included direct investments, securities and bank loans.<sup>490</sup>

From 1984 profits made by US companies started to decline due to the violent uprisings in South African townships which created a public relations dilemma for USA companies operating in SA. Consequently large American corporations like Coca-Cola, IBM, General Motors and Kodak withdrew from SA in 1985. In December 1984, 284 American companies were operating in SA, but by July 1988 only 136 remained in SA. It was clear that the US public was exerting sufficient pressure on American companies to disinvest from SA.<sup>491</sup> The passing of the CAAA in 1986 almost ended the USA-SA economic relationship as it imposed several sanctions against SA.

### 3.4.1 The Sullivan Principles

The Carter administration decided to increase pressure on American firms in SA to assist in bringing change to the country. In fact most American companies understood that Carter was an advocate for human rights and that it would be in their own best interest to support him if they could.<sup>492</sup> As a result, representatives of 11 of the largest US companies met the USA Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, and black church leaders in March 1977 during which they agreed on six guidelines that should be followed by American companies operating in SA. The guidelines were:

- "Non-segregation of the races in all eating, work and comfort facilities;
- Equal pay and fair employment practices for all employees;
- Equal pay for comparable work;
- Development training programs to prepare blacks for supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical jobs;
- Increasing the promotion of blacks to supervisory and management positions;

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<sup>487</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 36.

<sup>488</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 234.

<sup>489</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 75.

<sup>490</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 29. Urnov, op cit. p. 234.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid, p. 48. Bissel, op cit. p. 89. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 148.

<sup>492</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. pp. 96-7.

- Improving the quality of employees' lives in non-work environment (housing, transport, school, recreation, and health).<sup>493</sup>

Reverend Leon Sullivan was the leader of the black delegation to the meeting and was also the first black member of the Board of Directors of General Motors.<sup>494</sup> Resultantly the guidelines would be referred to as the Sullivan Principles or the Sullivan Plan. In July 1978, Sullivan published an expanded version of the initial six principles which explained in greater detail what the Sullivan Principles expected from US companies.<sup>495</sup> In short, the Sullivan Plan intended to use US multinational corporations to place pressure on SA to change its racial policies.

During March 1978 SA received news that the USA government planned to penalise American companies operating in SA that did not abide to fair employment practices.<sup>496</sup> This further served to motivate US companies to sign the Sullivan Principles and by July 1978, 103 American companies were signatories to the Sullivan Plan. The companies included American Cyanamid, Burroughs, Caltex, Citicorp, Ford, General Motors, IBM, International Harvester, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing, Otis Elevator and Union Carbide.<sup>497</sup> By 1979, 135 US companies were signatories to the Sullivan Principles.<sup>498</sup>

The membership of signatories to the Sullivan Principles increased during the Reagan administration as the administration appealed on all companies operating in SA to sign the principles in order to help the USA government bring peaceful change to SA. Signatories to the Sullivan Principles increased from 105 by the end of 1977 to 146 by 1982.<sup>499</sup> The US Congress also requested Reagan to make the Sullivan Principles mandatory to all American companies operating in SA. However, Reagan repeatedly refused to do so.<sup>500</sup>

At the end of 1984 the Sullivan Principles were expanded to include:

- “Companies must influence other companies to follow equal rights;
- Companies must support the rights of black workers to seek jobs wherever they exist;
- Companies must support the rights of black businesses to operate in urban areas;
- Companies must support the rescinding of all apartheid laws.”<sup>501</sup>

The Sullivan Plan was not without its critics however, the verification process of the Sullivan Principles was one of the main criticisms of the principles and it was further argued that the

<sup>493</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 408. Bissel, op cit. p. 85.

<sup>494</sup> Minter, op cit.p. 282. Davies, op cit. p. 43.

<sup>495</sup> The expanded version of the Sullivan Principles can be found in Bissel, op cit. pp. 86-88.

<sup>496</sup> Ekonomiese optrede in Amerikaanse Kongres teen Suid-Afrika. 1978. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.

<sup>497</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 409.

<sup>498</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 43.

<sup>499</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 121.

<sup>500</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 35.

<sup>501</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 43.

Sullivan Principles were not a solution to SA's racial problems.<sup>502</sup> It was instead argued that the government should press for disinvestment in SA and US universities like Yale and Stanford emerged as the main advocates for disinvestment from SA.<sup>503</sup> The American Committee on Africa was of the opinion that the Sullivan Principles could not make up for all the financial and material support that the USA government had already given SA. The committee regarded the plan as hypocritical and a way to make the American public forget the USA's support for the apartheid regime. Rather, the American Committee on Africa called for the total disinvestment from SA.<sup>504</sup>

The SA government did not react to the Sullivan Principles publicly.<sup>505</sup> The South African Consul wrote to Sullivan that he was impressed with the stand that he took against SA.<sup>506</sup> The USA's decision to rather implement the Sullivan Principles than to support economic sanctions against SA further demonstrated that the USA was using the policy of "neither encourage, nor discourage" investment in SA as with the previous USA administrations.<sup>507</sup>

### 3.4.2 Strategic Minerals: The Persian Gulf of minerals - SA<sup>508</sup>

South Africa had a myriad of mineral resources which the USA needed to grow its own economy.<sup>509</sup> During the 1970s and 1980s SA was the fourth largest exporter of non-fuel minerals in the world. The four most important minerals to the USA that were found in SA were: chromium, manganese, vanadium and platinum. These were strategic resources because they were used in armaments, computers and vehicles.<sup>510</sup> As a result, SA has been called the Persian Gulf of minerals. Crocker described SA as the Saudi Arabia of minerals.<sup>511</sup>

By 1974, SA supplied 57 percent of the USA's vanadium, 36 percent of its ferromanganese, 35 percent of its ferrochrome, 30 percent of its chrome ore and 19 percent of its platinum. Any sudden disruption in the supply of these minerals would have had a disastrous effect on the American economy because the USA would have to find new sources to sustain its industries.<sup>512</sup> Table 3.2 indicates how important SA's minerals were to the USA.

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<sup>502</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 99.

<sup>503</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 89.

<sup>504</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 409.

<sup>505</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 90.

<sup>506</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 409.

<sup>507</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>508</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>509</sup> Goldstone, op cit. p. 814.

<sup>510</sup> A. Seidman and N. Seidman. 1977. *U.S. Multinationals in Southern Africa*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House. p. 84. Davies, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>511</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 114.

<sup>512</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 8.

Mineral	United States	South Africa	Soviet Union	Soviet Union plus South Africa
<b>Chromium:</b>				
Production	0	33	24.5	57.5
Reserves	0	66.4	2.9	69.3
<b>Manganese:</b>				
Production	0	20.9	45.8	66.7
Reserves	0	37.2	50.7	87.9
<b>Platinum Groups:</b>				
Production	0.1	47.5	47.5	95
Reserves	0.1	73.2	25.1	98.3
<b>Vanadium:</b>				
Production	17.6	42.3	27.9	70.2
Reserves	0.7	49.4	45.9	95.3

**Table 3.2:** Percentage share of world chromium, manganese, platinum group metals, and vanadium production and reserves, by country, 1979.<sup>513</sup>

South Africa was aware that the USA relied heavily on its minerals and did not hesitate to use this as leverage. SA distributed a pamphlet through its embassies in Western countries to remind readers that “South Africa produced 70 percent of the world’s gold and half of its diamonds, held 25 percent of the non-communist world’s uranium reserves, and was the largest producer of chromium outside the USSR.”<sup>514</sup> In 1977 the Minister of Mines of SA, Fanie Botha, warned the USA that if it could not guarantee ongoing capital investment in SA, then it could not guarantee that the USA would have ongoing access to SA’s minerals.<sup>515</sup>

By 1984 trade between the USA and SA amounted to US\$ 4.8 billion. Most commodities were minerals of strategic importance to the USA.<sup>516</sup> Gold and other minerals accounted for 60 percent of SA’s mineral export. In terms of Constructive Engagement it was essential that the USA used SA’s minerals in order to deny their usage to the USSR for if the USSR was to

<sup>513</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>514</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 114.

<sup>515</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 32.

<sup>516</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 235.

gain control of SA's mineral wealth, it would control as much of 90 percent of several important minerals only found in areas controlled by the USSR.<sup>517</sup>

### 3.5 USA-SA MILITARY RELATIONS

During the Carter administration, the USA placed its anti-apartheid campaign above its strategic interests in SA. In 1980, a Pentagon official admitted that the US DOD had only limited interests in SA because other interests were of a higher priority. Three issues regarding USA-SA military relations became evident during the Carter Presidency: to enforce the arms embargo against SA, to prevent SA from acquiring nuclear weapons or the capability to build them; to end any reliance on South African military facilities, including its harbours and the tracking stations.<sup>518</sup>

Carter made it clear that he was not interested in using South African facilities when he chose to use bases in Oman, Somalia, Kenya and Diego Garcia for the Rapid Deployment Force ahead of the planned USA offensive on Afghanistan. The USA needed bases in the Indian Ocean region, but refused SA's offer of the Simon's town naval base.<sup>519</sup> The USA maintained that it will only make use of the offer when SA changed its racial policies. Thus the USA made clear that even though the Cape sea route was of importance to the USA; SA would have to stand on its own until it ended apartheid.<sup>520</sup>

#### 3.5.1 Arms Embargoes against SA

In March 1977 the US House of Representatives called on the Carter administration to review US policies and practices with regard to arms sales to SA. An investigation into US weapon sales to SA was conducted by the US Committee on International Relations which established that "from 1975 through 1976, the US government had permitted the export of nearly \$500 000 worth of weapons like shotguns, rifles, teargas and other so-called non-military weapons to South Africa."<sup>521</sup> This practice would not be tolerated by the Carter administration if he wanted to keep the trust of anti-apartheid lobbies.

Carter's principle that the fight against apartheid was more important than the USA's strategic interests in SA led to the USA to support a UN mandatory arms embargo against SA.<sup>522</sup> The embargo was officially imposed on 4 November 1977 in terms of UN Security Council Resolution 418. For the first time in the history of the UN a member state was subject to Chapter VII sanctions under the UN Charter.<sup>523</sup> This entitled that SA was regarded as being a threat to international peace and security. Washington announced that "an arms boycott is more effective than a total economic blockade because it makes it uncomfortable

<sup>517</sup> Davies, op cit. pp. 29, 41, 57.

<sup>518</sup> Bissel, R. p. 61.

<sup>519</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit.p. 345.

<sup>520</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 67-68.

<sup>521</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p. 172.

<sup>522</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p.356.

<sup>523</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 99.

for South Africans without forcing them to become completely independent.”<sup>524</sup> Although the USA believed that the new arms embargo would hamper SA’s capability to produce arms, the previous arms embargo against SA in fact motivated SA to develop its own arms industry.

In terms of the new embargo the USA was not allowed to sell any security force-related equipment to SA, whether lethal or not. The USA again placed restrictions on aircraft sales to SA.<sup>525</sup> The USA in addition placed restrictions on travel visas for South African military personnel, especially high ranking officers. The export of computer equipment that could be used by the security services was also banned. The Carter administration was so adamant about the embargo, that by February 1978 there were no loopholes in the embargo as in previous sanctions.<sup>526</sup> To make the arms embargo inviolable the Carter administration ordered ‘the denial of the export or re-export of “any commodity” to South Africa or SWA if the exporter “knows or has reason to know” that the item will be “sold to or used by” military or police entities in these countries.’<sup>527</sup> However, even though the new arms embargo was imposed against SA, American companies still found ways to sell equipment to SA in violation of Resolution 418.<sup>528</sup>

Despite the new arms embargo US companies, entrepreneurs and the CIA provided SA with weapons - now illegally. These weapons were shipped to SA via third world countries that were not covered by the arms embargo.<sup>529</sup> In 1977, Gerald Bull<sup>530</sup>, the engineer who was behind the development of the G5 long range artillery gun, with help from the CIA, Armscor, Israel and Taiwan smuggled G5 components and ammunition to SA. The guns and ammunition were smuggled over the USA-Canada border to SA via Antigua. After the US Justice Department and Senate found out about the incident Bull was incarcerated for a short period.<sup>531</sup>

Other cases of the illegal supplying of arms to SA were uncovered. The Olin Corporation sold 3200 Winchester rifles to SA via Mozambique, Austria, Greece and the Canary Islands.<sup>532</sup> The Space Research Corporation (SRC) in North Troy, Vermont, shipped tens of thousands of 155mm shells to SA. The shells were for the G5 cannon of the SADF. The SRC transported the shells via ports in Canada, Spain and Antigua to Cape Town.<sup>533</sup>

<sup>524</sup> Anon. 1977. Young Says S. African Premier Is Over the Hill Intellectually. *Washington Post*. November 8, 1977. p. A 14.

<sup>525</sup> Van Wyk and Grobler, op cit. p.179. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 169. Bissel, op cit. p. 62.

<sup>526</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 360.

<sup>527</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 100.

<sup>528</sup> More examples of how US companies bypassed the arms embargo can be found in Bissel, op cit. p. 61-62 and Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 199.

<sup>529</sup> M. Klare. 1982. Arms for Apartheid: New Evidence of Illegal U.S. Arms Sales to South Africa in E. Ray W. Schaap, K. Van Meter and L. Wolf (Eds). 1982. *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa*. London: Zed Press. p. 232. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 166.

<sup>530</sup> Bull was assassinated in 1990 by Mossad after he helped Iraq to build a supergun.

<sup>531</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 228.

<sup>532</sup> Klare, op cit. p. 233. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 166

<sup>533</sup> Klare, op cit. p. 234. Cawthra, op cit. p. 94.

Reagan relaxed the arms embargo when he became president in 1980 and USA companies were allowed to sell 'grey area' materials to SA.<sup>534</sup> As a result of Constructive Engagement, a large number of grey area materials were allowed and from January 1984 to April 1985, USA companies sold computers and related equipment worth US\$ 100.8 million and weapon parts worth US\$ 111 000 to SA.<sup>535</sup>

After the USA Congress passed the CAAA on 6 October 1986, the sale of arms and ammunition to SA was again banned.<sup>536</sup> The CAAA also included a clause which declared that the USA would break all ties with any country that violated the arms embargo against SA. This resulted in the withdrawal of military support from most of SA's allies. Israel was the only country that still secretly supported SA after 1986.<sup>537</sup>

### 3.5.2 The 1979 Spy Plane Incident

During 1979 an incident occurred which almost led to a termination of all ties with the USA. Washington received permission from Pretoria to operate a light aircraft from SA Air Force Base (AFB) Waterkloof in Pretoria, which also served as a base for SAAF fighter jets. The American plane, a Beechcraft C-12, could carry up to eight passengers<sup>538</sup> and was intended to transport US diplomatic personnel in Southern Africa more easily.<sup>539</sup> The aircraft could also be used to for emergency and evacuation flights if necessary although the Department of Foreign Affairs of SA had to be informed of any crisis before permission could be given to use the aircraft.<sup>540</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Cawthra, op cit. p. 96. Urnov, op cit. p. 233. Nesbitt, op cit. p. 114. Klare, op cit. p. 233.

<sup>535</sup> T. Conrad. 1988. Circumventing the Embargo: Invisible Trade with Pretoria, in United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations. *Transitional Corporations in South Africa and Namibia: United Nations Public Hearing. Volume III*. United Nations: New York. p. 351.

<sup>536</sup> Report from Defence Attaché in Washington to the Chief of Staff Military Intelligence. 1989. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 57 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 7.4.89 – 5.7. 89. Insameling van Inligting: Eie MA - Washington.

<sup>537</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 197.

<sup>538</sup> Letter from AFB Waterkloof to Military Intelligence (Directorate Counter-Intelligence). 1976. File nr Z/7/2/2 Volume 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 25.3.75 – 18.11.75. VSA Ambassade DAK.

<sup>539</sup> Malan, op cit. p.201.

<sup>540</sup> Letter to Military Intelligence (Directorate Counter - Intelligence). 1975. Vervoer van nie VSA MA's in VSA Ambassade Vliegtuig. 12 September 1975. File nr Z/7/2/2 Volume 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 25.3.75 – 18.11.75. VSA Ambassade DAK.



**Illustration 3.2:** The Beechcraft C-12<sup>541</sup>

South African Military Intelligence was suspicious of the US plane from the start. During a meeting of the Defence Staff Committee on 25 April 1978 the Director General of Operations tasked a team to determine where else the plane could be based and what measures should be implemented to control the movements of the aircraft.<sup>542</sup> During a meeting of the Defence Staff Committee on 19 May 1978 it was decided that the USA must move the aircraft from AFB Waterkloof to the Jan Smuts Airport (now known as O.R. Tambo International Airport) before 1 July 1978.<sup>543</sup>

Military Intelligence was tasked to covertly search the aircraft at AFB Waterkloof and a 70mm-air survey camera was found. The camera contained photos of classified installations that were taken by the Americans. Some of the photos taken by the camera included the Pelindaba complex west of Pretoria where SA was developing nuclear material warfare capability.<sup>544</sup> Photos of strategic installations in neighbouring countries were also discovered when the aircraft flew on supposed diplomatic missions.<sup>545</sup>

As a result, SA informed the USA that the diplomatic plane was no longer authorised to remain in SA. The USA in turn expelled the SA's Military Attaché in Washington.<sup>546</sup> Pretoria

<sup>541</sup> Illustration found at <http://www.vintageadbrowser.com/military-ads-1970s/11>

<sup>542</sup> Minutes of the Defence Staff Committee. 1978. File nr HSAW 203/3/ 2 Volume 1 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 3.5.78 – 2.11. 85.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

<sup>544</sup> Malan, op cit. p.201.

<sup>545</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 65.

<sup>546</sup> S. Talbot. 1982. The CIA and BOSS: Thick as thieves in E. Ray., W. Schaap, K. Van Meter and L. Wolf (Eds). 1982. *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa*. Zed Press: London. p. 242. A. Van Wyk. 2007. Ally or critic? The United States's response to South Africa's Nuclear Development 1949-1980, in *Cold War History*, Volume 7, No 2, May 2007. p. 214.



in response expelled all American Attachés from SA.<sup>547</sup> According to Bissel, both Pretoria and Washington each allowed one attaché in their respective countries.<sup>548</sup>

The spy plane incident was widely publicised. There are three possible reasons why the incident was blown out of proportion:

- SA intended to divert public attention from the 'Muldergate scandal'.
- The incident provided SA with a reason to break off talks over SWA with the Contact Group of which the USA was the leader.<sup>549</sup>
- The incident gave SA the opportunity to realign itself to a neutral political position in the Cold War.<sup>550</sup>

### 3.5.3 Intelligence Exchange between SA and the USA

The real relationship between the CIA and the South African intelligence services still remains a mystery because of a lack of documentation. Dr Niel Barnard, who was the head of the South African National Intelligence Service (NIS) during the 1980s, gives a hint on the relationship in his auto biography "South Africa's intelligence relationship with the Americans goes back a long way".<sup>551</sup> According to him some of SA's best intelligence operators were placed in Washington to liaise with the CIA.<sup>552</sup>

Talbot is of the opinion that CIA and the BOSS were as "thick as thieves",<sup>553</sup> while Stockwell notes that the CIA mainly liaised with the BOSS rather than conducted covert operations within SA as BOSS agents were very well trained to uncover covert operations by Foreign Intelligence Services and the USA did not want to antagonise Pretoria by conducting covert operations in SA. Some BOSS operatives were even trained in the USA.<sup>554</sup> However, when SA began its nuclear program, the CIA felt compelled to gather intelligence on the project.<sup>555</sup> By early 1975 BOSS uncovered a CIA espionage operation that focused on the nuclear project and expelled the CIA agents that were involved from SA.<sup>556</sup>

According to El- Khawas and Cohen there are several indirect sources which show collaboration between the CIA and the South African security forces.<sup>557</sup> During the Ford

<sup>547</sup> J. F. Burns. 1979. "South Africa Ousts 3 U.S. Embassy Aides, Charging Air Spying." New York Times, 13 April 1979: A1. Thomson, op cit. p. 106.

<sup>548</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 41.

<sup>549</sup> The Contact Group will be discussed in the chapter on the Border War.

<sup>550</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 41.

<sup>551</sup> N. Barnard. 2015. *Secret Revolution: Memoirs of a Spy Boss*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers. pp. 82-85.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid. p. 82.

<sup>553</sup> Talbot, op cit. p. 240. P. Gleijeses. 2003. *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-1976*. Alberton: Galago Books. p. 291.

<sup>554</sup> Interview with Alexander Van Wyk (Deputy Chief of BOSS). 1977. *The Johannesburg Sunday Times*, 24 July 1977.

<sup>555</sup> Barnard, op cit. p. 66

<sup>556</sup> Talbot, op cit. p. 241. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 90.

<sup>557</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen, op cit. p. 60.

administration in 1975, the USA Secretary of Defence, James Schlesinger, proposed at a NATO conference that the organisation should consider using Simon's Town naval base as a monitoring facility to gather naval intelligence.<sup>558</sup> The USA provided SA with some of the best eavesdropping and surveillance equipment to monitor the Southern parts of the Indian and Atlantic oceans.<sup>559</sup> The listening post at Silvermine near Simon's Town often provided the USA government with intelligence assessments.<sup>560</sup>

During the Carter administration there was no official intelligence sharing between the two countries. The CIA lied to the administration about their involvement with SA. The CIA was banned from having an intelligence relationship with SA, but the CIA felt that it would be in the best interest of the USA to have a mutually beneficial intelligence relationship with SA.<sup>561</sup> Military Intelligence was pleased when the USA indicated that it was willing to once again legally exchange intelligence where possible during the early 1980s. The USA specified that it was willing to again provide covert intelligence to SA.<sup>562</sup>

Most intelligence sharing regarded the situation in Angola as the CIA had a presence in Angola.<sup>563</sup> SA would provide intelligence to the USA on the activities of ANC members in Angola while the USA would exchange Cuba's troop numbers and movements with SA. The Pentagon used electronic collection methods in Angola and constantly updated the SADF about the military situation.<sup>564</sup> The US DOD also requested the SADF to exchange captured Soviet equipment with the USA<sup>565</sup> and in exchange for intelligence on Soviet weapons that the SADF did not have.<sup>566</sup>

An example of intelligence sharing was when a Canadian citizen who worked for the CIA, contacted a member of the South African Military Intelligence in Canada during May 1990. The Canadian informed the South African agent that he had just returned from Cuba on a mission for the CIA. One of the Canadian's sources in Cuba informed him that Cuba was providing pilot training to 80 ANC members at an air force base in Camaguey. The helicopters that they were using were bought from Brazil. The CIA agent further told the South African that between 250 and 500 ANC guerrillas were being trained by Cuban and Libyan instructors at another military base in Cuba. The CIA agent even volunteered to give

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid. p. 53.

<sup>559</sup> P. Hounam and S. McQuillan. 1995. *The Mini-Nuke Conspiracy: Mandela's Nuclear Nightmare*. London: Faber and Faber. p. 214.

<sup>560</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 69. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 114. Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. p. 213.

<sup>561</sup> Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. pp. 218- 219.

<sup>562</sup> Hulpverlening aan die VSA. 1982. File nr HSOPS 311/1/ 29 part 4 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 27.08.82 – 2.6. 85.

<sup>563</sup> Guimarães, op cit. p. 134. Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. pp. 276-277

<sup>564</sup> Fax from Military Attaché in Washington to Military Intelligence. 1990. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 67 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 5.2.1990. Insameling van Inligting: Eie MA -Washington. Barnard, op cit. p. 76.

<sup>565</sup> G. Mills and D. Williams. 2006. Every cause needs a victory: Cuito Cuanavale, 1987-1988. *Seven Battles that Shaped South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers. p. 178.

<sup>566</sup> Hulpverlening aan die VSA. 1982. File nr HSOPS 311/1/ 29 part 4 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 27.08.82 – 2.6. 85. A complete list of all the equipment exchanged between the two countries can be found in the file.

the South African photos of the military bases where members of the ANC were being trained as well as pictures of individual ANC members undergoing training. The most valuable information that the CIA agent provided the Military Intelligence agent was a picture of a person with a note that a USA citizen will travel to SA during May or June 1990. The individual should not be given a visa, because he was a spy working for Cuba and Libya and he intended to gather intelligence on SA's nuclear program and weapon stores. The CIA agent said that he provided the information not for financial reasons, but because there are very few people in the USA and Canada who wanted to see SA taken over by communists.<sup>567</sup>

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

The situation in Southern Africa changed drastically in 1974 with the withdrawal of the Portuguese from Africa. It was in the same period that Ford took over presidency in the USA. Ford was aware that there was an opportunity for the communist to get a foothold in Southern Africa, because SA was now surrounded by black governed states. In order to ensure that the anti-communist apartheid government remain in power, Ford maintained the status quo of his predecessors with regards to its relationship with SA.

Of all the US presidents studied for this research, Carter was the most confrontational towards SA. During his presidency the USA verbally attacked apartheid publicly and took symbolic action against SA such as the withdrawal of diplomatic personnel and supported a mandatory arms embargo against SA. The arms embargo proved to be relatively ineffectual as the USA gained little by denying SA arms. This confrontation policy continued throughout Carter's presidency. Carter's tone and urgency toward SA on economic matters also differed from previous administrations although his actions or intentions remained the same as previous administrations.

A survey on USA public opinion on SA revealed that Carter's foreign policy towards SA reflected the sentiments of the public. The American public wanted to see human rights prevail in SA, but simultaneously did not want to harm USA business opportunities in SA. While there was an increase in the awareness of apartheid, most American citizens still did not care much about events in SA. The debates over apartheid, sanctions and Constructive Engagement were mostly reserved for politicians and a very small group of concerned groups and individuals.

The verbal and symbolic criticism of the Carter administration changed USA-SA relations but did not fundamentally alter apartheid policies. Even though Carter constantly proposed that an end should be brought to apartheid, he was unwilling to implement economic sanctions against SA. Carter did show that he was more serious than previous administrations to eradicate apartheid, but he still had to take cognisance of the Cold War. Carter did not want to alienate SA, because its government was regarded as an ally against communism in

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Letter from the South African Consulate in Canada. 1990. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 67 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 5.2.1990. Insameling van Inligting: Eie MA - Washington. pp. 161-163.

Southern Africa. The presence of Cuban and Soviet military personnel in Angola also influenced Carter's foreign policy towards SA as his administration did not want excessive criticism to drive away a useful partner against Soviet expansionism in Africa.

The after-math of Vietnam was the main reason why Carter did not want the USA to become militarily involved in the conflict in Southern Africa. Instead of looking for support from its old ally, the USA, SA turned to other countries such as France and Israel. Pretoria decided to wait out Carter's term of office with the hope that a more amenable presidential would replace him. This indeed happened with the election of Reagan.

The Reagan administration demonstrated more empathy with white South Africa and his administration was of the opinion that peaceful change in SA was only possible with the cooperation of white institutions. As a result, the Reagan administration neglected the black population of SA and the political opinions of those without voting rights. South Africa's importance as an economic and strategic ally thus overshadowed the USA abhorrence of apartheid during Reagan's term.

There are different opinions on whether Constructive Engagement was successful. Some scholars argue that Constructive Engagement failed in the first half of the 1980s, but was successful in the latter half of that decade. When the Reagan administration realised that SA was exploiting Constructive Engagement to its own advantage it should have stopped with 'positive sanctions'. Instead it continued with 'positive sanctions' in service of US interests in the hope that the political situation in SA would change. As a result, Constructive Engagement gave the SA government even in its modernised form of racial domination, some breathing space and thus postponed the dismantling of apartheid for some years.

By the middle of the 1980s, the USA Congress realised that Constructive Engagement was not achieving its expected results and passed the CAAA even though the President tried to veto the bill. Yet while the CAAA was a major political statement against SA and further isolated SA, the USA still continued to share intelligence with SA's security services.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION: USA-SA RELATIONSHIP WITH REGARDS TO THE BORDER WAR<sup>568</sup>

The Border War refers to the regional conflict that took place from 1966 to 1989 between SA and her allies (UNITA, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola [FNLA] and the USA) on the one side and SWAPO, the MPLA, the ANC, Cuba and the USSR in opposition. Geographically the Border War was fought in Namibia and the southern half of Angola.<sup>569</sup> Many researchers use the terms Bush War and Border War interchangeably, but the Bush War includes the conflict in Rhodesia. Cuban and Russian researchers might also refer to it as the Angolan War or the first Angolan War (1975/1976) and the second Angolan War (1987/1988).<sup>570</sup> The Angolan people refer to it as the second war of liberation.<sup>571</sup> For the purpose of this paper it will be referred to as the Border War. This chapter will firstly research the USA-SA relationship with regards to Namibia as a separate issue and then the USA-SA relationship with regards to the conflict in Angola as a separate issue. Then the chapter will investigate the role that the USA played in the Border War as a whole.



**Illustration 4.1:** Role players in the Border War.<sup>572</sup>

<sup>568</sup> See illustration 4.1.

<sup>569</sup> J. E. Davies. 2008. South Africa and Constructive Engagement: Lessons learned. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 34, Nr. 1, March 2008.p. 13. See map 4.1.

<sup>570</sup> M. Walters (Ed). 2013. *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*. Canada: Pathfinder Press. G. Shubin. 2007. *The Oral History of Forgotten Wars: The Memoirs of Veterans of the War in Angola*. Moscow: Memories. I. Liebenberg in T. Potgieter, A. Esterhuyse and I. Liebenberg. (Eds). 2008. *Regions, Regional Organisations and Military Power – Proceedings of the XXXIII International Congress of Military History*. Stellenbosch: Sun Media. p. 64.

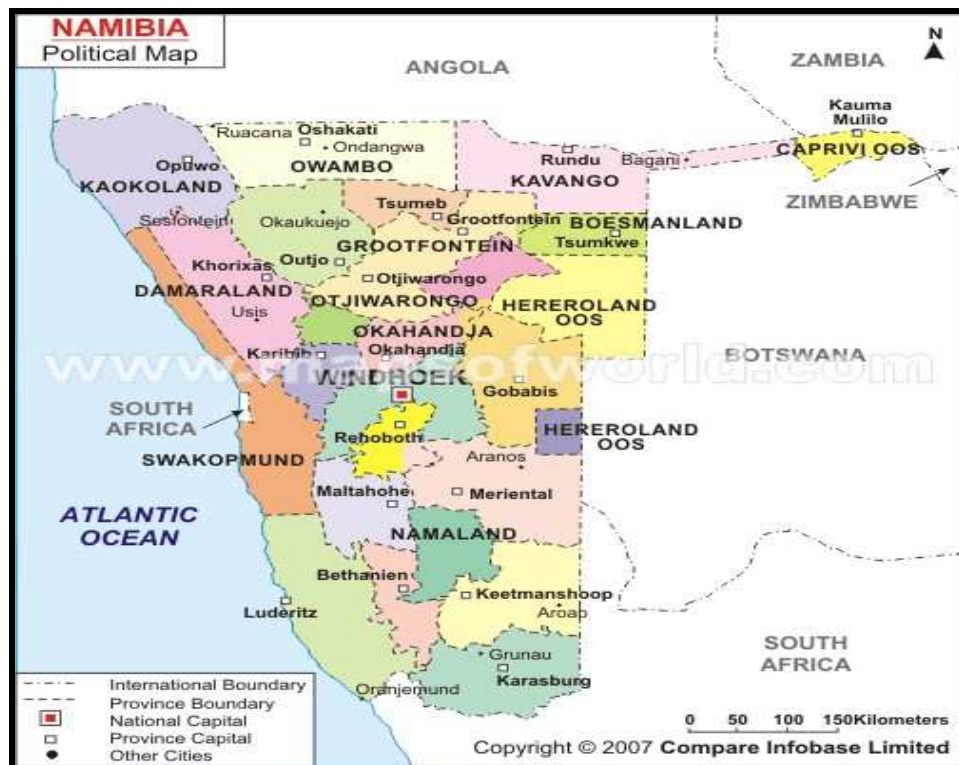
<sup>571</sup> Liebenberg, 2008. op cit. p. 64. . A. Urnov, 1988. *South Africa Against Africa*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. p. 122.

<sup>572</sup> Illustration can be found at <http://www.borderwar.cz/sites/border%E2%80%93war%E2%80%931.php>

## 4.2. THE USA-SA RELATIONSHIP WITH REGARDS TO NAMIBIA

### 4.2.1. Background

Situated at the south western tip of Africa, Namibia (previously known as SWA) is surrounded by Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana to the east, SA to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west (see map 4.1). A country rich in natural resources which varies from diamonds and gems to fish and game<sup>573</sup> Namibia is also renowned for its large uranium deposits and base metals such as copper, lead, zinc, tin and manganese.<sup>574</sup>



Map 4.1: Map of Namibia.<sup>575</sup>

By 1878 SWA was still largely unexplored by the then colonial superpowers, but within the space of five years both Great Britain and Germany became interested in different parts of the country with the British annexing the town of Walvis Bay on behalf of the Crown incorporating the town into the Cape of Good Hope Colony in 1884. Not to be outdone by its colonial rival, Germany through purchase from local chiefs secured the remaining part of the

<sup>573</sup> A. Seidman and N. Seidman. 1977. *U.S. Multinationals in Southern Africa*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House. p. 162.

<sup>574</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens. 1978. *U.S. Military Involvement in Southern Africa*. Boston: South End Press. p. 31.

<sup>575</sup> Maps of the World. 2007. <http://www.mapsoftheworld.com/namibia/namidia-political-map.html> (accessed 15 October 2011).

coastal area and the rest of the hinterland in 1883 leaving the British in control of Walvis Bay only.<sup>576</sup>

German occupation was brutal and brief and lasted until July 1915 when the Union of South Africa occupied German South West Africa at the request from Britain during the First World War.<sup>577</sup> The mandate of administration and legislation was given to SA by the League of Nations in 1920 under the condition that SA would build up the country socially and economically.<sup>578</sup> Namibia then became a virtual “province” of SA known as SWA. With an internationally sanctioned obligation to govern the country, Pretoria did not hesitate to implement its existing racist legal structure in SWA and in 1922 Pretoria extended its pass laws to the inhabitants of SWA which meant that the native people were not allowed to move around freely without their permits.<sup>579</sup>

#### 4.2.2 South Africa’s Illegal Occupation of Namibia

At the conclusion of the Second World War, SA expected the UN to allow for the annexation of SWA, but the requests was unequivocally rejected.<sup>580</sup> It was this new organisation, the UN, which replaced its toothless predecessor, the League of Nations, which began putting pressure on Pretoria to transfer control of SWA to the UN in order to eventually become an independent country.<sup>581</sup> South Africa, however, bluntly refused to surrender SWA and to grant the country independence, leaving SWA to become the last remnant of Africa’s colonial history.<sup>582</sup>

On 17 November 1959, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1375 which appealed to all UN member states to oppose racial discrimination throughout the world. The USA voted in favour of the resolution.<sup>583</sup> On the same day the UN General Assembly also

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- <sup>576</sup> P. H. Katjavivi. 1990. *Namibia: A History of Resistance in Namibia*. New Jersey: Africa World Press Inc. pp. 7-12. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. pp. 31-32.
- <sup>577</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 13. D. Soggot. 1986. *Namibia: The Violent Heritage*. London: Rex Collings. p. 17. H. Strachan. 2004. *The First World War: The First World War in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 63. M. Malan. 2006. *My lewe saam met die SA Weermag*. Pretoria: Pretoria Boekhuis. p.69. A. Thomson. 2008. *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948-1994: Conflict of Interests*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 15.
- <sup>578</sup> C. Coker. 1986. *The United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics*. Durham: Duke University Press. p. 242. US Department of State. 2011. Background note: Namibia. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5472.htm> (accessed 20 October 2011).
- <sup>579</sup> A. D. Cooper. 1988. *Allies in Apartheid: Western Capitalism in Occupied Namibia*. London: Macmillan Press. p. 2.
- <sup>580</sup> H. Steyn, R. Van der Walt and J. Van Loggerenberg. 2003. *Armament and disarmament: South Africa’s nuclear weapons experience*. Pretoria: Network Publishers. pp. 2-3. W. Steenkamp. 1983. *Borderstrike: South Africa into Angola*. Pretoria/Durban: Butterworth Publishers. p. 3. Malan, op cit. p.67.
- <sup>581</sup> J. E. Davies. 2007. *Constructive Engagement? Chester Crocker & American Policy in South Africa, Namibia & Angola 1981-8*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. p. 11. P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1989. *Frontline Southern Africa*. Peterborough: Ryan Publishing. p. 158. Katjavivi, op cit. p. 34.
- <sup>582</sup> C. A. Crocker. 1993. *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood*. Parkland: Jonathan Ball Publishers. p. 11.
- <sup>583</sup> H.D. Schwar and A.W. La Fantasie (Eds). 1992. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1958-1960, Vol xiv, Africa*. Washington: Department of State. p. 739.

adopted Resolution 1360 which sought to convince SA to place SWA under control of the International Trusteeship System. The USA also voted in favour of Resolution 1360.<sup>584</sup>

President Johnson's first major foreign policy decision in 1964 towards SA concerned the SWA issue. During March of the same year, the USA National Security Council was warned by its agents in SA that Pretoria has the intention to apply its apartheid laws to the people of SWA.<sup>585</sup> The International Court of Justice (ICJ) was due to announce in 1965 whether SA had breached the terms laid down by the League of Nations over the original mandate for SWA. The USA expected that the ICJ was going to rule that SA had breached the terms, so they would have to take the necessary diplomatic measures to convince the UN not to take punitive steps against SA until after the ICJ ruling in 1965. This would give the USA time to persuade SA to moderate its apartheid policies and if they did not want to scale down, the USA would still have time to "...make contingencies for its strategic and economic interests..." in SA.<sup>586</sup> As a result the USA issued NSAM 295.<sup>587</sup>

The immediate purpose of NSAM 295 was to stop SA from imposing apartheid legislation to SWA before the ICJ's decision. Johnson was successful in his attempt to postpone the export of apartheid to SWA, because in April 1965 Prime Minister Verwoerd issued a white paper which announced that SA was going to delay the export of apartheid to SWA until after the decision of the ICJ.<sup>588</sup>

The UN voted in favour of revoking SA's mandate over SWA in 1966 after "the International Court of Justice dismissed the rights of Ethiopia and Liberia (two former members of the League of Nations) to seek a judgement on SA's maladministration of the mandate over Namibia."<sup>589</sup> Consequently on 27 November 1966, the UN passed Resolution 2145, which revoked SA's mandate over Namibia.<sup>590</sup> The UN then placed SWA under the direct supervision of the UN and decided that the name of the country would henceforth be Namibia.<sup>591</sup> As a result, the UN Council for Namibia was created on 19 May 1967 to act as the legal authority over Namibia.<sup>592</sup> South Africa rejected Resolution 2145 and regarded it as unlawful.<sup>593</sup>

On 20 March 1969, the UN Security Council announced that according to the new Resolution 264, SA was to be regarded as occupying Namibia illegally.<sup>594</sup> Resolution 264 further

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<sup>584</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie, op cit. p. 739.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid. p.49.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid. p.50.

<sup>587</sup> See Chapter 2 for full description of NSAM 295.

<sup>588</sup> Schwar and La Fantasie, op cit. p.53. More on this issue in the chapter on Namibia.

<sup>589</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 2.

<sup>590</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 33. Thomson, op cit. p. 15. Malan, op cit. p.72.

<sup>591</sup> United Nations. 1974. *A trust betrayed: Namibia*. New York: United Nations. p. 25.

<sup>592</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 11. Thomson, op cit. p. 60. Cooper, op cit. p. 2.

<sup>593</sup> Malan, op cit. p.72.

<sup>594</sup> Moukambi, V. 2008. Relations between the South African Defence Force and France, 1960-1990. Unpublished dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History at the University of Stellenbosch. p. 31.



demanded that SA withdraw immediately from Namibia. The UN Security Council then passed Resolution 2517 on 12 August 1969, which recognised the right of the people of Namibia to make war against SA, because SA was occupying their land illegally. Resolution 2517 showed that the UN perceived SA as not respecting their authority and that UN was ready to implement measures to remove SA from Namibia. The UK, France, the USA and Finland refused to adopt Resolution 2517.<sup>595</sup> Pretoria's rejection of the resolutions was probably fuelled by the tacit support to the occupation of Namibia by Western powers such as the USA, UK and France.<sup>596</sup>

Pretoria was of the opinion that they had invested too much money in Namibia and that Namibia was economically dependent on SA so they could not just withdraw from Namibia.<sup>597</sup> According to a CIA Intelligence Memorandum, SA gained US\$ 250 million annually from Namibian mineral, fish and agricultural exports. SA furthermore had about US\$ 500 million worth of private investments in Namibia.<sup>598</sup> It was thus lucrative for SA to occupy Namibia for as long as possible.

Even though the ICJ dismissed the earlier request to condemn SA's occupation of Namibia, the ICJ acknowledged in June 1971 (after a request by the UN Security Council) that SA was indeed occupying Namibia illegally and that SA had to withdraw from Namibia immediately.<sup>599</sup> The ICJ announced that SA was violating international law by occupying Namibia and that countries supporting SA in its occupation were also guilty of violating international law.<sup>600</sup> Pretoria and her allies continued to defy international opinion.<sup>601</sup> Criticism against SA's occupation of Namibia did inevitably force the USA to raise its voice on a subject that they did not really want to discuss; the same as the apartheid topic.<sup>602</sup>

After uprisings in Namibia during the early 1970s, SA attempted to hold an election in Namibia believing that a collaborator would win and then rule Namibia on behalf of SA.<sup>603</sup> The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) however boycotted the elections. SWAPO's aim was to liberate Namibia from the oppressive South Africans.<sup>604</sup> SWAPO saw itself as an organisation that could fight against the exploitative South African government.<sup>605</sup> With a host of countries having just recently achieved independence during this period

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<sup>595</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>596</sup> Y. G-M. Lulat. 2008. *United States Relations with South Africa: A Critical Overview from the Colonial Period to the Present*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. p. 179.

<sup>597</sup> Malan, op cit. p.71.

<sup>598</sup> CIA. 1977. Intelligence Memorandum: South Africa's Policy toward Namibia: A Review of Basic Factors. May 20 1977.

<sup>599</sup> S. Polakow-Suransky. 2010. *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. p. 78. R. E. Bissel. 1982. *South Africa and the United States: The Erosion of an Influence Relationship*. New York: Praeger Publishers. p. 24. Katjavivi, op cit. p. 65. F. R. Metrowich. 1977. *South Africa's New Frontiers*. Sandton: Valiant Publishers. p. 112.

<sup>600</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 45. Lulat, op cit. p. xliv.

<sup>601</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>602</sup> Thomson, op cit. p. 15.

<sup>603</sup> United Nations, op cit. p. 17.

<sup>604</sup> Moukambi, op cit. p. 32. Lulat, op cit. p. 226.

<sup>605</sup> Y. Gorbunov (Ed). 1988. *Namibia: A struggle for Independence*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. p. 47.

SWAPO was recognised by the UN and other international agencies as a legitimate liberation movement that could possibly bring freedom to the people of Namibia.<sup>606</sup>

South Africa then decided that Namibia should be steered towards “independence” and subsequently held the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference in Windhoek on 1 September 1975.<sup>607</sup> The objective of this conference was to develop a constitution for an independent Namibia.<sup>608</sup> By 18 March 1977, a constitution was finalised and submitted.<sup>609</sup> This constitution “called for a governmental structure based upon the existing Bantustans.”<sup>610</sup> The USA and other Western powers did not approve of the new constitution and SA once again took direct control of Namibia.

In the years which followed SA built a close relationship with Namibia and thought of the country as its fifth province.<sup>611</sup> When SWAPO commenced hostile activities from bases in Southern Angola, Pretoria did not falter to deploy its security forces in Namibia for the protection of the country against insurgents. According to Malan the leaders of the Ovambo people requested assistance from SA against the terrorists attacking them.<sup>612</sup> Pretoria felt obliged to protect the people of Namibia from the “terrorists” because of the mandate given to SA by the League of Nations which dictated that SA was responsible to ensure that elements such as SWAPO did not use violence to overthrow the government of Namibia.<sup>613</sup> Pretoria however neglected the fact that the UN declared SA’s occupation of Namibia as illegal. Pretoria argued that if SWAPO was to come to power in Namibia the country would fall under the influence of a Marxist-Leninist regime which would be a threat to the West.<sup>614</sup> The USA shared this sentiment with SA.<sup>615</sup>

The US government was of the opinion that the USSR and her allies were eagerly waiting to get a foothold in Southern Africa. The USA believed that they had to compete with the Soviets for Southern Africa.<sup>616</sup> Southern Africa with the exception of SA was not significant to the USA until 1975.<sup>617</sup> The USA was aware that SA had the intention of fighting the communists on their own in Southern Africa, because SA was isolated from the West during the 60s and early 70s as a result of its apartheid laws. It remains an open question whether or not SA would have been able to fight off the communist threat on its own. An argument for the positive can be made on the grounds of SA’s intense investment hugely in arms

<sup>606</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 2.

<sup>607</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 95. Thomson, op cit. p. 73. Soggot, op cit. p. 101.

<sup>608</sup> Cooper, op cit.p. 4.

<sup>609</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 183. Coker, op cit. p. 253.

<sup>610</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 4.

<sup>611</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 45.

<sup>612</sup> Malan, op cit. p.71. L.J. Bothma. 2007. *Die Buffel Struikel: n Storie van 32 Bataljon en sy mense*. Bloemfontein: Handisa Media. pp. 22-23. Metrowich, op cit. p. 91.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

<sup>614</sup> G. Mills and D. Williams. 2006. Every cause needs a victory: Cuito Cuanavale, 1987-1988. *Seven Battles that Shaped South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. p. 169. R.I. Rotberg in R.J. Bloomfield (Ed). 1988. *Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique*. Michigan: Reference Publications. p.84.

<sup>615</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 63.

<sup>616</sup> Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 5. Crocker, op cit. p. 21.

<sup>617</sup> P. Gleijeses. 2010. A Test of Wills: Jimmy Carter, South Africa, and the independence of Namibia. *Diplomatic History*. Vol. 34, No 5. p. 854.

manufacturing and even nuclear research. With its capable arsenal and manpower, SA was the perfect ally to stop the red tide of communism in Southern Africa.<sup>618</sup> The USA now found itself in an unenviable position where it supported SA while still publically campaigning for an independent Namibia.

By 1977, the USA had seemingly taken the lead in the diplomatic advocacy of Namibia's independence under the leadership of President Carter.<sup>619</sup> The USA was considered as the leader of the five Western members on the UN Security Council who called themselves the Contact Group "for the specific purpose of negotiating Namibia's independence with Pretoria and the Front Line States (FLS)."<sup>620</sup> The Contact Group consisted of the USA, the UK, France, West Germany and Canada.<sup>621</sup> By February 1978 the Contact Group had its proposals ready. Both Pretoria and SWAPO agreed that national elections, supervised by the UN, could be held in Namibia. But when the time came, SA refused a UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) "to enforce the UN's authority."<sup>622</sup> Instead, Pretoria "prepared the way for a Unilateral Declaration of Independence by sponsoring an election for a 'National Assembly' with wide legislative powers."<sup>623</sup>

On 25 April 1978 Pretoria "formally accepted the West's Proposals for a SWA/Namibian settlement."<sup>624</sup> These proposals were to be known as UN Security Council Resolution 435. It was endorsed in the UN by September 1978 and is described by Crocker as "an impressive and ambitious piece of diplomatic work."<sup>625</sup> The aim of Resolution 435 was to change SWAPO's war for independence to an act of bloodless self-determination that would eventually lead to the independence of Namibia. Resolution 435 entailed that SA would systematically give up its administrative control over Namibia whilst being monitored by the UNTAG which consisted of civilian and military personnel.<sup>626</sup> The Contact Group wanted to achieve the following objectives with Resolution 435 and UNTAG:

to create acceptable conditions for an electoral campaign and organise and supervise 'free and fair' elections; assure the repeal of discriminatory laws and the release of political prisoners (on either side); arrange the return of war refugees; monitor the Namibia-Angola border against infiltration; monitor the conduct of the local police, the confinement to base and scheduled departure of South African forces from Namibia, and the demobilisation of local, South African-controlled territorial forces; and monitor and maintain a cessation of hostilities between the various forces.<sup>627</sup>

<sup>618</sup> R. K. Massie. 1997. *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Publishing Group Inc. pp. 483-487.

<sup>619</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 52.

<sup>620</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 37. Bothma, op cit. p. 227. Katjavivi, op cit. pp. 114-120. Urnov, op cit. p. 142.

<sup>621</sup> C. Legum. 1979. *The Western Crises over Southern Africa*. New York: African Publishing Company. p. 182. Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 127. Lulat, op cit. p. 229. Katjavivi, op cit. p. 114.

<sup>622</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 4. Lulat, op cit. p. 230. Katjavivi, op cit. p. 121.

<sup>623</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 4.

<sup>624</sup> Steenkamp, op cit. p. 10.

<sup>625</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 37.

<sup>626</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 189. Lulat, op cit. p. 230.

<sup>627</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 38.

Policy makers in the USA and in Moscow were cynical that Resolution 435 would succeed in resolving the Namibian dispute<sup>628</sup> since Pretoria declined to implement the Resolution and they also did not want to allow the UNTAG on Namibian soil for the following reasons.<sup>629</sup> Firstly, Resolution 435 only accommodated for the settlement of the Namibian crisis and did not take into consideration that Angola was also a problematic area for Pretoria. Secondly Pretoria did not want to lose the natural resources of Namibia. Thirdly, Namibia served as a buffer zone from the perceived communist threat in Angola. Fourthly, if SA would agree to Resolution 435, it would mean that SA acknowledged to wrongfully occupying Namibia and lose political face. Fifthly Pretoria was concerned that SWAPO would use its support from the UN, the USSR, Cuba and the MPLA to force its way into power. Sixth, Pretoria possibly felt that they could not abandon their ally, UNITA. Lastly, if the South Africans were to withdraw from Namibia; they would lose valuable military bases that were utilised to project SA's military force to neighbouring states.<sup>630</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Namibia: The Protracted Road to Independence<sup>631</sup>

In order to win the hearts and minds of the native Namibians the National Assembly issued the Abolition of Racial Discrimination Act of 1979 which entailed that racial segregation should be ended at Namibian public facilities. The white population of Namibia did not take kindly to this act and the Administrator General of the time, Marthinus Steyn<sup>632</sup> was replaced by Gerrit Viljoen who was much better at slowing down the pace of political reform in Namibia.<sup>633</sup>

In June 1985 SA established the Transitional Government of National Unity whose objective was to organise "a Constitutional Council that would devise a constitution bringing full independence for Namibia within two years."<sup>634</sup> After 23 years of fighting between SWAPO and South African forces, peace eventually came to Namibia. The USA served as a middleman to broker the peace between the belligerent parties and their supporters. In November 1989 after eight months of arduous negotiations all parties agreed to the holding of elections in Namibia. The entire political manoeuvring taking place from the 1960s onwards did so against the backdrop of the Angolan civil war and the Namibian war for independence. If one was to follow Clausewitz's argument that warfare is a continuation of politics, then the link between Namibian independence and the Angolan civil war will become transparent.

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<sup>628</sup> V. Shubin. 2008. *The Hot "Cold War": The USSR in Southern Africa*. London: Pluto Press p. 221. Crocker, op cit. p. 63.

<sup>629</sup> The reasons why SA did not initially accept Resolution 435 can be found in Lulat, op cit. p. 230.

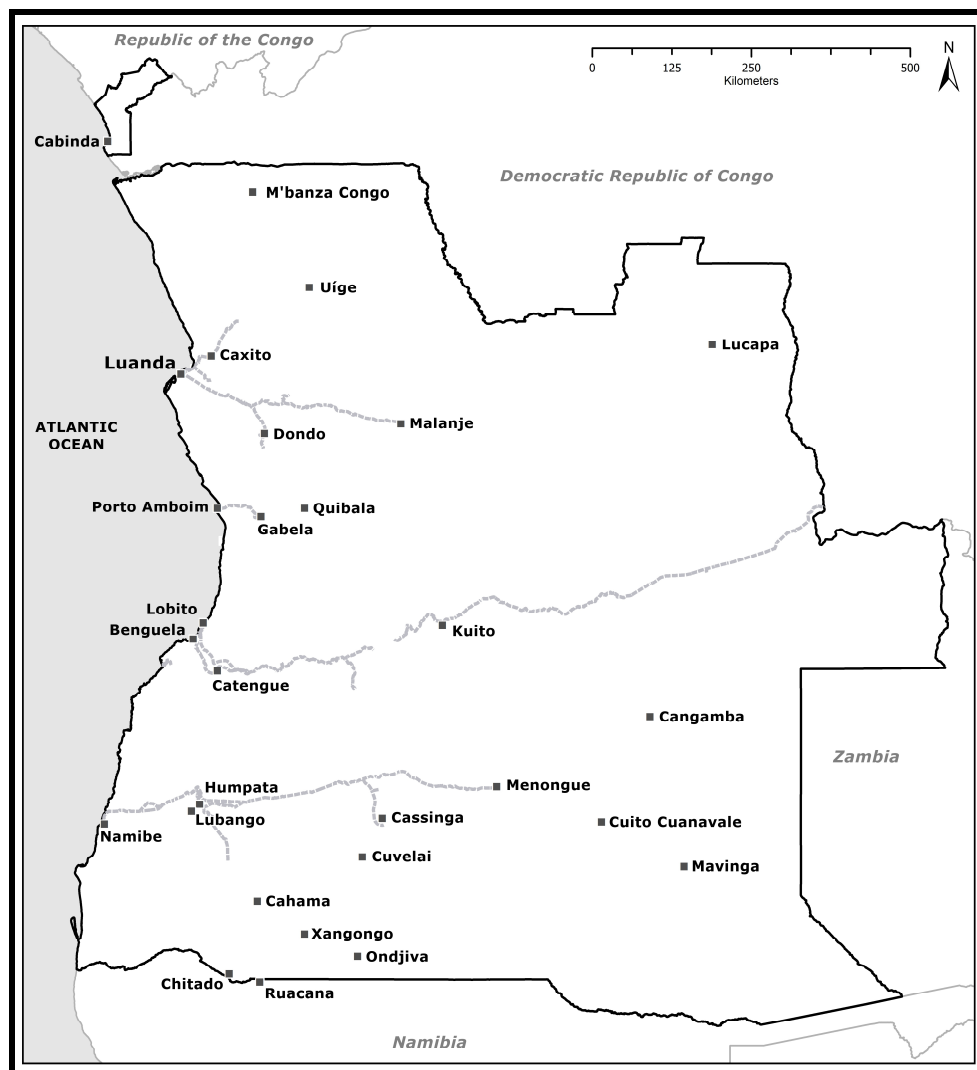
<sup>630</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 41.

<sup>631</sup> It is important for the reader to understand that the section of Namibia's independence and the section on the Border war in Angola is inextricably linked. The reader will only understand how Namibia's independence came about after reading the section explaining the Border War in Angola.

<sup>632</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 186.

<sup>633</sup> Cooper, op cit. p. 5.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid. p. 6.



Map 4.2: Map of Angola<sup>635</sup>

## 4.3 THE USA-SA RELATIONSHIP WITH REGARDS TO ANGOLA

### 4.3.1 Background

Since the early 1960s when Angola was still under the colonial rule of Portugal, regular uprisings by the local people took place to demonstrate their discontent with the way that the country was run.<sup>636</sup> The independence of several African countries in the early sixties spurred the people of Angola on to fight against the colonialist Portuguese regime.<sup>637</sup> South

<sup>635</sup> Map designed by Tyrel Flugel, Department of Geography, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

<sup>636</sup> F.A. Guimarães. 1998. *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: Foreign Intervention and Domestic Political Conflict*. New York: St Martin's Press. pp. 31-32.

<sup>637</sup> Malan, op cit. p.75.

Africa's role as military and economic powerhouse of the region made it inevitable that involvement in any future conflict was an almost foregone conclusion in order to ensure stability in the region.<sup>638</sup> The South Africans were dragged into the Angolan conflict as a result of the insurgency war that they were fighting in Namibia<sup>639</sup> since SWAPO found refuge in Angola leading to the SADF frequently launching cross-border raids into Angola.<sup>640</sup>

Until 1970 Portugal did well in helping SA to halt insurgent groups from entering Namibia from Angola but by the early 1970s various insurgent groups began gaining ground against the Portuguese and already controlled several areas of Angola. In spite of cementing their hold over certain areas the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) which was SWAPO's military wing<sup>641</sup> was unable to freely build training facilities in Southern Angola due to successful Portuguese counter insurgency warfare.<sup>642</sup>

Then everything changed in 1974. The Lisbon coup, also known as the Carnation Revolution<sup>643</sup> necessitated a whole new approach to the situation in Angola and Namibia.<sup>644</sup> The Portuguese government announced that Angola would become independent on 11 November 1975 as a result of the Alvor Agreement that was "hammered" together in January 1975.<sup>645</sup> Accordingly elections were to be held in Angola during September 1975 with the winning party ruling the whole country.<sup>646</sup> The Lisbon coup was an indication to the West that they were losing their grip over Southern Africa. The USA wanted to avoid this at all costs and consequently welcomed any entity willing to protect Western interest in Southern Africa.<sup>647</sup> The imminent exit of Portugal from the scene forced SA and the US policies into greater alignment regarding Southern Africa.<sup>648</sup>

There were three groups fighting for control of Angola.<sup>649</sup> These were the MPLA, backed by the communist countries, the FNLA and then UNITA with the backing of the USA, Zaire and SA.<sup>650</sup> All three groups operated in different geographical areas of Angola. Initially the FNLA was the strongest militarily and the MPLA was stronger in the political and

<sup>638</sup> A. Zegeye, T. Dixon, and I. Liebenberg. 1999. Images: the Seesaw Haunting keeps Killing the Living. *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*. Vol 5(4). pp. 387-414.

<sup>639</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 20.

<sup>640</sup> I. Liebenberg in C. Manganyi, I. Liebenberg and T. Potgieter (Eds). 2013. The Arms Industry, Reform and Civil-Military Relations in South Africa in *South Africa and Romania: Transition to Democracy and Changing Security Paradigms*. Durban: Just Done Publishing. p. 246. Mills and Williams, op cit. p. 169. Gorbunov, op cit. p. 49.

<sup>641</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 90. Gorbunov, op cit. p. 49.

<sup>642</sup> Malan, op cit. p.75.

<sup>643</sup> I. Ramonet. 2007. *My Life: Fidel Castro*. London: Penguin Books. p. 316.

<sup>644</sup> P. Gleijeses. 2006. Moscow's Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975-1988. *Journal of Cold War Studies*. Vol 8, No 2. p. 3.

<sup>645</sup> C. Alden. 1998. *Apartheid's last stand: The rise and fall of the South African security state*. St Martin's Press: New York. p. 25.

<sup>646</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 84-85.

<sup>647</sup> Walters, op cit. p. 9. Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 6.

<sup>648</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 23. Katjavivi, op cit. p. 86.

<sup>649</sup> Guimarães, op cit. p. 32.

<sup>650</sup> J. W. Turner. 1998. *Continent Ablaze: The insurgency wars in Africa, 1960 to the present*. Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers. p. 36. Walters, op cit. p. 15.

administrative spheres.<sup>651</sup> The MPLA would in the end prove to be the most successful of the three groups.<sup>652</sup>

With three factions fighting for power in Angola, the country was soon descended into chaos.<sup>653</sup> “The three rebel movements, with no one to control them, bloodily jockeyed to grab control of the country when independence came.”<sup>654</sup> The Portuguese withdrawal created an exploitable situation for the Soviets to win more support in Angola.<sup>655</sup> The Cuban and Soviet interest in Angola created a whole new dimension to the situation with their support of MPLA, SWAPO and the ANC.<sup>656</sup> Likewise the instability in Angola created opportunities for the USA to further its own interests in Africa. South Africa and the West would not allow what they depicted as a communist takeover of Angola without a fight.<sup>657</sup> When considering the above, it should not be surprising that by mid-1975 Angola was engulfed in a fully-fledged civil war.

### 4.3.2 Role Players

#### 4.3.2.1 UNITA

At the head of UNITA was Dr Jonas Savimbi<sup>658</sup>, a one-time member of the MPLA.<sup>659</sup> He then joined the FNLA, but in 1964 Savimbi and the leader of the FNLA, Holden Roberto, had an argument which led to Savimbi founding UNITA. UNITA drew the majority of its support from the Ovimbundu tribe in Southern Angola. The Ovimbundus were related to the Ovambo's from Namibia.<sup>660</sup> Before Angola's independence from Portugal, UNITA worked in collaboration with SWAPO. UNITA allowed SWAPO to use their territory in Angola to transit refugees, supplies and guerrillas between Zambia and Namibia. The UNITA-SWAPO alliance ended after Angola's independence because SWAPO started leaning more towards supporting the MPLA.<sup>661</sup> Savimbi claimed that UNITA was going to be an anti-imperialist and nationalist movement.<sup>662</sup> However, Savimbi reached the conclusion that ruling Angola could only be achieved with the assistance from Pretoria and Washington but he maintained that the main principle of UNITA's struggle should be self-reliance.<sup>663</sup> SA and the USA did not hesitate to support Savimbi in his endeavours, because a UNITA victory would stop the

<sup>651</sup> Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 251.

<sup>652</sup> I. Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuyse and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. pp. 66-68.

<sup>653</sup> Castro, F. In Walters, op cit. p. 22. Metrowich, op cit. p. 89.

<sup>654</sup> P. Stiff. 1989. *Nine Days of War: Namibia – before, during and after*. Alberton: Lemur Books.. p. 12.

<sup>655</sup> Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. pp. 235-237. Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. pp. 113-116. Bothma, op cit. p. 47.

<sup>656</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 20.

<sup>657</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 35. Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 216.

<sup>658</sup> Metrowich, op cit. p. 89. Walters, op cit. p. 15. R.I. Rotberg in R.J. Bloomfield (Ed). 1988. *Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique*. Michigan: Reference Publications. p. 76.

<sup>659</sup> H. Kitchen. 1987. *Angola, Mozambique and the West*. New York: Praeger. p. 4. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 14. Savimbi had a reputation of being a wealthy playboy by some people. Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 196.

<sup>660</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 378.

<sup>661</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 85. Massie, op cit. p. 378. Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 240.

<sup>662</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 55.

<sup>663</sup> M. Wolfers and J. Bergerol. 1983. *Angola in the Frontline*. London: Zed. p. 205.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid. p. 201.

communist expansion in Angola and a collaborator would be in power. Pretoria also reckoned that if UNITA was in power in Angola, then SWAPO would no longer be able to utilise southern Angola as springboard for operations into Namibia.<sup>664</sup>

#### 4.3.2.2 MPLA

The MPLA was founded in 1956 when two Angolan liberation movements namely the Party for the United Struggle of Angolan Africans and the Angolan Communist Party amalgamated.<sup>665</sup> The MPLA managed to gain the trust of the intellectuals, as well as the trust of the underprivileged people of Angola.<sup>666</sup> The MPLA started its armed struggle in February 1961 under the leadership of Dr Agostinho Neto, an intellectual and a supporter of communism. SWAPO turned to the MPLA for protection and the MPLA readily became SWAPO's main African benefactor. This eventually made the MPLA a target for the SADF.<sup>667</sup>

#### 4.3.2.3 FNLA

During March 1962 the Union of Angolan People combined efforts with the Peoples Democratic Party to form the FNLA. The FNLA operated in the northern and eastern parts of Angola under the leadership of Holden Roberto who was the brother in law of Pres Mobutu Sese Seko<sup>668</sup> from Zaire (the Democratic Republic of the Congo today). The FNLA differed from the MPLA in the sense that they were anti-communist as well as anti-Portuguese.<sup>669</sup> The FNLA received a great deal of support from Zaire for obvious reasons. The FNLA was supported by Zaire, the Peoples Republic of China and a number of Arab states.<sup>670</sup> Around 1961 Roberto became permanently involved with the CIA.<sup>671</sup> By the end of 1973, when it became clear that the Portuguese were not going to be able to occupy Angola for much longer, the CIA funded a recruitment campaign for the FNLA in Kinshasa.<sup>672</sup> The CIA wanted to ensure that the FNLA would be able to take power once the opportunity came.<sup>673</sup> At that time the SADF was also involved with the training and arming of the FNLA.<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 295.

<sup>665</sup> Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 3. Lulat, op cit. p. 186.

<sup>666</sup> Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 82. Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 102.

<sup>667</sup> Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 115.

<sup>668</sup> Malan, op cit. p.75. Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 236.

<sup>669</sup> Mobutu was funded by the CIA since 1960. Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>670</sup> Malan, op cit. p.76-77.

<sup>671</sup> Stiff, op cit. p. 11.

<sup>672</sup> Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 279. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 91. Lulat, op cit. p. 187.

<sup>673</sup> G. Wright. 1997. *The Destruction of a Nation: US Policy toward Angola since 1945*. Chicago: Pluto Press. p. 9. Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 259.

<sup>674</sup> Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 4. Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 117. Guimarães, op cit. p. 32.

J. Breytenbach. 2009. *The Buffalo Soldiers: The Story of South Africa's 32-Battalion, 1975-1993*. Alberton: Galago Books. p. 31.



#### 4.3.2.4 Cuba and the USSR

Cuba's relationship with the MPLA was formed ten years earlier when Ernesto "Che" Guevara travelled to Congo-Brazzaville to meet with African guerrilla leaders. Agostinho Neto was one of the leaders that met with Guevara.<sup>675</sup> By late September 1975 the first Cuban soldiers arrived in Angola to serve as advisors to the MPLA in order to control the country after independence and also to fight side by side with the MPLA.<sup>676</sup> The Cuban mission in Angola was codenamed Operation Carlota.<sup>677</sup> Scholars like Stiff argue that the Cubans were used as surrogates or proxies for the USSR, but Fidel Castro denies it. Shubin and Gleijeses through their research proved that the Cubans were in fact not a surrogate force of the USSR<sup>678</sup> and that it was instead the Cuban values of internationalism and anti-imperialism which motivated Cuba to intervene in Angola.<sup>679</sup> Gabriel Garcia Marquez from Columbia interviewed many Cuban leaders after the war and confirmed that the Cuban decision to intervene in Angola was made by Cuba. The USSR was only informed about the decision after Fidel Castro already made it.<sup>680</sup> It can also be argued that Cuba brought the USSR into the Angolan conflict, because if the Cubans did not intervene in Angola, then maybe the USSR would not have gotten so heavily involved in the Angolan conflict.<sup>681</sup>

Piero Gleijeses describes Cuba's role in international politics during the Cold War as unique. Cuba was the only developing country that intervened in conflict far away from its immediate area. The only other country that sent more troops to fight in foreign wars far away from home was the USA. Cuba thus even projected more troops than the USSR during the Cold War. Castro's decision to send 36 000 Cuban troops to Angola from November 1975 – April 1976 signalled to Washington that Cuba was determined to move into Africa.<sup>682</sup> Castro did not only send military personnel to Angola. By the end of 1976 more than 1000 Cuban aid workers were also present in Angola. The Cubans constantly emphasised that they were in Angola to fight off foreign attacks against Angola.<sup>683</sup> They had no interest in the Angolan civil war. The majority of the Cuban force was deployed in central Angola to protect the region against a South African invasion.<sup>684</sup> The Cuban soldiers had their first skirmish in Angola in the last week of October 1975 at Quifangondo<sup>685</sup>

<sup>675</sup> H. L. Blanch and I. Liebenberg. 2009. A view from Cuba: Internationalists against Apartheid. *Journal for Contemporary History*. Vol 34, No 1, Feb 2009. p. 86.

<sup>676</sup> Ramonet, op cit. p. 319.

<sup>677</sup> R. Castro. 1991. *¡La Operación Carlota ha concluido! Victoria del internacionalismo cubano*. Havana: Editora Política. p.5. Marquez, G.G. in Walters, op cit. p. 127. Guimarães, op cit. p. 111.

<sup>678</sup> Shubin, 2008. op cit. p. 73. Stiff, op cit. p. 12. Ramonet, op cit. p. 322. Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 8.

<sup>679</sup> Castro F. In Walters, op cit. p. 21. Blanch and Liebenberg, op cit. p. 86.

<sup>680</sup> Walters, op cit. p. 17.

<sup>681</sup> Guimarães, op cit. p. 153.

<sup>682</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 3. Walters, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>683</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 190.

<sup>684</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 25.

<sup>685</sup> Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuysen and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 66.

The MPLA's communist links "coupled with overt and covert support from the USSR and its allies, set the stage for the first major superpower confrontation in Sub-Saharan Africa."<sup>686</sup> It was very convenient for the USA and SA to portray the MPLA as an outright communist organisation, because it could justify a war against them if viewed through the Cold War lens. But Shubin and Tokarev are of the opinion that the MPLA was not an outright Marxist organisation. They argue that the MPLA rather tried to have relationships with the West and the East, so their policies could not be outright Marxist if they wanted the support of the West.<sup>687</sup> Blanch and Liebenberg confirms that the MPLA was "...undecided at the time on its stance on either capitalism or socialism but hoping for a national independent state..."<sup>688</sup>

The arrival of the Cuban troops was the perfect excuse for SA and the USA to increase their support to the newly allied FNLA-UNITA coalition in order to counter the so called communist invasion. Pretoria and the American media were grossly exaggerating the role that the Cubans and Russians were playing in Angola in order to convince the American public that US intervention was needed in Angola.<sup>689</sup> Between 1975 and 1991 more than 425 000 Cuban citizens volunteered to participate in the war in Angola as soldiers and as civilian volunteers<sup>690</sup> with 2700 of them becoming casualties during the conflict.<sup>691</sup>

The first group of 40 Soviet military specialists and advisors arrived in Angola during November 1975 to support the MPLA.<sup>692</sup> By January 1991, 10 985 Soviet military advisors and specialists visited Angola. In addition to the manpower, the USSR provided military supplies to the value of 3.7 billion Rubles to Angola during the entire war. Almost 7 000 Angolans received training at Russian military educational institutions during the war.<sup>693</sup> By the end of the war in Angola, more than 30 000 Soviet military personnel partook directly and indirectly in the war.<sup>694</sup>

The fact that the USSR was providing the MPLA with weapons further strengthened USA-SA willingness to get involved in Angola. During September 1975 Fidel Castro announced in a speech that the USSR had recently provided the MPLA with the following weapons and equipment:

- "26 armoured vehicles;
- 32 GRAD-1PS – the *granizos* (mobile multiple-rocket launchers);
- 12 76-mm cannons;

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<sup>686</sup> Alden, op cit. pp. 24-25.

<sup>687</sup> V. Shubin and A. Tokarev. 2001. "War in Angola: A Soviet Dimension". *Review of the African Political Economy*, No 90. p. 611. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 45.

<sup>688</sup> Blanch and Liebenberg, op cit. p. 87.

<sup>689</sup> Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 75.

<sup>690</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 11. Barnard, op cit. p. 46.

<sup>691</sup> Walters, op cit. p. 9, 15.

<sup>692</sup> Mills and Williams, op cit. p. 170.

<sup>693</sup> Shubin, G. op cit. p. 26. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>694</sup> Shubin, V. in Potgieter, Esterhuyse and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 33.

<sup>694</sup> Shubin, G. op cit. p. 26.

- 3 216 RPG-7 bazookas;
- 39 82-mm mortars;
- 4 anti-aircraft batteries with 23-mm cannons;
- 44 ZCU anti-aircraft guns;
- 298 machine guns;
- 2 899 AKM rifles;
- 84 radio transmitters; and
- 10 000 uniforms, both military and civilian.<sup>695</sup>

South Africa and the USA's support for UNITA and the Soviet/Cuban support to the MPLA and SWAPO changed both the Angolan and Namibian conflicts. Resultantly the Angolan civil war became part of the regional Border War.<sup>696</sup>

#### 4.4 THE EVOLUTION OF THE BORDER WAR AND THE USA'S INVOLVEMENT

##### 4.4.1 Opening Salvo's

In September 1965 the first SWAPO insurgents entered Northern Namibia via the border with Angola. It was a small group of six people. Their mission was to recruit more members and provide them with basic military training. In February and July of 1966 two more groups crossed the border into Namibia. PLAN's first military attack was in February 1966 when "a gang attacked two Portuguese trading stores in southern Angola, killing two Portuguese citizens and three of their Owambo employees."<sup>697</sup> The first contact between SWAPO and the South African security forces took place in August 1966 at Ongulumbashe in Owamboland.<sup>698</sup> The SAP supported by the SAAF tracked and located a large number of SWAPO guerrillas, killing two and capturing nine. More SWAPO members were arrested after the contact as a result of intelligence gathered by the South Africans from locals who were sympathetic to SA.<sup>699</sup> PLAN gained confidence and soon numerous attacks on Owambo's, South Africans and Portuguese alike became part of everyday life in Northern Namibia and Southern Angola.<sup>700</sup>

From early 1967 SWAPO decided to focus their attacks on the Caprivi strip (see map 4.1), because it was easier to mount attacks on this area from their Zambian bases. Numerous

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<sup>695</sup> Castro, F in Walters, op cit. p. 25.

<sup>696</sup> Crocker, op cit. pp. 55-56.

<sup>697</sup> Stiff, op cit. p. 10.

<sup>698</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 60. Bothma, op cit. pp. 22-23.

<sup>699</sup> United Nations, op cit. p. 29.

<sup>700</sup> Stiff, op cit. p. 10. Malan, op cit. p.73.

incidents of armed attacks by PLAN continued in Owamboland and the Caprivi.<sup>701</sup> Pretoria responded to these attacks by cautioning the liberation movements that SA will take any measures necessary to protect Namibia and that the government had the capabilities to do so. The confrontation with the SA security forces slowly escalated until the early 1970s when Pretoria decided that the SADF should take over the border security from the SAP.<sup>702</sup>

Pretoria was cautious to deploy military forces to the border before 1971, but when the ICJ announced that SA was unlawfully occupying Namibia, the South African approach changed. Before 1971, SA only deployed the police to suppress riots close to the border areas. Pretoria was determined to fight a war inside Namibia to keep the country and its resources in SA's hands.<sup>703</sup> In order to achieve this aim the SADF had to replace the police.

The early 1970s was characterised by low-intensity insurgency into Namibia, but things changed when the Portuguese withdrew from neighbouring Angola in 1974 and a civil war for the rule of Angola broke out between the three liberation movements.<sup>704</sup> South Africa's response to Lisbon's withdrawal from Africa was to embark on a policy of détente with sympathetic African countries like Ivory Coast, Senegal and Zambia.<sup>705</sup> Pretoria improved relations with these African countries by providing them with aid and "launching a flurry of diplomatic activity..."<sup>706</sup> SA reckoned that peaceful coexistence with its black neighbours would be possible if each state respected the internal system of their neighbours. This meant that if SA's neighbours would turn a blind eye to its apartheid system then they would not have problems with each other.<sup>707</sup>

#### 4.4.2 An Escalation in the Fighting

Initially UNITA and the FNLA achieved dominance over the MPLA and its military wing (FAPLA). This changed when the Cuban government began sending troops/military equipment and the USSR sent large stockpiles of weapons in support of FAPLA to Angola.<sup>708</sup> Even though the USSR sent equipment to Angola, their soldiers were not heavily involved in the actual fighting in Angola. The Soviet soldiers in Angola were applied as advisors or interpreters. Initially Soviet aid to the MPLA remained limited, because the USSR did not entirely trust Neto and the Soviets "did not want to jeopardise the strategic arms control negotiations with the United States."<sup>709</sup> There were never any regular Soviet military units in

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<sup>701</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 84.

<sup>702</sup> Steenkamp, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>703</sup> Malan, op cit. p.74.

<sup>704</sup> Steenkamp, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>705</sup> Bothma, op cit.p. 41.

<sup>706</sup> Gleijeses, 2010, op cit. p.854.

<sup>707</sup> Ibid.

<sup>708</sup> Piero Gleijeses's work disagrees with this statement. According to Gleijeses, the MPLA did not win because of Cuban or Soviet aid, but because the MPLA leaders were better trained, educated and motivated than those of UNITA and the FNLA.

<sup>709</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 5.

Angola, except for a logistical unit that was placed in Angola to support some naval elements of the USSR.<sup>710</sup>

Once SA realised that the tide was turning in Angola, Pretoria decided to intervene in the conflict on the side of UNITA/FNLA.<sup>711</sup> Initially the SADF used Angolans that were trained and equipped by the SADF, but later on groups of regular SADF soldiers became involved in the actual fighting.<sup>712</sup> The SAAF also played an important role in providing air support to the Angolan and SA troops on the ground.<sup>713</sup>

The SADF launched operation Savannah<sup>714</sup> in 1975 “which involved sending small numbers of troops into Angola – at the instigation, so it is said, of Dr Henry Kissinger himself.”<sup>715</sup> The USA disputed that they ever told Pretoria to invade Angola.<sup>716</sup> The SADF’s main argument for launching Operation Savannah was to protect the Calueque hydro-electrical scheme situated at Ruacana<sup>717</sup> from occupation by their opponents.<sup>718</sup> Liebenberg has a valid point when he argues that the protection of the Calueque dam was not a good cover story to validate the SADF’s actions in Angola. He bases his argument on the fact that by the end of Operation Savannah, the SADF forces were hundreds of kilometres north of the dam that they were supposed to protect. (See map 4.2)<sup>719</sup> The South African thought that they were going to fight side by side with UNITA, but the standard of the UNITA forces was so low that the South African had to fight most of the battles by themselves.<sup>720</sup>

The CIA tried to keep its support to anti-communist Angolan forces as covert as possible.<sup>721</sup> The USA sent weapons and advisors to Angola.<sup>722</sup> One technique the CIA used to hide their support for the anti-communist forces in Angola was to provide them with obsolete Second World War weapons that could be found in numerous countries from all over the world. So the weapons could not be directly traced back to the USA.<sup>723</sup> The USA government received plenty of international criticism when it came to light that they were supplying UNITA with weapons.<sup>724</sup> One of the most important contributions from the USA to UNITA was the Stinger Missiles that could be used against enemy planes.<sup>725</sup> Major General (Ret) Tienie

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<sup>710</sup> Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 72.

<sup>711</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 188.

<sup>712</sup> F. Bridgland. 1986. *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa*. Edinburgh: Main Street Publishing Company Ltd. p. 139.

<sup>713</sup> Turner, op cit. p. 36.

<sup>714</sup> Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuysen and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 66. Guimarães, op cit. p. 121.

<sup>715</sup> Steenkamp, op cit. p. 3. Castro, F in Walters, op cit. p. 37. Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. p. 151.

<sup>716</sup> Metrowich, op cit. p. 96.

<sup>717</sup> See map 4.2.

<sup>718</sup> Metrowich, op cit. p. 89. Guimarães, op cit. p. 109.

<sup>719</sup> Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuysen and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 66. Urnov, op cit. p. 124.

<sup>720</sup> Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 211.

<sup>721</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 5.

<sup>722</sup> Blanch and Liebenberg, op cit. p. 89.

<sup>723</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 87.

<sup>724</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 67.

<sup>725</sup> Malan, op cit. p.279. Mills and Williams, op cit. p. 175. G.J. Bender. *Washington's Quest for Enemies* in R.J. Bloomfield (Ed), op cit. p. 190.

Groenewald (Head of South African Military Intelligence, 1984-1986) confirmed that the CIA helped to secure Stinger missiles to be used by the SADF and UNITA in Angola.<sup>726</sup>

The USA then found itself in a predicament, because they could not align themselves with apartheid SA as it would damage their international status, but they also did not want to allow the communist to get a foothold in Southern Africa.<sup>727</sup> Kissinger proposed to President Ford that the USA should adopt a policy of covert intervention in Angola.<sup>728</sup> Kissinger's plan for Angola had the following limited objectives:

- The USA should prevent the MPLA, the USSR and Cuba from achieving a quick military takeover in Angola;
- The USA should help the FNLA and UNITA to dominate the MPLA politically.<sup>729</sup>

According to El-Khawas and Cohen, the USA started covert military operations in Angola from January 1975.<sup>730</sup> As the war progressed and the USA realised that the FNLA won't be able to overthrow the MPLA on its own, so they also provided UNITA with military weapons, training and funds.<sup>731</sup>

During mid-1975 President Kaunda of Zambia used a state visit to the USA to urge the American government to provide UNITA with covert support to fight the MPLA. By the end of July 1975 USA support in the form of weapons and supplies were given to UNITA under the supervision of the CIA. Officials inside the Ford administration warned the CIA and Kissinger that the USA should not align itself with the SA foreign policy by supplying UNITA with weapons. Their argument was that a diplomatic solution to the Angolan problem would fit the American political image better.<sup>732</sup> The American Ambassador to SA of the time, William Bowder, denied that the USA was participating in the Border War.<sup>733</sup> A telegram from the SA embassy in Washington informed the South African Secretary of Foreign Affairs that John Stockwell, the man who commanded the CIA's Angola task force<sup>734</sup> in 1975 was going to reveal to the American media that the:

- "CIA had advisers and trainers in Angola in violation of orders of operations advisory group;
- CIA offered bounties for stolen aircraft, then used them to fly arms to Angola;

<sup>726</sup> Anon. 1997. This is an off –the-record discussion tonight. *Noseweek*. Issue no 15. p. 5.

<sup>727</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 36.

<sup>728</sup> F. V. Pabian. 1995. South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program: Lessons for U.S Nonproliferation Policy, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall 1995. p. 3.

<sup>729</sup> Mokoena, op cit. pp. 219-25.

<sup>730</sup> M.A. El-Khawas and B. Cohen. 1976. *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa: National Security Study Memorandum 39 (Secret)*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill. p. 57.

<sup>731</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 29. Blanch and Liebenberg, op cit. p. 89

<sup>732</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 379. Guimarães, op cit. pp. 106-107..

<sup>733</sup> Letter from G. Colyn to Minister P.W. Botha. 1978. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.

<sup>734</sup> Bridgland, op cit. p. 13.

- CIA recruited and delivered mercenaries to Angola;
- CIA and US government encouraged South Africa to intervene in Angola and had close contact with SA...<sup>735</sup>

During the Ford administration the USA was initially in support of Holden Roberto of the FNLA.<sup>736</sup> The USA even supported the FNLA in their war against the Portuguese and they intended to install Roberto as the leader of an independent Angola.<sup>737</sup> From late 1974 through to mid-1975 the USA support to the FNLA escalated. In January 1975 the CIA covertly provided the FNLA with US\$ 300 000 to buy bicycles, desk and paperclips on paper but in reality it was used for weapons and military equipment.<sup>738</sup> President Ford authorised around US\$ 14 million of American expenditure to the FNLA during July 1975.<sup>739</sup> So at first the Ford administration wanted to prevent the MPLA from taking over Angola.<sup>740</sup> Between July and August 1975, Ford provided anti-MPLA forces with US\$ 25 million in aid.<sup>741</sup> In total from January 1975 to December 1975 the USA spend over US\$ 31 million in military equipment, transportation and cash payments in Angola.<sup>742</sup> It was also at this time that the SADF invaded Angola on the side of UNITA.<sup>743</sup>

It is important to remember that the USA was still involved with the conflict in Vietnam during the early 1970s. As a result the US congress was not very eager to support Kissinger's endeavour in Angola. It was not a good time for the US government to have a crisis in Africa.<sup>744</sup> Alden colourfully explains that "[c]oming on the heels of the ignoble experience in Vietnam, Congressional doves sought to curtail American 'adventurism' in Africa."<sup>745</sup> As a result the US Congress passed the Clark Amendment in December 1975 which entailed that the USA was no longer allowed to support the SA-UNITA war effort in Angola.<sup>746</sup> The Bill did not ban the USA from military involvement entirely, but Ford would need permission from the Congress before doing anything in Angola.<sup>747</sup> This decision greatly affected the relationship between SA and the USA. After hearing about the Clark Amendment, P.W. Botha commented that: "If the West does not want to contribute its share for the sake of itself and

<sup>735</sup> Telegram from SA embassy in Washington to Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Cape Town. 1978. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.

<sup>736</sup> Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuysen and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 68. Lulat, op cit. p. 186.

Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 100.

<sup>737</sup> Castro, F in Walters, op cit. p. 36. Breytenbach, op cit. p. 31. Lulat, op cit. p. 188. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>738</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 44.

<sup>739</sup> Bridgland, op cit. p.13. Johnson, P. and D. Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 117. Lulat, op cit. p. 188. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 44.

<sup>740</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>741</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 85.

<sup>742</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen, op cit. p. 183.

<sup>743</sup> Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 211.

<sup>744</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed). 1p. 10.

<sup>745</sup> Alden, op cit. p. 25.

<sup>746</sup> Bridgland, op cit. p. 155. Lulat, op cit. p. 190.

<sup>747</sup> Davies, op cit. p. 14.

the free world, it cannot expect South Africa to do it...South Africa is not prepared to fight the West's battle against Communist penetration on its own."<sup>748</sup>

At the same time the first Soviet advisors arrived in Angola, the Ford administration started to intensify its campaign against Soviet and Cuban intervention in Southern Africa. The USA Congress was asked to make more money available to the CIA to fund covert operations in Angola. But the American Senate did not want to provide extra funds to the CIA for operations in Angola because they were wary after the Vietnam debacle.<sup>749</sup> Kissinger argued that it was extremely important for the USA to maintain operations in Angola, because the Soviets and Cubans were increasing their involvement continuously in Angola. He argued that SA was going to fall to Soviet expansionism if the USA did not intervene aggressively in Angola. Kissinger's argument was not accepted and on 27 January 1976 the USA House of Representatives voted 323 to 99 that American covert military aid to Angola should be stopped.<sup>750</sup>

Even though military aid to Angola was banned, Ford felt that he could not allow the Cubans and Soviets to take control over Southern Africa. Ford then ordered Kissinger to look at the new situation in Southern Africa and to create a new policy for USA-SA relations which took the build-up of Cuban forces in Angola into consideration. While Kissinger was busy formulating a new policy, Ford continuously warned the Soviets and Cubans that they should withdraw from Southern Africa if they do not want war with the USA.<sup>751</sup> Kissinger's plan with the new policy was to convince Cuba to withdraw its troops from Angola, whilst at the same time finding solutions for peaceful transfer of power in Namibia and Rhodesia. According to El-Khawas and Cohen, "[t]he main purpose of the new Ford-Kissinger policy is to find solutions to Southern Africa's chronic racial and colonial problems that can be broadly satisfactory to African leaders but that also guarantee continued white rule in South Africa." In order to force Cuba to withdraw from Angola, Kissinger said that the USA would only recognise Angola as a diplomatic entity once all Cuban troops withdrew from Angola. He further insisted that the USA would not allow Angola to become part of the UN whilst there were still Cuban troops present in Angola.<sup>752</sup>

Events were taking place in the USA from December 1975 to January 1976 which had far reaching effects on the war in Angola. President Nixon's involvement in the Watergate scandal caused the American public and some officials to distrust the new US government under the leadership of Gerald Ford. As a consequence, support to anti-communist countries in Africa was reduced.<sup>753</sup> South African Defence Minister P.W. Botha expressed his disgrace with the USA abandonment with the following words:

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<sup>748</sup> Mills and Williams, op cit. p. 170.

<sup>749</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen, op cit. p. 59. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 45. Urmov, op cit. p. 127.

<sup>750</sup> El-Khawas and Cohen op cit. p.45.

<sup>751</sup> Metrowich, op cit. pp. 96 – 97. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 61.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid. pp. 61-63.

<sup>753</sup> Malan, op cit. p.133. Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 280.



[W]e [intervened in Angola] with the approval and knowledge of the Americans. But they left us in the lurch. We are going to retell that story: The story must be told of how we, with their knowledge, went in there and operated in Angola with their knowledge, how they encouraged us to act and, when we had nearly reached the climax, we were ruthlessly left in the lurch by an undertaking that was broken...<sup>754</sup>

In response, US officials publicly questioned why Botha expected the USA to help him with a war in Angola if the US government had been implementing arms embargoes against SA for more than a decade. The officials further denied their involvement in Angola by saying that the USA made it clear to Pretoria that they did not want a military relationship with Pretoria as long as SA was continuing to implement its apartheid policies.<sup>755</sup> The USA denied its involvement in Angola until after the war in Angola was finished.<sup>756</sup>

During a meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1975 at the holiday home of South African Premier, John Vorster a number of senior South African officials came to the conclusion that SA should withdraw from Angola as soon as possible. The decision was based on the fact that SA was being severely criticised by the international media and especially the American media for its presence in Angola. General Constand Viljoen personally flew to the residence of Savimbi to inform him that SA was finished with the war in Angola and that they were going to withdraw as soon as possible. When the US security advisor to the president heard of the decision to withdraw from Angola, he pleaded with the South Africans to stay in Angola at least until the next meeting of the OAU. His argument was that the withdrawal of SA forces from Angola would allow the communist to take over Southern Angola.<sup>757</sup>

SA felt that the USA could no longer be trusted and the increasing movements for sanctions against SA did not help much to better the relationship either.<sup>758</sup> President Ford was livid when he heard off the Congress' decision to withdraw support to the Angolans after the implementation of the Clark Amendment.<sup>759</sup> The President wanted to know from the Congress how they could allow the communist to operate freely whilst the local people were willing to fight communist expansion.<sup>760</sup>

Some South African scholars and soldiers like Malan, Breytenbach and Venter are of the opinion that the USA stabbed SA in the back during Operation Savannah because the USA encouraged SA to get in involved in Angola to stop the spread of communism in Southern Africa.<sup>761</sup> The South Africans argue that as a result of the withdrawal of USA military and diplomatic aid Operation Savannah resulted in a strategic failure. The Americans on the other hand argue that the US aid to the operation was in any case not to going to be much.

<sup>754</sup> P. W. Botha. 1978, quoted in Alden, op cit. p. 39.

<sup>755</sup> Opsomming van samesprekings op 2 Desember 1978 te Libertas. 1978. File nr MV 56/3/ 1 part 5 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 22.12.76 – 15.3. 79. VSA Verslae.

<sup>756</sup> Ramonet, op cit. p. 316.

<sup>757</sup> Malan, op cit. p.134.

<sup>758</sup> Alden, op cit. p. 25.

<sup>759</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 86. Bridgland, op cit. p. 155.

<sup>760</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 384. Bridgland, op cit. p. 155.

<sup>761</sup> A. J. Venter. 2008. *How South Africa Built Six Atom Bombs and then Abandoned its Nuclear Weapons Program*. Kyalami Estate: Ashanti Publishing. p. 143. Malan, op cit. p.119. Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 46.

The USA rather decided to give equipment to Roberto's troops. Roberto's advance to Luanda ended in chaos when a combination of Cuban and FAPLA forces destroyed them.<sup>762</sup> Stockwell is of the opinion that there were no formal documents signed between Pretoria and the USA to prove that the USA encouraged SA to enter Angola.<sup>763</sup> Everything was probably done covertly via the CIA.<sup>764</sup>

The SADF was able to push the MPLA/Cuban forces back to Luanda during Operation Savannah.<sup>765</sup> It is arguable that the SADF could have seized Luanda if it was not for Castro's decision to send troops to save the MPLA.<sup>766</sup> Even though the SADF were able to push back their communist enemies, the SADF withdrew its forces from Angola in March 1976, because of the international condemnation on SA's participation in Angola.<sup>767</sup> So even though Operation Savannah was a perceived military success, it was still a political failure as a result of the international outcry against SA's fighting in Angola. Western media provided credible evidence that the USA and SA were working together in Angola, but the USA government denied it and rather condemned SA's interference in Angola.<sup>768</sup>

The summit conference of the OAU from 10-13 January 1976 under the leadership of Ugandan President Idi Amin concluded that the MPLA would be recognised as the legitimate leader of Angola. A month later the MPLA government of Angola was accepted as a member of the OAU. After the OAU summit, the SA cabinet made their final decision to withdraw from Angola except from the Calueque area on the Southern border of Angola. They informed the USA of their decision.<sup>769</sup> According to Malan the South Africans felt that they should respect the decision of the OAU, but that the USA had abandoned SA and her allies in a time of need. Minister Botha felt that the USA motivated SA to act in Angola, but when the bullets started to fly the Americans left SA with the mess and withdrew.<sup>770</sup> Feeling betrayed by the USA and suffering constant chastisement by the international community the SADF withdrew from Angola for the time being.<sup>771</sup>

During a visit to Lusaka on 26 April 1976 Kissinger outlined his new US policy towards Southern Africa. With regards to the situation in Namibia he said the USA would continue to call upon SA to give the people of Namibia self-determination. He indicated that the USA would relax restrictions on trade and investment on Namibia once SA decides that Namibia can get independence. The USA would also help Namibia financially to become a diplomatic entity.<sup>772</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> Breytenbach, op cit. p. 123.

<sup>763</sup> J. Stockwell. 1978. *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*. New York: W.W. Norton. p. 188.

<sup>764</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 87. Bridgland, op cit. pp. 142-143.

<sup>765</sup> J. Sithole. Unknown DOP. *Cuba's Internationalism in Africa, 1962-1991*. Pretoria: The Freedom Park Trust. p. 32. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 86.

<sup>766</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 6.

<sup>767</sup> Steenkamp, op cit. p. 4.

<sup>768</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 19. Gleijeses, 2003, op cit. p. 296.

<sup>769</sup> Bissel, op cit. p.135.

<sup>770</sup> P.W. Botha quoted in Malan, op cit. p.135.

<sup>771</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 7.

<sup>772</sup> Ibid. pp. 188-89.

Explaining how the new US policy would influence the USA-SA relationship Kissinger had the following to say:

A peaceful end to institutionalised inequality is in the interest of all South Africans. The United States will continue to encourage and work for peaceful change. Our policy toward South Africa is based upon the premise that within a reasonable time we shall see a clear evolution towards equality of opportunity and basic human rights for all South Africans. The United States will exercise all its efforts in that direction.<sup>773</sup>

From this point onward the South African security forces mostly operated from Namibia against SWAPO or in support of UNITA. There were cross-border raids into Angola, but no major military operations. According to Malan, when SA operated in Angola, they tried their best to avoid fighting with Cuban, Soviet or Angolan soldiers where possible.<sup>774</sup>

By early 1976 PLAN had a large number of permanent bases and training camps in the Southern parts of Angola. This was very worrying to SA. Pretoria was concerned that if SWAPO would achieve dominance in Southern Angola it might motivate other African countries to support them. The real concern was that the ANC could see a SWAPO victory as motivation to infiltrate SA and overthrow the government.<sup>775</sup> The ANC's partnership with the SACP gave the ANC a reputation of being a communist terrorist organisation in SA by the USA.<sup>776</sup> But in fact the ANC was an umbrella organisation with members from a variety of different ideologies, not just communists. Members from the ANC's military wing, MK were sent to the USSR, other Eastern bloc countries and even in Western countries (UK, West Germany, the USA, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries) for training in politics, administration and revolutionary studies. They were also taught how to run an underground organisation and how to form an intelligence service. The ANC had training camps in the rest of Africa (e.g. Lusaka and Dar es Salaam) where they received basic military training from Soviet and Eastern Bloc instructors.<sup>777</sup>

When Jimmy Carter took over the American presidency in January 1977 he announced that one of his first objectives was to negotiate the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. After the MPLA/Cuban victory over the FNLA/UNITA/SA/USA alliance one would expect that Carter would have joined the rest of the world in accepting the MPLA as the legitimate Angolan ruler, but he did not.<sup>778</sup> The Cubans refused to withdraw all their troops since they were already slowly withdrawing forces from Angola as from mid-1976. By March 1977 almost 12 000 Cuban troops have already been withdrawn back to Cuba.<sup>779</sup> In March 1977 the Katangans invaded southern Zaire. Mobutu called on the West to help and Moroccan

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<sup>773</sup> El-Khawas M.A. and B. Cohen, op cit. p. 189.

<sup>774</sup> Malan, op cit. pp135-36.

<sup>775</sup> Turner, op cit. p. 36.

<sup>776</sup> Malan, op cit. p. 382

<sup>777</sup> Ibid. p.80.

<sup>778</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 220.

<sup>779</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 11.

troops (urged by the USA and France) forced the Katangans to retreat into Angola. This incident caused Castro to stop withdrawing troops from Angola, because he saw a new threat in the region.<sup>780</sup> Castro regarded Angola as the pillar in the struggle against white racist rule, so he refused to give up on Angola. The Cuban presence in Angola remained Carter's biggest headache.<sup>781</sup>

During mid-1977 the MPLA claimed that the SADF was acting against the MPLA under the auspices of being UNITA forces.<sup>782</sup> The SADF was in fact carrying out cross-border raids against SWAPO and in support of UNITA since early 1976. UNITA did however declare that they were fighting against SWAPO in Angola.<sup>783</sup> By May 1978 the SADF concluded that the only way to exterminate SWAPO was to hit its bases deep in Angola. Pretoria was wary to venture into Angola again after Operation Savannah, but proceeded with the execution of Operation Reindeer.<sup>784</sup>

A number of SWAPO bases in Angola were destroyed and hundreds of SWAPO fighters were killed within days. Probably the most well-known attack of this operation was the airborne attack on the SWAPO refugee camp at Cassinga (about 250 km north of the Namibian border) in May 1978.<sup>785</sup> At least 300 children were killed during the attack on Cassinga.<sup>786</sup> The attack on Cassinga indicated that SA was determined to maintain power over Namibia.<sup>787</sup> The USA protested<sup>788</sup> after the raid but P.W. Botha responded that "South Africa would not be intimidated and would strike again if its security was threatened."<sup>789</sup> The USA felt that SA was not really looking for a solution to the security problem. Operation Reindeer signalled that the SADF was going to rely on cross-border raids in Angola to hurt SWAPO.

The CIA's clandestine actions in Angola during this period could not be concealed indefinitely. Infighting within the CIA produced whistle-blowers that provided the media with information on CIA activities in Angola. One such an example appeared in the Washington Post in May 1978 when it was reported that:

White House strategists for at least two months have attempted to funnel sophisticated arms and funds clandestinely to African guerrilla forces fighting Soviet-backed Cuban troops in Angola.<sup>790</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> Ramonet, op cit. p. 327.

<sup>781</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 12

<sup>782</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>783</sup> Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 212.

<sup>784</sup> Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuysen and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 66. Bothma, op cit. pp. 228-229. Urnov, op cit. p. 135.

<sup>785</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 18. Crocker, op cit. p. 57 Blanch and Liebenberg, op cit. p. 97.

<sup>786</sup> Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuysen and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 69.

<sup>787</sup> Gleijeses, 2010, op cit. p.853.

<sup>788</sup> Memorandum of talks with Don McHenry - Deputy Ambassador of the USA to the UN and Head of negotiating team of Five Western Powers. 1978. File nr HSAW 203/3/ 2 Volume 1 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 3.5.78 – 2.11. 85.

<sup>789</sup> P.W. Botha quoted in Bissel, op cit. p. 38

<sup>790</sup> Washington Post. 19 May 1978.



**Illustration 4.2:** Bodies of women and children at Cassinga<sup>791</sup>

Pretoria emphasised that they were not fighting a war against Angola, but a war against the insurgents who based themselves in Angola.<sup>792</sup> The SADF vowed to attack rebel bases; HQ's and supply routes in Angola for as long as the insurgents pose a threat to SA or Namibia.<sup>793</sup> Pretoria justified the renewed attacks in Angola on the basis that SWAPO rejected the settlement proposals that were laid on the table. Pretoria also reckoned that the UN won't go further than to implement an arms embargo against SA as punishment and since such an embargo was already in effect, Pretoria could not really be bothered.<sup>794</sup> The USA also did not make any effort to stop South African attacks in Angola.<sup>795</sup> Renewed attacks by the SADF in Angola caused Castro to reverse his Cuban withdrawal. Instead more Cuban reinforcements were sent to Angola to protect the MPLA and SWAPO from the SADF/UNITA forces.<sup>796</sup>

In 1978 SA agreed to the implementation of Resolution 435 which entailed granting Namibia its independence but "it had found a number of pretexts to avoid living up to its pledge."<sup>797</sup> The world condemned SA for its refusal to accept the Resolution but its ally the USA (under

<sup>791</sup> <http://www.informante.web.na/putting-record-straight.13970>

<sup>792</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 221.

<sup>793</sup> Steenkamp, op cit. p. iii.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid. p. 11.

<sup>795</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 221.

<sup>796</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 19.

<sup>797</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

the leadership of President Reagan) had a plan to ease SA's isolation – the principle of Linkage.<sup>798</sup> Linkage refers to the idea that it would be impossible to determine separate ways for peace in either Angola or Namibia.<sup>799</sup> Instead a parallel solution was to be determined, which basically entailed that SA should withdraw from Namibia while Cuba at the same time withdraws from Angola.<sup>800</sup> The USA's allies in the Contact Group were not sure that the linkage concept was going to work.<sup>801</sup> They based their uncertainty on the fact that Namibia's independence was supported and in a way forced by a decision from the ICJ whereas the Cuban withdrawal would have to be voluntary.<sup>802</sup> Washington's principle of Linkage shows that the USA "viewed Africa as a theatre for East-West conflict rather than as a continent with its own dynamics."<sup>803</sup>

By 1981 the Border War was centred on Angola and it became impossible to untangle "the Angolan civil war from the SWAPO-SADF conflict and the cross-border SADF-FAPLA clashes they spawned."<sup>804</sup> Cuba maintained that they would stay in Angola as long as there were external military threats to the country. Castro was however willing to withdraw his troops from Angola if two conditions were met:

- Firstly Namibia should get independence as it was stipulated in UN Resolution 435. Castro argued that as long as SA occupies Namibia, SWAPO would seek refuge in Angola and the attacks on Angolan soil would continue.
- Secondly, SA should stop its support to UNITA. Castro argued that the Cubans were in Angola to protect the country from external threats. If SA were to stop its aid to UNITA then Cuba would also withdraw. FAPLA's war against UNITA would then be an internal conflict in which Cuba had no interest.<sup>805</sup>

When President Reagan was elected President in 1981 his administration had to choose one of the following 3 options with regards to how they were going to handle the Namibian situation:

- They could carry on with the diplomatic game of buying time and to keep their allied and African partners happy (an option that have been tried but failed ); or
- They could join SA in full support of UNITA's military effort against the MPLA and "offer at least tacit support to Pretoria's 'internal option' in Namibia"( this option would portray the USA as pro-South Africa and would not reflect good on the USA's political image) ; or

<sup>798</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 39. W. Minter. USA/SA in the Reagan Era in P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1986. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House. p. 297.

<sup>799</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 242. Pabian, op cit. p. 6.

<sup>800</sup> W. M. LeoGrande. 1982. Cuba Issue Blinds U.S. in Namibia. *The New York Times*. 29 July 1982. p. 23. Lulat, op cit. p. 259.

<sup>801</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 364.

<sup>802</sup> Coker, op cit. p. 263.

<sup>803</sup> Katjavivi, op cit. p. 125.

<sup>804</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>805</sup> Walters, op cit. p. 47.

- They could “restructure fundamentally the negotiation to incorporate the Angolan factor and strengthen Resolution 435, and thereby acquire new leverage while also accommodating necessity.”<sup>806</sup>

The Reagan administration chose the third option as the other two options either already failed or was not feasible. According to Crocker the USA had to avoid a communist party from taking control of Namibia whilst maintaining opposition against the Marxist-Leninist MPLA regime in Angola. Therefore the USA needed to work towards “a strategy that could make both Namibia and Angola free.”<sup>807</sup> What remained the most important for the USA was to curb Soviet-Cuban adventurism in Southern Africa. According to Johnson and Martin, there was a definite increase in South African aggression against Angola after Reagan was elected as President of the USA.<sup>808</sup>

According to Schultz it was clear to the USA by the early 1980s that peace would not be possible in Namibia or Angola if the USA was not going to act as a mediator. The Cubans intensified their war effort in Angola at that time by providing skilled pilots to fly the Angolan MIG fighter jets. This was becoming a headache for Pretoria and Washington, because if the Angolan/Cubans could maintain air superiority in Angola, SWAPO would be able to operate freely in Southern Angola.<sup>809</sup>

It was a rather difficult task for the USA to serve as a mediator, because they lost their neutrality when they covertly supported UNITA in its effort against the MPLA.<sup>810</sup> Schultz adequately describes America’s dilemma during the Border war when he wrote:

The improbable cast of nations and characters presented a unique challenge, requiring the classic diplomacy of juggling several balls in the air at once-but these were barbed balls, painful to catch and to toss accurately again...Our support for Savimbi’s UNITA was under constant domestic political attack. Our relations with South Africa were severely strained by its adherence to a racial policy wholly anathema to us. Confronting us at every turn was the Soviet Union, with the ideological contest of the Cold War at a stage of growing tension.<sup>811</sup>

The best strategy that the USA could follow to achieve peace in both Namibia and Angola would be to pursue parallel settlements in Namibia and Angola also known as the principle of Linkage.<sup>812</sup> Crocker proposed that the USA should pursue a commitment from the Cubans to withdraw from Angola whilst the SADF withdraw from Namibia at the same time. This would signal to all the parties involved that one settlement would not be possible without the

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<sup>806</sup> Crocker, op cit. pp. 58-59.

<sup>807</sup> Crocker, op cit. p. 64. Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 216.

<sup>808</sup> Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p.133.

<sup>809</sup> Notes on briefing the USA Defence and Air Attaché. 1982. File nr HSAW 203/3/ 2 Volume 1 (Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 3.5.78 – 2.11. 85. Shubin, V, op cit. p. 109.

<sup>810</sup> Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 128.

<sup>811</sup> Schultz, G.P. 1993. In Crocker, C. A. 1993. *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood*. Jonathan Ball Publishers: Parkland. p. 37.

<sup>812</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 26. Johnson, P. and D. Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 130.

other.<sup>813</sup> It can be argued that the USA wanted to use the Namibian settlement as hostage against the Angolan settlement and vice versa.<sup>814</sup>

Whilst South African Special Forces were still operating clandestinely in Angola during 1984, Pretoria invited the MPLA to have discussions about the conflict in Angola. The South African leaders met with the MPLA in Lusaka during February 1984 with the USA acting as mediator.<sup>815</sup> The Cubans were not informed by the MPLA that they were going to negotiate with SA and the USA. Fidel Castro was not impressed that the MPLA would consider negotiations with the enemy without informing him. Fidel felt that the MPLA sold out the Cuban soldiers who were selflessly giving their lives for the freedom of Angola and Namibia.<sup>816</sup>

The meeting was thought to be successful because the parties agreed to a 7-point withdrawal plan of South African forces from Angola. In return the MPLA had to assure that no Cuban or SWAPO forces were moving into the areas where the SADF was withdrawing from. The Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC) was also born during the Lusaka meetings.<sup>817</sup> The aim of the JMC was to monitor how SA was withdrawing from Angola in accordance with a predetermined timeline. The JMC was also to monitor that the Cubans and SWAPO did not move into the areas that the SADF was withdrawing from.<sup>818</sup> The Angolans signed the accord without consulting with either the Cubans or the Soviets. Fidel Castro found this upsetting and felt as if the Angolans did not appreciate the Cuban intervention which saved them from failure.<sup>819</sup>

The peace treaty of 1984 signed in Lusaka between SA and Angola lasted for almost 18 months. Even though SA and the MPLA tried their best to reduce the possibility of conflict with each other during this period, their allies (UNITA and SWAPO) found reconciliation more difficult. Thus in effect neither SA nor Angola was totally disconnected from the war.<sup>820</sup>

According to Malan, SA was committed to a withdrawal from Angola, but SWAPO did not keep to their promises. Gleijeses agrees that the Lusaka accord was unsuccessful, but he place the blame on the fact that SA undertook to withdraw from Namibia but nothing was mentioned about their continuing support of UNITA.<sup>821</sup> The Americans argued that if Namibia were given independence then SA would have no reason to attack Angola anymore, but the Cubans were suspicious. The Cuban suspicion stemmed from the fact that SA might give up Namibia, but they would still want to place Savimbi in power in Angola. So by the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1984 SA withdrew itself from the JMC after trying several times to convince SWAPO to cooperate. The first SADF withdrawal from Angola was unsuccessful since the JMC was

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<sup>813</sup> Coker, op cit. p. 261.

<sup>814</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 259. Johnson, P. and D. Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 133.

<sup>815</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 27.

<sup>816</sup> Shubin, 2008, op cit. pp. 97-98.

<sup>817</sup> Johnson, and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 138.

<sup>818</sup> Malan, op cit. p.262.

<sup>819</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 27.

<sup>820</sup> Malan, op cit. p.302.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid. p. 30.



unable to ensure that SWAPO did not use the agreement to its own advantage.<sup>822</sup> According to Alden several events led to the end of the 1984 Lusaka agreement:

- In May 1985 group of SADF special forces (which included the famous Capt Wynand Du Toit) was captured in the Angolan province of Cabinda while on a mission to attack an oil installation which would be accredited to UNITA;
- The USA “forfeited its somewhat tarnished position as an ‘honest broker’ with the USA Senate’s repeal of the Clark Amendment, thus paving the way for a return to covert American support for Jonas Savimbi’s Unita forces”;
- In September 1985 the Angolan government attacked UNITA’s bases in the south of Angola.<sup>823</sup>

In 1985 the USSR convinced the Angolans to attack Mavinga<sup>824</sup> in the south east of Angola which hosted a major UNITA base. The Cuban’s refused to attack so far from their defensive positions because SA had air superiority in that area. So FAPLA continued on a solo mission. The offensive started in August 1985 and at first it progressed well. UNITA was unable to stop the FAPLA forces but the situation was altered when SA intervened with air and artillery attacks in late September 1985. The FAPLA offensive ended as a massive failure.<sup>825</sup> Another factor that possibly helped UNITA to repel the FAPLA offensive was the repealing of the Clark Amendment by the USA Congress in July 1985.<sup>826</sup> So the CIA could once again support UNITA with the blessing of the USA Congress.

During 1986, the Cubans concluded that SA’s air superiority in Southern Angola needed to be put to an end. This would allow FAPLA to attack UNITA without the fear of being attacked from the air and SWAPO would also be able to attack Northern Namibia easier. A victory in Southern Angola would boost the morale and embolden the black people of Southern Africa. During January 1986, Savimbi was taken on an all expenses paid tour to Washington to meet with President Reagan. Savimbi was given the same protocol as a visiting head of state. It indicated that the USA regarded Savimbi as being the president of Angola and this angered FAPLA so much that they called the respect given to Savimbi an act of war. As a result of the meeting, the USA decided to provide UNITA with US\$ 15 million worth of covert support which included surface to air Stinger missiles.<sup>827</sup>

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<sup>822</sup> Malan, op cit. p.263.

<sup>823</sup> Alden, op cit. p. 179. See also A. Soule, G. Dixon and R. Richards. 1987. *The Wynand Du Toit Story*. Melville: Hans Strydom Publishers. Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 142.

<sup>824</sup> See map 4.2.

<sup>825</sup> Gleijeses, 2006. op cit. p. 34.

<sup>826</sup> Shubin, 2008, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>827</sup> Blanch and Liebenberg, op cit. p. 82. Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 145.

#### 4.4.3 Nearing the End

By 1987, SA was not supposed to be actually involved in the fighting in Angola, because Pretoria claimed to be focusing on Namibia. But according to Sithole, “Angola reported over 75 airspace violations and over 33 ground attacks during the first six months of 1987.”<sup>828</sup> At that time, the SADF’s main objective was to destroy SWAPO insurgents in Namibia; what happened between FAPLA and UNITA was only seen as important in so far as it influenced SA’s operations against SWAPO or the safety of the Republic. But SA received intelligence that FAPLA, together with Cuba was planning a large scale attack on the South-Eastern bases of UNITA.<sup>829</sup> It is possible that this intelligence was incorrect, because Cuban sources show that Cuba did not participate in the offensive. It was however a FAPLA force which was urged on by the Soviets to attack Mavinga.<sup>830</sup>

South Africa deemed the South-Eastern part of Angola as very important to the safety of Namibia, because if FAPLA could take control of the area, UNITA would be significantly weakened and SWAPO would be able to use the region to launch attacks against Namibia. An offensive against Mavinga meant that FAPLA wanted to turn Mavinga into a base area for an offensive against UNITA’s Headquarters in Jamba.<sup>831</sup> At the time, UNITA was in control of the South-Eastern part of Angola, so SWAPO could not infiltrate Namibia through the Kavango and Caprivi regions. This meant that SWAPO could only infiltrate through Ovambo land, but if FAPLA was in control of Mavinga, the SADF would have to fight SWAPO there as well.<sup>832</sup> South Africa was concerned that a FAPLA victory “would also increase the danger of Soviet sponsored and perhaps Cuban-backed instability in neighbouring countries.”<sup>833</sup> Hence the SADF got the order to support UNITA in its efforts to stop the FAPLA offensive in Mavinga.<sup>834</sup> In June 1987 the USA also decided to provide UNITA with another US\$ 15 million worth of covert aid in the form of Stinger missiles and anti-tank missiles.<sup>835</sup>

In July 1987, FAPLA launched a massive offensive on UNITA in the South-Eastern part of Angola. The offensive was codenamed Operation Saluting October.<sup>836</sup> The offensive was mainly directed against the town of Mavinga which was held by UNITA since 1981.<sup>837</sup> The SADF saw the push from FAPLA as a threat and decided to intervene. By November 1987, the SADF and UNITA had pushed FAPLA back into the town of Cuito Cuanavale.<sup>838</sup> The

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<sup>828</sup> Sithole, op cit. p. 36.

<sup>829</sup> L. Scholtz. 2010. The South African Strategic and Operational Objectives in Angola, in *Scientia Militaria*, Vol 38, Nr 1. p 68.

<sup>830</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 36.

<sup>831</sup> Scholtz, op cit. p 68.

<sup>832</sup> Scholtz, op cit. p 68.

<sup>833</sup> H. Heitman. 1989. Operations Modular and Hooper (1987-1988). [www.rhodesia.nl/modloop.htm](http://www.rhodesia.nl/modloop.htm) (accessed 01 June 2010).

<sup>834</sup> Scholtz, op cit. p 80.

<sup>835</sup> Johnson and Martin (Eds), op cit. p. 149.

<sup>836</sup> Blanch and Liebenberg, op cit. p. 100.

<sup>837</sup> K. O’Neill and B. Munslow. 1990. Ending the Cold War in Africa. *Third World Quarterly*. Vol 12, No 3. p 82.

<sup>838</sup> See map 4.2.

FAPLA forces were about to be destroyed.<sup>839</sup> On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November the UN Security Council called on SA to withdraw its forces from Angola. The USA voted in favour of the decision at the UN where the world's eyes were on them, but Crocker told the SA ambassador to the USA that "the SAG [South African Government] should take note that the resolution did not contain a call for comprehensive sanctions and did not provide for any assistance to Angola. That was no accident, but a consequence of our own efforts to keep the resolution within bounds."<sup>840</sup>

FAPLA requested for more Cuban troops to be dispatched to Angola. Castro complied and sent his best pilots, planes, anti-aircraft machines and tanks to support FAPLA in Angola when it became apparent that FAPLA was in a corner and ready to be dealt a heavy blow by the SADF.<sup>841</sup> According to Gleijeses, Castro did not just want to defend Cuito Cuanavale, he wanted to force the SADF out of Angola.<sup>842</sup> According to Pabian, Castro sent another 15 000 of his best Cuban soldiers to Angola to help in the fight against the SADF, but Mills and Williams wrote that it was 25 000 troops.<sup>843</sup>

In the beginning of 1988, it seemed as if the Cubans and Angolans were going to lose the town of Cuito Cuanavale, because the South Africans succeeded in cutting of the vital Cuito River Bridge.<sup>844</sup> Even with the destruction of the bridge, the Cubans and Angolans managed to keep control of the town. The SADF launched its last major attack against Cuito Cuanavale on 23 March 1988 but the attack was halted by a Cuban/Angolan force.<sup>845</sup> The issue of whether the SADF intended to take control of Cuito Cuanavale is still a controversial topic in military and political debates. Many ex-members of the SADF and researchers argue that it was never the intention of the SADF to capture Cuito Cuanavale.<sup>846</sup> The Cubans and Soviets maintain that it was the SADF's objective to capture Cuito, but that they failed to do so.<sup>847</sup>

With the SADF forces bogged down at Cuito Cuanavale, a large Cuban force (15 000 troops) began to advance towards the Namibian border. The South Africans saw this advance as a serious threat to the security of Namibia. They were not sure whether or not the Cuban's would risk entering Namibia.<sup>848</sup> At the same time as the Cuban advance, South African-, Angolan-, Cuban- and American officials began negotiations in search of common ground. The Cuban advance towards Namibia bothered the American and South African officials tremendously. When Crocker asked one of the Cuban officials whether they were going to stop their advance at the Namibian border, the official said that he could not answer him.

<sup>839</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 36. Mills, G and D. Williams, op cit. p. 174.

<sup>840</sup> Cable from the Secretary of State to the American Embassy in Pretoria as quoted in Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. p. 37.

<sup>841</sup> Ramonet, op cit. p. 328.

<sup>842</sup> Gleijeses, P. 2007. Cuito Cuanavale Revisited. *The Mail and Guardian*. 11 July 2007.

<sup>843</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 8.

<sup>844</sup> O'Neill and Munslow, op cit. p. 82.

<sup>845</sup> Sithole, op cit. p. 39.

<sup>846</sup> In Mills and Williams, p 185 they report that Helmoed Romer-Heitman and Fred Bridgland both wrote in their books that the SADF's strategy was not to capture Cuito Cuanavale.

<sup>847</sup> Walters, op cit. p. 10.

<sup>848</sup> Lulat, op cit.p. 267.

Indirectly this meant that the Cuban advance would only stop if SA gave Namibia its independence.<sup>849</sup> The Soviets had an agreement with the Cubans that they would not venture into Namibia, but they saw no need to inform the USA or SA about the agreement.<sup>850</sup>

On 27 June 1988 the Cubans decided to show the SADF that they were in control of the air by bombing Calueque, 11km north of the Namibian border. This served as a wakeup call for the USA and SA that the Cubans had air advantage over Southern Angola and even Northern Namibia. The Cubans flew as far south as Ondangwa. On 22 July 1988 senior officials from Cuba, Angola, SA and the USA met once again, this time at Cape Verde. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of a ceasefire. The result of the meeting was that the South Africans agreed to Cuba's demand for a ceasefire - SA should withdraw all its forces from Angola by 1 September 1988. By 25 August the last SADF troops withdrew from Angola.<sup>851</sup> The withdrawal of SADF troops from Angola did not mean that the USA was no longer going to support UNITA financially.

The United States Senate was still concerned about the USSR's support to the MPLA, SWAPO's mission to take control over Namibia and the Cuban presence in Angola.<sup>852</sup> It appeared that a communist takeover of Southern Africa was inevitable if the USA was going to totally withdraw its support for SA and Savimbi. As a result the US Senate would only allow the American President to continue providing the UN forces in Angola and Namibia with funds if he would also continue to finance and support UNITA's war effort.<sup>853</sup>

On 22 December 1988 the New York agreements were signed.<sup>854</sup> These agreements entailed that the SADF would withdraw (with the exception of 1500 soldiers who would be confined to base) from Namibia within three months.<sup>855</sup> Furthermore SA would have to give Namibia its independence as it was stipulated in Resolution 435.<sup>856</sup> SA also had to declare that they would no longer provide UNITA with any aid. The Cubans had to withdraw from Angola within 27 months.<sup>857</sup> This was the culmination of the Border War.<sup>858</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> Gleijeses, 2006, op cit. pp. 41-42.

<sup>850</sup> Shubin in Potgieter, T, A. Esterhuysen and I. Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 40.

<sup>851</sup> Gleijeses, op cit. p. 43.

<sup>852</sup> Report from Defence Attaché in Washington to the Chief of Staff Military Intelligence. 1989. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 57 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 7.4.89 – 5.7. 89. Insameling van Inligting: Eie MA - Washington.

<sup>853</sup> Ibid.

<sup>854</sup> F. W. De Klerk. 1993. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and South Africa's Nuclear Capability: A speech to Parliament. 24 March 1993. p. 4. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116789>. Walters, op cit. p. 17.

<sup>855</sup> Coker, op cit. p. 254.

<sup>856</sup> Gorbunov, op cit. p. 101. Walters, op cit. p. 10.

<sup>857</sup> Gleijeses, P. 2006. Moscow's Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975-1988. *Journal of Cold War Studies*. Vol 8, No 2. p. 36. Gleijeses explains that very little research has been done on this period of the negotiations. Chester Crocker's *High Noon in Southern Africa* is the major published source that deals with the New York agreement. But Gleijeses is of the opinion that Crocker explains the New York agreements as "a triumph of U.S. patience, skill and wisdom"...which according to Gleijeses is different from what his research of Cuban documents show. Gleijeses argues that Crocker leaves out the fact that "U.S. policy strengthened the hardliners in Pretoria, who opposed Namibian independence and sought a military solution in Angola that could propel UNITA to power."

The South African withdrawal of resources from Angola meant that Savimbi would have to fight the war on his own. With Namibia no longer under control of SA, Savimbi lost his most precious logistical route for supplies. Consequently he started negotiations with the MPLA to form a new government where both parties could share power. However, Savimbi did not inform the US government about his negotiations, because on 23 August 1989 the Chairperson of the United States Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations admitted in a letter to Savimbi that he was confused about what was happening in Angola.<sup>859</sup> The Committee Chairperson wanted to know from Savimbi if the rumours about Savimbi's willingness to share government with the MPLA were true. Evidently the USA was no longer able to direct Savimbi on what choices he should make.

Just a month before the above mentioned letter was written; the USA sent a delegation of military officials and government officials to investigate the situation in Namibia. The South African ambassador warned the South African Military Intelligence that the American members who were going on the trip to Namibia were pro-SA. He mentioned that if the delegation were to speak to senior members of the South African security forces in Namibia, it could help to get more support for SA within the US government circles.<sup>860</sup> It was during this trip that the Americans became aware of Savimbi's backdoor negotiations with the MPLA.

Between July 1989 and January 1990 the CIA did not provide Savimbi with any weapons. Some analysts were of the opinion that the USA finally stopped its support to Savimbi. However the CIA explained that it was not a conscious decision to stop supplying weapons to UNITA, but rather a logistical problem. The CIA blamed Mobutu Sese Seko because he closed the Zairian railway to Angola for USA logistical supplies, because Mobutu and Savimbi were no longer in an alliance after a misunderstanding during June 1989. The MPLA cleverly claimed that after negotiations with UNITA in June 1989 Savimbi agreed to go into exile and to integrate his forces with the MPLA. Savimbi denied that he ever agreed to such an agreement, but he already lost Mobutu's trust and support.<sup>861</sup> Because of the fact that Savimbi could no longer use Namibia as a supply route for weapons, the Zairian railway line from Zaire to Angola was Savimbi's only supply route left. So if the MPLA was lying about the alleged agreement with Savimbi, it can be regarded as an excellent example of successful propaganda warfare. The USA had to mediate between Mobutu and Savimbi to re-establish their relationship. After a visit by both Mobutu and Savimbi to the USA in October 1989 their relationship was restored.<sup>862</sup>

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<sup>858</sup> Ramonet, op cit. p. 330.

<sup>859</sup> United States Senate. 1989. Letter to Jonas Savimbi. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 volume 60 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 05.09.89 – 26.9. 89. Insameling van Inlingting: Eie MA - Washington.

<sup>860</sup> Report from Defence Attaché in Washington to the Chief of Staff Military Intelligence. 1989. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 57 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 7.4.89 – 5.7. 89. Insameling van Inlingting: Eie MA - Washington.

<sup>861</sup> L. Weymouth. 1990. Endgame in Angola: Is the CIA pulling the plug on Savimbi? *The Washington Post*. 25 February 1990.

<sup>862</sup> Ibid.

By 1990 there were constant negotiations between the MPLA and UNITA over a possible power sharing deal but the MPLA did not stop their attacks on UNITA bases. The USA still continued to fund UNITA even though they were aware that Savimbi showed willingness to form a coalition government with the MPLA. The Washington Post reported on 25 February 1990 that the USA still clandestinely provided Savimbi with about US\$50 million annually.<sup>863</sup> Savimbi continued to enjoy support in the US Congress as he was the USA's only chance to have a pro-Western leader in charge of the mineral rich Angola.

The fall of communism changed the war in Angola from a Cold War battle to a civil war. By June 1990 the MPLA abolished the one party system and Angola became a democratic country. Following elections some senior political members and military leaders of UNITA defected to democratic politics thereby withdrawing from the civil war. Over years support for UNITA dwindled. However, the civil war in Angola continued until 2002 when the MPLA finally achieved victory after the death of Savimbi.

According to Turner<sup>864</sup> the Border War can be divided into 4 phases:

- Phase 1: Stretched from 1966 to 1978. The first phase was when the SADF and its allies tried to “contain the war from its origins in 1966 to the development of a new policy of intervention by means of cross-border raids...”<sup>865</sup>
- Phase 2: Stretched from May 1978 to January 1984. In this period the SADF mostly focused on cross border raids into Angola.
- Phase 3: This phase was from early 1984 to mid-1988. This was the time where the SADF dominated the fighting with what Turner regards as successful campaigns such as Operation Modular, Operation Hooper and Operation Packer. Ironically most of the fighting in this period was not against SWAPO, but against FAPLA and the Cubans.<sup>866</sup>
- The final phase lasted from mid-1988 through to the independence of Namibia on 20 February 1990. This phase consisted of a great deal of political bargaining and also includes the last big battle of the war - The battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

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<sup>863</sup> Ibid.

<sup>864</sup> Turner, op cit. p. 34.

<sup>865</sup> Ibid. Wolfers and Bergerol, op cit. p. 197.

<sup>866</sup> Liebenberg in Potgieter, Esterhuysen and Liebenberg. (Eds), op cit. p. 71.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

Namibia's independence was entwined with the situation unfolding in neighbouring Angola. The Angolan civil war became part of a regional war in which multiple external actors were involved. The USA and the rest of the West did not want a communist regime in Angola so they supported the anti-communist efforts with their ally – South Africa.

South Africa viewed Angola as a buffer zone for Namibia; therefore they were willing to assist the anti-communist forces in Angola. Pretoria was committed to fight the communist supported MPLA in Angola, because the MPLA provided SWAPO with refuge from where they could attack the Northern parts of Namibia. The USA on the other hand intervened in the Border War to prevent communism from getting a foothold in Southern Africa.

The reality was that Namibian independence could only become a possibility if both the South African and Cuban forces withdrew from Angola. The Cubans saw it as their responsibility to ensure that white minority rule is abdicated in both SA and Namibia and they were willing to lay down their lives to achieve it.

The USA from their perspective had to decide whether they were going to suffer the political consequences of intervention in the conflict, or allowing the communist to gain control in Southern Africa. The USA could not allow a communist takeover in Angola, because the probability that the communist wave would spread to SA was too high. The implementation of the Clark-amendment is evidence that decisions in US foreign policy is not always made by the President. Ford was not in favour of withdrawing the support to UNITA and SA, but Congress had the final say.

The period from 1975-81 saw the USA engaging effectively in a previously neglected region – Southern Africa with specific emphasis on Namibia and Angola. In Southern Africa the USA achieved a moral victory in curtailing the USSR's efforts to discredit the USA's efforts to negotiate independence in Namibia. The USA appeared to have been successful to some extent in slowing down the spread of Soviet influence in Southern Africa.

South Africa clung onto Namibia for as long as possible for its own political-, economical- and security interests and not for the good of the people of Namibia. Western Powers, especially the USA played a big part in slowing down the independence process for Namibia. By 1981 it was clear that there was no way to disentangle the Angolan civil war from the Namibian war between the SADF and SWAPO. Angola did not have the capability to disentangle itself from the war so the futures of Namibia and Angola were both in the hands of the USSR, the Cubans, South Africans and the USA.

By 1984 it seemed as if peace would soon be achieved with the signing of the Lusaka Accord. But it did not last long. It seems as if SA was willing to withdraw from Angola, but still wanted to support Savimbi. Pretoria and Washington wanted Savimbi as the Angolan president, as Angola could then serve as a buffer for Namibia and SWAPO would not be able

to seek refuge in Angola anymore. So it could be argued that SA would only abide to an accord which would ensure Savimbi's place in a position of power.

After the 1989 New York accord, Savimbi no longer had the full backing the SADF. The USA however still provided UNITA with weapons and money. The USSR also still provided the MPLA with advisors and equipment. The war in Angola continued until 2002 and cost the lives of more than 500 000 people

The SADF learned that the West, especially the USA, could not be relied upon to come to the defence of apartheid SA; not even in the face of a possible communist victory in Southern Africa. The USA had to choose the lesser of two evils from their point of view – apartheid or communism. But Pretoria had a card up its sleeve just in case the USA was not willing to intervene in the case of a communist attack against SA – its nuclear arsenal.



## CHAPTER 5

*“Although nuclear strategy is no fool-proof formula for survival, it offers a helpful method to stabilise international relations in an uncertain world”* (N. Barnard)<sup>867</sup>

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION: SOUTH AFRICA’S NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAMME AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE USA

South Africa’s nuclear ambitions would undoubtedly have been stillborn had it not been for a close collaboration between SA and the USA. Fidel Castro was of the opinion that SA would have been unable to build nuclear bombs without help from the USA.<sup>868</sup> Castro was not wrong. Arguably SA would not have been able to build a nuclear arsenal without the expertise and equipment provided by the USA. Many of SA’s nuclear scientists received training in the USA and the USA dispatched nuclear scientists and technicians to SA to help with training and technical experience.<sup>869</sup> The USA-SA nuclear relationship started during the final period of the Second World War. The USA needed uranium to continue its Manhattan project which was required for the production of similar bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>870</sup> In 1950, the USA signed a purchasing agreement for uranium with SA that would guarantee the USA an ongoing supply of the valuable chemical element.<sup>871</sup> The USA-SA nuclear relationship was cemented with the signing of the Atomic Energy Act (AEA) of 1954 thus enabling the USA to export nuclear material and reactors to SA as long as it was used for peaceful purposes. From the middle of the 1950s to the middle of the 1970s the USA-SA nuclear relationship continued without much controversy.<sup>872</sup>

By mid-1970 the USA-SA relationship became severely strained. Pretoria’s refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968 placed pressure on the USA to break nuclear ties with SA or at least create the appearance that that it had done so.<sup>873</sup> The NPT aimed to maintain the status quo regarding the “nuclear club” by preventing countries without nuclear weapons from building their own or acquiring such weapons from those countries which did possess a nuclear arsenal. The nuclear powers were however allowed to assist the non-nuclear countries to develop their own nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes.<sup>874</sup>

<sup>867</sup> N. Barnard. 1977. The Deterrent Strategy of Nuclear Weapons, *Journal for Contemporary History and International Relations*. September 1977. p. 74.

<sup>868</sup> I. Ramonet. 2007. *My Life: Fidel Castro*. Penguin Books: London. p. 317.

<sup>869</sup> J. E. Spence. 1980. South Africa/ The Nuclear Option in J.M. Roherty, *Defence Policy Formation: Towards Comparative Analysis*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press. p. 108. . A.S. Minty. South Africa’s Nuclear Capability: The Apartheid Bomb in P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1986. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House. p. 205.

<sup>870</sup> I. Liebenberg in C. Manganyi, I. Liebenberg and T. Potgieter (Eds). 2013. The Arms Industry, Reform and Civil-Military Relations in South Africa in *South Africa and Romania: Transition to Democracy and Changing Security Paradigms*. Durban: Just Done Publishing. pp. 249-250.

<sup>871</sup> F. V. Pabian. 1995. South Africa’s Nuclear Weapons Programme: Lessons for U.S Nonproliferation Policy, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall 1995. p. 2.

<sup>872</sup> K. Mokoena. 1993. *South Africa and the United States: The Declassified History*. New York: The New Press. p. 115.

<sup>873</sup> S. F. Burgess. 2006. “South Africa’s Nuclear Weapons Policies”. *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol 13, No 3, p. 520.

<sup>874</sup> H. Steyn, R. Van der Walt and J. Van Loggerenberg. 2003. *Armament and disarmament: South*

Resultantly SA turned away from the USA and found other allies. The USA was consequently excluded from SA's nuclear programme but continued pressure on Pretoria to sign the NPT. Even though the USA was no longer accomplice partner in SA's nuclear programme, USA intelligence agencies still kept close watch on SA's nuclear developments.<sup>875</sup>

In March 1993, Pretoria shocked the world when it was announced that SA had built six and a half nuclear bombs. The construction of the bombs was the outcome of a top secret nuclear program spanning 15 years.<sup>876</sup> This surprise revelation left the international community asking several uncomfortable questions:

- How was SA able to build nuclear weapons if the country was on the receiving end of severe sanctions aimed at preventing the country from obtaining the very weapons it now possessed?
- Why did SA feel the need to have a nuclear arsenal?
- Would Pretoria ever consider deploying any or all of its nuclear weapons?
- To what extent did the USA know that SA had a nuclear arsenal and how did the USA contribute to SA achieving its goal?

## 5.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF SA'S NUCLEAR LAAGER<sup>877</sup>

*"...if any nation wishes to acquire nuclear weapons, it could do no better than to look at how South Africa did it."* (Al J. Venter)<sup>878</sup>

### 5.2.1 Early Beginnings

At the conclusion of the Second World War, Pretoria, in concert with many Western nations declared communism an evil and promised the West that they will do what was required to halt the spread of communism in Southern Africa.<sup>879</sup> Pretoria's nuclear development programme started in 1948 with the establishment of the South African Atomic Energy Board (AEB).<sup>880</sup> The aim of the AEB was to mine and process uranium, to advise the Minister of Mines on matters concerning nuclear energy, to produce nuclear energy and to conduct nuclear energy research.<sup>881</sup> The birth of SA's nuclear ambitions occurred against the backdrop of the Berlin Airlift where communist Russia prevented supplies from entering

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<sup>875</sup> *Africa's nuclear weapons experience*. Pretoria: Newark Publishers. p. 31. Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 199.  
<sup>876</sup> N. Barnard. 2015. *Secret Revolution: Memoirs of a Spy Boss*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers. p.16.  
<sup>877</sup> B. Keller. 1993. South Africa Says it Built 6 Atom Bombs. *The New York Times*. 25 March 1993.  
<sup>878</sup> Laager refers to a defensive posture derived from the drawing in a circle of wagons for protective purposes.  
A.J. Venter. 2008. *How South Africa Built Six Atom Bombs and then Abandoned its Nuclear Weapons Programme*. Kyalami Estate: Ashanti Publishing. p. 9.  
<sup>879</sup> A. Van Wyk. 2010. Apartheid's Atomic Bomb: Cold War Perspectives. *South African Historical Journal*. Volume 62, Number 1. p.101.  
<sup>880</sup> Spence, op cit. p. 109.  
<sup>881</sup> A. Van Wyk. 2007. Ally or Critic? The United States' Response to South African Nuclear Development, 1948 – 1990. *Cold War History*, Vol 7, No 2. p, 196.

Western occupied and controlled West Berlin. In Europe thus the battle lines have been drawn. It could be argued that Pretoria's saw its willingness to oppose communism would allow it a free hand in pursuing its own nuclear ambitions.

As a result of Pretoria's stern anti-communist stand, SA's strategic position on the African continent, the country's "...excellent port facilities and experienced military made it an important ally in the Cold War."<sup>882</sup> SA's status as a 'friendly' country eased the nuclear relationship between the USA and SA in spite of SA's apartheid policies.<sup>883</sup> The relationship was mutually beneficial as the USA imported uranium from SA for use in its nuclear programme. SA in turn used its mineral deposits as a bargaining chip to secure a research reactor and limited amounts of enriched uranium from the US programme.<sup>884</sup>

The USA's dependence on SA's uranium sources led to a soft approach by various American administrations towards SA's apartheid policies. In 1950 Pretoria agreed to sell uranium to Washington. It was a time of good relations between the USA and SA, because SA also agreed to send a detached air force contingent to Korea to assist the US air force.<sup>885</sup> The fact that SA was willing to assist the USA in Korea and that SA agreed to provide them with uranium was testimony that SA was a reliable ally, one of the "good ones". In return President Eisenhower assured Pretoria that any arms requests will be considered as favourably as possible. Between 1953 and 1966 the USA purchased more than 40 000 tons of uranium oxide from SA. The value of the uranium was valued at approximately US\$ 450 million.<sup>886</sup>

South Africa's nuclear programme benefited greatly from the country's willingness to sell uranium to the American programme. One of the benefits that SA received from its dealings with the USA was the establishment of the Nuclear Physics Institute by the Council for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Pretoria. The Nuclear Physics Institute was primarily tasked with producing radioisotopes and to conduct nuclear spectroscopy. Another benefit came in 1952 when the USA and Great Britain collaborated with SA to build facilities at South African goldmines that were able to extract uranium from such mines.<sup>887</sup> The Nuclear Physics Institute and the uranium extraction facilities provided SA with the capability to produce key ingredients that could be used for the development of nuclear weapons.

President Eisenhower was the first American president to sign a bilateral agreement with Pretoria on the uses of atomic energy. In July 1957 Pretoria signed a bilateral agreement on

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<sup>882</sup> Van Wyk. 2010, op cit. p. 101.

<sup>883</sup> Liebenberg in Manganyi, Liebenberg and Potgieter (Eds), op cit. p. 250. Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 197.

<sup>884</sup> R.E. Bissel. 1982. *South Africa and the United States: The Erosion of an Influence Relationship*. New York: Praeger Publishers. pp. 114.

<sup>885</sup> V. Moukambi. 2008. Relations between the South African Defence Force and France, 1960-1990. Unpublished dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History at the University of Stellenbosch. p. 13.

<sup>886</sup> S. Landgren. 1989. *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 153.

<sup>887</sup> Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 197.

the civil uses of atomic energy in terms of Eisenhower's Atom-for-Peace initiative.<sup>888</sup> The Atom-for-Peace Initiative entailed that the USA would offer "nuclear infrastructure, materials, and training to other countries in order to further the peaceful use of atomic energy."<sup>889</sup> This agreement was prolonged and was renewed in 1962, 1967 and 1974. The agreement was extended to 2007.<sup>890</sup> The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was also founded in 1957, with SA as one of the founding member states.<sup>891</sup>

During the early 1960s the USA provided SA with a nuclear research reactor as dictated by the above mentioned agreement. It was named SAFARI-1 and located at Pelindaba which is roughly 20km to the west of Pretoria.<sup>892</sup> Most of the equipment used at Pelindaba was of American origin.<sup>893</sup> French and German companies assisted in the building of SAFARI-1.<sup>894</sup> It was designed by an American company, the Allis Chalmers Corporation.<sup>895</sup> The USA also supplied the enriched fuel that was needed by SAFARI-1<sup>896</sup> to operate.<sup>897</sup> The US State Department was of the opinion that the provision of SAFARI-1 to SA would give the USA leverage in the future over SA's nuclear programme.<sup>898</sup> The USA provided SA with the nuclear reactor on condition that SA sign a safeguard agreement which would allow American scientists to inspect the facility whenever they wanted to. Pretoria accepted the agreement.<sup>899</sup>

During the 1960s the USA had no anxiety that SA would use its nuclear capabilities to develop nuclear bombs. South African students were sent to the USA to study nuclear technology.<sup>900</sup> Washington was confident that SA would use its nuclear capabilities for the production of nuclear energy. American analysts surmised that because there was no serious regional threat to SA's security, Pretoria had no reason to construct nuclear weapons. They also argued that Pretoria only wanted nuclear capabilities for prestigious reasons. At the time a small number of countries had nuclear capabilities so it made SA part of an elite club of countries.<sup>901</sup>

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<sup>888</sup> S. Polakow-Suransky. 2010. *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media. p. 40. Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 197.

<sup>889</sup> Ibid.

<sup>890</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed). 1978. *U.S. Military Involvement in Southern Africa*. Boston: South End Press. p. 185. Moukambi, op cit. p. 16.

<sup>891</sup> Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 197.

<sup>892</sup> G. Cawthra. 1986. *Brutal Force: The Apartheid War Machine*. London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa. p. 106. Steyn, Van der Walt and Van Loggerenberg, op cit. p. 32.

<sup>893</sup> D. Albright. 1994. South Africa and the Affordable Bomb. *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1994. p. 38. Bissel, op cit. p. 105.

<sup>894</sup> Liebenberg in Manganyi, Liebenberg and Potgieter (Eds), op cit. p. 237. Moukambi, op cit. p. 16.

<sup>895</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 86.

<sup>896</sup> SAFARI is the acronym for South African Fundamental Atomic Research Installation.

<sup>897</sup> Spence, op cit. p. 108. Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.101.

<sup>898</sup> C. Coker. 1986. *The United States and South Africa, 1968-1985: Constructive Engagement and Its Critics*. Durham: Duke University Press. p. 99. A.S. Minty. South Africa's Nuclear Capability: The Apartheid Bomb in P. Johnson and D. Martin (Eds). 1986. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House. p. 205.

<sup>899</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 35.

<sup>900</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 39.

<sup>901</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.102.

In 1965 Prime Minister Verwoerd ordered the establishment of a new Nuclear Institute. It was the first sign that SA was going to pursue the production of nuclear weapons. Verwoerd thought that SA could not depend on the West for protection from the communists, because the West supported sanctions against SA. Verwoerd wanted to give the white people of SA the capability to shield themselves against any communist aggression but he did not publicly acknowledge that the new Nuclear Institute was built with the intention of producing nuclear bombs.<sup>902</sup>

### 5.2.2 South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Programme Gains Momentum

South Africa's nuclear programme picked up pace from 1970 onwards. During March 1971, B.J. Vorster, the then Prime Minister of SA, ordered that scientists should surreptitiously research the viability of developing a nuclear weapon. At the outset the research was merely theoretical, but soon progressed to application of the knowledge gained. By 1973, the USA was still under the impression that SA did not want to create a nuclear bomb as an offensive weapon. The USA argued that the only reason why SA would build a nuclear bomb was to show the world that SA is capable of doing so in spite of the 1963 arms embargo.<sup>903</sup> It is important to remember that even though Kennedy implemented the arms embargo in 1963, he still maintained a nuclear relationship with SA. For example, in 1973 the USA sold two large computers that SA used to run the Pelindaba plant.<sup>904</sup> The US Commerce Department allowed the Foxboro Company to provide the South African Energy Board with these two computers.<sup>905</sup>

The withdrawal of the Portuguese from Mozambique and Angola in 1974 led to a deterioration in the security situation of Southern Africa.<sup>906</sup> The Cuban presence in Angola and SA's counter-insurgency war in Northern Namibia was great motivation for SA to build a nuclear arsenal which could be used as a last resort.<sup>907</sup> Pretoria decided that a deterrent against the possible communist attack was necessary.<sup>908</sup> Vorster authorised an increase in research on the possible development of a nuclear weapon.<sup>909</sup> The apartheid government still maintained that the reason for the development of nuclear weapons was not to use the bombs offensively in war, but rather as a deterrent against an enemy attack.<sup>910</sup> The nuclear

<sup>902</sup> R. K. Massie. 1997. *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Publishing Group Inc. p. 170.

<sup>903</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.103.

<sup>904</sup> El-Khawas and B. Cohen. 1976. *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa: National Security Study Memorandum 39 (Secret)*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill. p. 67.

<sup>905</sup> M. Klare. 1982. Arms for Apartheid: New Evidence of Illegal U.S. Arms Sales to South Africa in Ray, E., W. Schaap, K. Van Meter and L. Wolf (Eds). 1982. *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa*. London: Zed Press. p. 237.

<sup>906</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>907</sup> Spencer, op cit. p. 118.

<sup>908</sup> F. W. De Klerk. 1993. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and South Africa's Nuclear Capability: A speech to Parliament. 24 March 1993. p. 3. Albright, op cit. pp. 42-43. P. Hounam and S. McQuillan. 1995. *The Mini-Nuke Conspiracy: Mandela's Nuclear Nightmare*. London: Faber and Faber. p. 46.

<sup>909</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 41. Venter, op cit. p. 35. Malan, M. 2006. *My lewe saam met die SA Weermag*. Pretoria: Pretoria Boekhuis. p.219; Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.103.

<sup>910</sup> Malan, op cit. p.219

bombs would serve as a technological laager to protect SA.<sup>911</sup> Pretoria wanted to keep its nuclear programme a secret as not to alienate the West, because SA still had to buy enriched uranium from Western countries.<sup>912</sup>

The acceleration of SA's nuclear weapon programme was prompted by the "... discovery of a secret, low-cost uranium enrichment process and the construction of an enrichment pilot plant at Valindaba near Pretoria, also called the Y-plant."<sup>913</sup> This new innovation placed SA a step closer to being able to construct a nuclear arsenal without assistance from other countries.<sup>914</sup> Pretoria maintained that SA was still not using its nuclear capabilities to produce nuclear weapons, but was rather using it for peaceful purposes.<sup>915</sup> Pretoria insisted that the work at Valindaba<sup>916</sup> will be used for peaceful purposes, they still had tacit aspirations to develop their own nuclear weapons.<sup>917</sup> During March 1975 senior South African and Israeli defence officials had a meeting where Israel offered to sell nuclear capable missiles (Jericho missiles) to SA.<sup>918</sup> At that time the SADF actively lobbied for and advocated nuclear capacity. The Chief of Staff of the SADF at the time provided the Minister of Defence with three reasons why the SADF needed a nuclear capability:

- If the sovereignty of SA should ever be threatened, the West would intervene because they would not want SA to use their nuclear weapons;
- The weapons would serve as a deterrent against a Soviet or Chinese invasion of SA;
- The West would take SA seriously if they knew that SA had nuclear weapons.<sup>919</sup>

The South African Minister of Defence agreed to have a defence relationship with Israel, but he held off on immediately purchasing any missiles. His argument was that SA had no aggressive tendencies, so there was no need for the missiles at that stage. From this meeting onwards a focussed defence relationship between SA and Israel was born. A security and secrecy agreement was signed. The agreement was known as SECMENT and neither of the parties was allowed to unilaterally abandon SECMENT.<sup>920</sup>

<sup>911</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 37.

<sup>912</sup> H.E. Purkitt, S.F. Burgess and P. Liberman. 2002. "South Africa's Nuclear Decisions" *International Security*, Vol 27, No 1. (Summer 2002). p. 188.

<sup>913</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.102. Albright, op cit. p. 39.

<sup>914</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 245.

<sup>915</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 35. Minty, op cit. p. 205.

<sup>916</sup> Y. G-M. Lulat. 2008. *United States Relations with South Africa: A Critical Overview from the Colonial Period to the Present*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. p. 233. Steyn, Van der Walt and Van Loggerenberg. op cit. 35. Steyn, Van der Walt and Loggerenberg says that it means behind closed doors. According to Hounam and McQuillan it means 'the council is closed' or 'no comment'. Lulat says that it means top secret in Zulu.

<sup>917</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.102.

<sup>918</sup> See figure 5.2. Burgess, op cit. p. 521. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 184.

<sup>919</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 82.

<sup>920</sup> Ibid. pp. 82-3.

### 5.2.3 The Vastrap Incident

Pretoria needed a testing ground for their possible nuclear weapons, so Vorster authorised the funding of an underground testing site in the Kalahari Desert about 100km north of Upington in the Vastrap area. This specific location was chosen because it was far enough from international borders to be able to contain the radiological affects to SA only.<sup>921</sup> In May 1974 India test-exploded their first nuclear bomb. This test created a stir in the international arena, because it proved that "... military and peaceful atoms could be created by the same dual-use facilities and materials."<sup>922</sup> As a result, Vorster decided to not immediately take the next step of nuclear development until the hype over the Indian test passed.<sup>923</sup> The USA was still told by Pretoria that their nuclear intentions were only for peaceful purposes. The CIA also thought that Pretoria did not yet have the capability to produce a nuclear weapon, but they were mistaken.<sup>924</sup>

During May 1974, South African scientists conducted a successful test using non-nuclear materials.<sup>925</sup> Later in 1974 the South African AEB confirmed that they were capable of building a nuclear bomb.<sup>926</sup> In 1975, Pretoria announced that the Y-plant was operational and that they were busy constructing another enrichment plant.<sup>927</sup> The Y-plant had not yet produced enough enriched uranium, but it was rapidly getting there. By August 1977 SA's preparations for an underground testing of a nuclear weapon was in full swing. In an effort to divert the attention of foreign intelligence services away from the deep boreholes the SADF was drilling at Vastrap, the army tested new artillery weapons at Vastrap.<sup>928</sup> This exercise was supposed to serve as a ruse.

In 1977 the SADF finished building the Vastrap nuclear test site. The site had facilities that allowed SA to conduct underground nuclear tests for experimental purposes. Two test shafts were built at the facility with depths of 385m and 216m respectively.<sup>929</sup> Another possible function of the Vastrap test site was to serve as warning to the rest of the world that SA had the capabilities to conduct nuclear tests on its own soil.<sup>930</sup> Vastrap did indeed alert the superpowers that SA might have a nuclear capability when a Soviet spy satellite registered the building of the site. So the SADF's effort to conceal the real use of Vastrap failed.<sup>931</sup>

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<sup>921</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 110.

<sup>922</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.104.

<sup>923</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 110.

<sup>924</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.104.

<sup>925</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 41.

<sup>926</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 73.

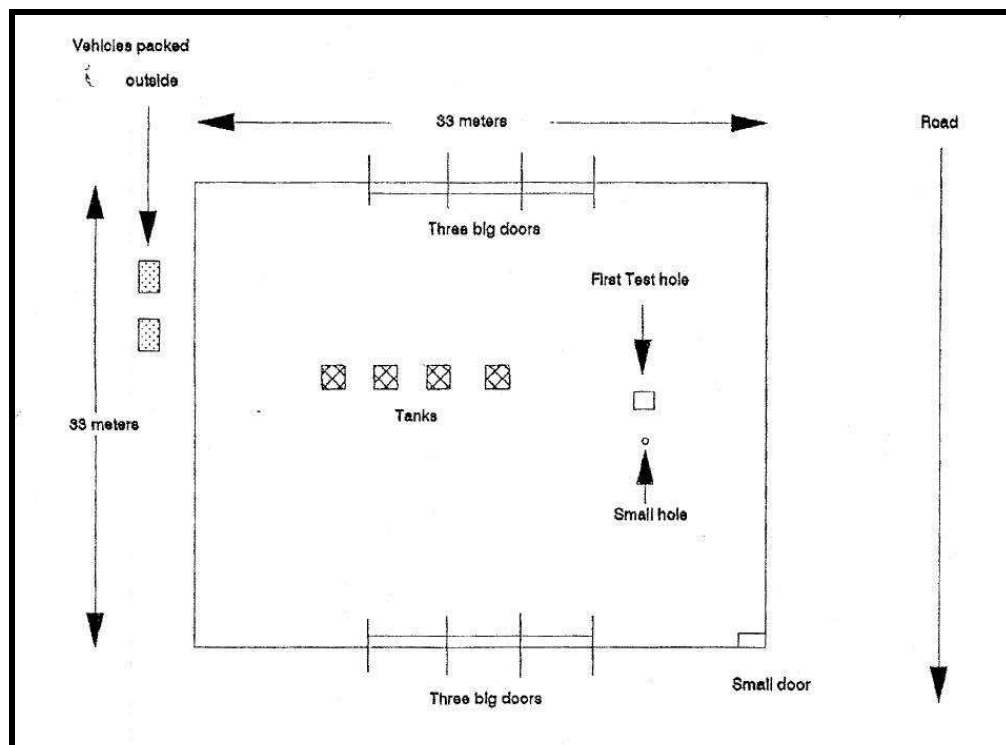
<sup>927</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. p.103.

<sup>928</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 111.

<sup>929</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 41.

<sup>930</sup> R.S. Jaster. 1984. Politics and the 'Afrikaner Bomb', *Orbis*, Vol 27, No 4, Winter 1984. p. 831.

<sup>931</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 230.



**Figure 5.1** Vastrap layout<sup>932</sup>

The Soviet's told the USA that they suspect that SA was building a nuclear test site.<sup>933</sup> A few days after the Soviets informed the USA about Vastrap, an American embassy plane (the spy plane discussed in chapter 3) flew over Vastrap and photographed the site. The photographs confirmed the USA's and the Soviet suspicions so they used an American satellite to collect more intelligence on the site. The South Africans saw that the embassy plane was flying low over the site and immediately destroyed documents and equipment which could confirm to the USA that Vastrap was a nuclear test site.<sup>934</sup> Pretoria denied the allegations of a nuclear test site and the South African media published articles to suggest that it was a worldwide campaign by the communist to prevent France from selling two nuclear power plants to SA.<sup>935</sup>

Carter warned Vorster that if SA should test a nuclear weapon, the USA would see it as a threat to world peace and will have to intervene by cutting all nuclear ties with SA.<sup>936</sup> By 21

<sup>932</sup> D. Albright, P. Brannan, Z. Laporte, K. Tajer and C. Walrond. 2011. Rendering Useless South Africa's Nuclear Test Shaft in the Kalahari Desert. *Institute for Science and International Security*. November 30, 2011. p. 6.

<sup>933</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned African Scholars (Eds), op cit. p. 173.

<sup>934</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa. 1981. *South Africa: Time Running Out*. University of California Press: Berkeley, Ca. p. 358. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. pp. 112-113.

<sup>935</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned African Scholars (Eds), op cit. p. 173.

<sup>936</sup> Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 210.



August 1977 President Vorster promised President Carter that SA would stop the preparations for a nuclear test at Vastrap.<sup>937</sup> Vorster later denied making such promises to Carter, but Carter released Vorster's written pledge to the media to prove it. In the media Vorster maintained that the USA and USSR satellites did not pick up a nuclear test site. Vorster's story to the media was that SA was building a new military airport at Vastrap.<sup>938</sup> A few days after Vorster's promise to Carter, Vorster gave the order that Vastrap should be closed down and that SA's nuclear weapon programme was to be ended.<sup>939</sup> This was all just a smoke screen, because Vorster at the same time approved that SA should clandestinely continue with the construction of nuclear weapons.<sup>940</sup>

The rumours which emerged that SA might have nuclear bombs led to more international pressure on SA to declare what its nuclear capability was. Some American analysts were of the opinion that SA never intended to test a nuclear weapon at the facility. Their opinion was that SA wanted the USA to think that SA had a nuclear weapon for political purposes.<sup>941</sup> If these analysts were correct then SA succeeded in its plan to make the world aware that SA might be a possible nuclear power.

The USA urged SA to halt its nuclear development and testing and further insisted that SA should sign the NPT. If SA were to sign the NPT then Pretoria would be forced to declare all its nuclear activities to the IAEA<sup>942</sup> and allow officials from the IAEA to inspect its nuclear facilities at any time.<sup>943</sup> The South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, R.F. Botha, maintained that SA did not have any nuclear weapons to test.<sup>944</sup>

Pretoria did not want to sign the NPT because it would have strategic implications. If they would allow the IAEA to inspect its nuclear facilities, then the world would know whether SA had the capability to build nuclear warheads or not. South Africa was not ready to play that card yet. They would only use the nuclear weapons if there were really no other options open to pursue.<sup>945</sup> Pretoria's reluctance to sign the NPT came with consequences.

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<sup>937</sup> W. Minter. 1986. *King Solomon's Mines Revisited: Western Interests and the Burdened History of Southern Africa*. New York: Basic Books. p. 295. U.S. Embassy Pretoria. 1977. Cable for Secretary Cyrus Vance. "Soviet Demarche on Nuclear Weapons Development by SAG," August 10 1977 in Mokoena op cit. p. 124.

<sup>938</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 111.

<sup>939</sup> Steyn, Van der Walt and Van Loggerenberg. op cit. 42.

<sup>940</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 113. Urnov, op cit. pp. 132 – 133.

<sup>941</sup> A. Van Wyk and J. Grobler. 2006. The Carter Administration and the Institution of the 1977 Mandatory Arms Embargo against South Africa: Rhetoric or Active Action. *Historia*. Vol 51, No 1, May 2006. p.164. Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 211.

<sup>942</sup> The IAEA is the international guard dog whose function is in short to regulate and monitor the building of nuclear weapons.

<sup>943</sup> Malan, op cit. p.220.

<sup>944</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned African Scholars (Eds), op cit. p. 173.

<sup>945</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 38.

### 5.2.4 In Search of New Allies

The USA was no longer prepared to provide SA with the necessary nuclear fuel to run its SAFARI-1 reactor by 1976.<sup>946</sup> The Ford administration decided to halt all deliveries of enriched uranium to SA because Pretoria decided that they wanted to be able to create and export enriched uranium on their own. The USA furthermore cancelled the provision of nuclear fuel for SA's civilian power plant at Koeberg near Cape Town. Pretoria had already paid the USA for the provision of the nuclear fuel, but the USA refused to reimburse Pretoria.<sup>947</sup>

The US State Department was concerned that the USA-SA nuclear relationship gave the impression that Carter was supporting SA's apartheid policies. So the State Department recommended that the nuclear relationship be ended as soon as possible.<sup>948</sup> Washington strongly objected to the idea of breaking the USA-SA nuclear relationship. Washington rather wanted more time to convince SA to sign the NPT so that its nuclear programme could be regulated.<sup>949</sup>

France was the only country willing to provide SA with the fuel, but the USA convinced France to also discontinue. France then insisted that SA must first sign the NPT before they would receive any further assistance from France. As a consequence of not signing the NPT, SA was dismissed from the IAEA's board of governors. This was a slap in the face of Pretoria.<sup>950</sup>

In 1977 the Valindaba plant was completed. Valindaba had the capacity to produce 10 tons of enriched uranium per year.<sup>951</sup> The first enriched uranium was produced in SA by 1978.<sup>952</sup> The USA's strategy to stop SA from obtaining nuclear weapons backfired. The South Africans were of the opinion that the USA did not want SA to be able to enrich their own uranium because of economic reasons. At that time the USA had the monopoly on uranium enrichment in the West, so SA would take away some of the USA's business. Pretoria argued that the USA just wanted SA to sign the NPT to protect its own monopoly in the uranium enrichment business.<sup>953</sup>

To isolate SA even further, the US Congress passed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act in March 1978. According to this act no nuclear exports were allowed to any countries which were not signatories of the NPT.<sup>954</sup> The Study Commission on US foreign policy toward SA, a project paid for by the Rockefeller foundation recommended that the Nuclear Non-

<sup>946</sup> Ibid. Minty, op cit. p. 210.

<sup>947</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 116. Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 190. According to Pabian, op cit. p. 3, the USA only refunded Pretoria in 1981.

<sup>948</sup> Ibid. pp. 104-5.

<sup>949</sup> Mokoena, op cit. p. 116.

<sup>950</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 5. Bissel, op cit. pp. 114.

<sup>951</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 233.

<sup>952</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 36. Malan, op cit. p. 218.

<sup>953</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 112.

<sup>954</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 415. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 134.

Proliferation Act of 1978 should be a broad ban of nuclear technology. The Commission recommended that it should be treated equivalent to a total arms embargo.<sup>955</sup> SA then had no other choice than to become self-sufficient in providing its own nuclear fuel and to enrich its own uranium. In attempting to starve SA from any nuclear resources and materials, those opposed to SA's nuclear programme actually achieved the opposite result by forcing Pretoria to turn inwards and develop its own processes without having to rely on support from the West.

The South Africans created the Witvlei Committee in 1978 under the leadership of P.W. Botha. The aim of this committee was to show the world that SA had a body which were responsible to regulate and control SA's nuclear weapons. The Witvlei Committee approved that SA should have nuclear weapons on condition that the weapons should only be used as a last resort. If the nuclear bombs were ever to be used, the president and his most senior minister had to take the responsibility of deciding whether or not to use the bombs. The nuclear bombs were thus actually just to be used as a show of force and to show the world that a small isolated country like SA was skilled enough to build weapons of mass destruction. The weapons were to be used as leverage when diplomats negotiated with other countries, especially with the superpowers.<sup>956</sup> In 1979 SA was entirely expelled from the IAEA because of its unwillingness to sign the NPT.<sup>957</sup>

### 5.2.5 The 1979 Nuclear blip: Did SA test "The Bomb"?

Pressure from the USA to sign the NPT increased dramatically from September 1979. On the night of 22 September an American satellite (the Vela type) registered evidence of a nuclear flash in the South Atlantic Ocean in the vicinity of the Prince Edward and Marion islands.<sup>958</sup> The Vela satellites were specifically designed to pick up evidence of nuclear testing and nuclear explosions (the double flash)<sup>959</sup> in space and the atmosphere.<sup>960</sup> The USA accused SA of testing a nuclear weapon.<sup>961</sup> The US Defence Intelligence Agency sent planes to the area where the flash was observed to take air samples. The aircraft studied the seismic records of the area for any disturbances. The planes returned with no evidence of radiation and there was no suspicious seismic activity recorded.<sup>962</sup>

It bothered the White House that they were not able to pinpoint the origins of the apparent nuclear flash. Consequently a group of experts from around the USA were assembled to

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<sup>955</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 415.

<sup>956</sup> Malan, op cit. pp.220-221.

<sup>957</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 5. Bissel, op cit. pp. 114.

<sup>958</sup> Cawthra, op cit. p. 105. Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 215. Pabian, op cit. p. 4. Lulat, op cit. p. 231.

<sup>959</sup> Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. p. 144. The double flash is "[w]hen an atom bomb detonates there is a flash of light followed by a fireball which for a period of about 300 milliseconds ionizes the air and blocks any further light emissions."

<sup>960</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 131.

<sup>961</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 456.

<sup>962</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 113.

investigate to the issue.<sup>963</sup> After investigation by the group of experts a number of alternative explanations were given to what could have caused the blip:

- It was possible that a Soviet submarine might have had an accident in the vicinity. This explanation seemed possible, because South African intelligence spotted a Soviet sub in the region at that time;
- The second alternative was that the flash was caused during an electrical storm. Some experts were of the opinion that a “super bolt” would be able to simulate the flash of a nuclear test;
- Another possibility was that SA and Israel jointly tested a low-yield nuclear artillery shell,<sup>964</sup>

The answer which was accepted by most of the experts in the group was that the satellite which picked up the blip was hit by a meteor. As a result of the collision some of the satellite’s paint chips broke off and the sensor picked it up. It then reflected on the system as a nuclear flash.<sup>965</sup>

The group of experts were almost convinced that the flash was not evidence of a South African nuclear test, but the US Defence Intelligence Agency, the CIA and the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) was not convinced.<sup>966</sup> They maintained that the blip could have been nothing else than a nuclear test. It was speculated that SA tested a nuclear weapon in the area with the help of Israel and possibly Taiwan.<sup>967</sup> This was a great concern to the USA and the rest of the world. The CIA reached the conclusion that it was not Pretoria who tested a nuclear weapon, but rather Israel. The CIA was of the opinion that Pretoria was just hinting that they might be responsible for the blip to give the impression that SA had already built a nuclear bomb.<sup>968</sup> Even though the CIA did not think that SA had nuclear weapons at the time, they still tried to infiltrate SA’s nuclear programme. A second flash in 1980 once again raised the question of whether SA was testing nuclear weapons.<sup>969</sup>

Walters is of the opinion that there was a cover up in the White House with regards to the nuclear flash. According to him the White House received evidence from other sources which showed that a nuclear weapon was tested:

- The CIA – They provided the White House with acoustic sounding which indicated a nuclear explosion;

<sup>963</sup> Mokoena, op cit. p. 116.

<sup>964</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp. 113. Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 215. Urnov, op cit. p. 133.

<sup>965</sup> Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. p. 144.

<sup>966</sup> C. Vance. 1980. Cable for U.S. Embassy Paris, “Press Panel Review of South Atlantic Event,” February 7, 1980 in Mokoena, op cit. pp. 134, 116.

<sup>967</sup> Cawthra, op cit. p. 105. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 140-142.

<sup>968</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 252.

<sup>969</sup> Massie, op cit. p. 257.

- The New Zealand Institute of Nuclear Science – They alerted the White House of increases in radioactive fallout;
- The Arecibo Ionospheric Observatory in Puerto Rico – This observatory picked up an ionospheric South to North wave which indicated a nuclear explosion.

All the evidence pointed out that SA or another country tested a nuclear weapon, but all the sources of the evidence were re-questioned and they all eventually withdrew their claims that a nuclear weapon was tested.<sup>970</sup> P.W. Botha raised the USA's suspicions even more when he told a provincial congress three days after the blip was observed that SA's enemies were soon to realise that SA had military weapons which the Republic's enemies did not know about. Even the South African media started to speculate that Botha was talking about nuclear weapons.<sup>971</sup>

Walters provides even more evidence of a possible White House cover up when he asks the following questions:

- “Why did the White House put together a panel under its control and not request scientific studies by government in the first place?
- Why did the White House hold up its panel's report and then issue it one day after the Defence Intelligence Agency statement supporting the Vela sighting as a nuclear burst?
- Why was there an apparent pattern of re-evaluating the initial data supporting the Vela event, resulting in subsequent negative findings?
- Why did the panel come to such an implausible conclusion when a body of evidence still remains unrefuted that points equally to the possibility of a nuclear explosion?...
- Why has there never been a congressional investigation of this case?”<sup>972</sup>

There are several possible reasons why the Carter administration did not want to announce that SA or a SA-Israel nuclear weapon was tested. The first reason is that the American election was taking place 1980. Carter's popularity was waning and he could not afford such a foreign policy disaster in view of the potential flux in US voter preferences. Secondly, the USA provided SA with nuclear equipment and knowledge for supposedly peaceful purposes. It would not reflect well on the White House if the American public found out that SA was able to build a nuclear bomb with American equipment and support, even if indirect. The third reason revolves around the Rhodesian issue. At that time the USA needed SA's assistance to end white minority rule in Rhodesia. So the USA did not want to alienate SA just yet. The fourth reason is that if the USA admitted that SA tested a nuclear bomb and the USA did not

<sup>970</sup> R. W. Walters. 1987. *South Africa and the Bomb: Responsibility and Deterrence*. Lexington, MA: Lexington. pp. 42-9. Minty, op cit. p. 219.

<sup>971</sup> *Rand Daily Mail*. 1979. SA could have secret weapons hints PW. *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 September 1979. p. 2. Spence, op cit. p. 109.

<sup>972</sup> Walters, op cit. p. 54.

take any concrete disciplinary action against Pretoria, other countries developing nuclear bombs might feel encouraged to also test their weapons. Lastly, American relations with Israel would also have been jeopardised. Israel was as it still is a crucial ally to the USA at the time and Washington did not want to alienate Israel.<sup>973</sup>

Many researchers and think tanks from all over the world have studied the case of the nuclear flash, but there is still no conclusion on whether SA tested a nuclear weapon or not.<sup>974</sup> Even though scientists and researchers could not decide whether or not SA tested a nuclear bomb, a retired CIA operative, Tyler Drumheller<sup>975</sup>, is of the opinion that SA definitely tested a nuclear bomb. In his book Drumheller mentions that his operatives gathered indisputable intelligence which proved that SA was behind the nuclear test in the South Atlantic. In 1997 Aziz Pahad, the South African Deputy Foreign Minister of the time confirmed that SA tested a nuclear device during 1979. According to Venter, Pahad later withdrew his statement that SA tested the nuclear device which was picked up by the Vela satellite.<sup>976</sup>

Hersch is of the opinion that SA in fact tested 3 bombs on that day. His research shows that SA wanted to test the bombs whilst clouds obstructed the view of satellites. According to him the first two bombs were tested without being spotted, but with the third bomb the clouds opened and the satellite could capture the evidence.<sup>977</sup> Van Wyk argues that it would not have been possible for SA to test a nuclear weapon at sea by 1979. Her argument is based on the facts that even though SA had two nuclear weapons by 1979, neither of the weapons could be delivered by an aircraft. Her second point is that one of the bombs was dismantled for parts and the other bomb was earmarked to be tested underground.<sup>978</sup> F.W. De Klerk admitted during a speech on 24 March 1994 that SA had completed its first nuclear weapon in 1979, but he did not mention anything about the fact that the weapon was tested in 1979.<sup>979</sup>

During September 1979, the task of producing nuclear weapons was transferred from the AEB to Armscor, which is the South African state-owned armaments firm.<sup>980</sup> A high-level cabinet committee on nuclear weapons suggested that SA should have at least seven nuclear weapons in the near future.<sup>981</sup> This would make SA a formidable nuclear power in the eyes of the world and would serve as a deterrent to any potential invader of SA.<sup>982</sup>

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<sup>973</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 232. Minty, op cit. p. 219.

<sup>974</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 24.

<sup>975</sup> T. Drumheller and E. Monaghan 2006. *On the Brink*. New York: Carrol and Graf.

<sup>976</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 24.

<sup>977</sup> S. Hersch. 1991. *The Sampson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy*. New York: Random House. p. 184

<sup>978</sup> Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 216.

<sup>979</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 1

<sup>980</sup> Liebenberg in Manganyi, Liebenberg and Potgieter (Eds), op cit. p. 250.

<sup>981</sup> Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 214.

<sup>982</sup> Steyn, Van der Walt and Van Loggerenberg. op cit. p. 67.

### 5.2.6. South Africa's Nuclear Programme During the 1980s

During the early 1980s SA's nuclear weapon building programme was centred at the facility known as Kentron Circle.<sup>983</sup> The name of the facility was later changed to Advena.<sup>984</sup> The facility was situated about 15 kilometres east of the Pelindaba site.<sup>985</sup> It was here that SA produced its first Hiroshima-style nuclear bomb.<sup>986</sup> The USSR's increasing support to the MPLA in Angola motivated the South Africans to obtain nuclear weapons as swiftly as possible.<sup>987</sup>

In 1981 with the election of Reagan as president, the USA attempted to revive the USA-SA nuclear relationship under the auspices of the Constructive Engagement Policy.<sup>988</sup> The Reagan administration provided SA with gray-area materials that were banned during the Carter administration. Reagan only banned equipment that could obviously and clearly only be used to produce nuclear weapons.<sup>989</sup> An example of nuclear related equipment that was authorised by Reagan to be sold to SA was vibration test equipment. The vibration test equipment is used to test the reliability of nuclear warheads.<sup>990</sup> A South African journalist, Diana Streak claimed that SA and the USA made a secret arrangement in 1981 where the USA would provide SA with low-enriched uranium that could keep SA's nuclear programme running. In exchange, for the uranium, SA had to allow American inspectors to access Valindaba and Pretoria had to open negotiations for the independence of Namibia.<sup>991</sup>

As discussed in chapter 3, Reagan maintained a soft foreign policy towards SA. This was also reflected in the Reagan administration's nuclear relationship with SA. Reagan defended his policy of nuclear cooperation with SA by arguing that isolating SA in the nuclear sphere would not work, because SA would only improvise ways to create its own nuclear capabilities.<sup>992</sup>

During April 1982 Armscor produced SA's first nuclear bomb that could be delivered by aircraft.<sup>993</sup> The increasing Cuban threat in Angola and the USSR's constant advancement in nuclear weapons brought Pretoria to the conclusion that they can't just rely on nuclear bombs which can be delivered by plane. They needed more advanced methods of delivering the bombs. Consequently Pretoria came to a decision that its scientists should develop medium range ballistic missiles. These missiles were built with assistance from Israel.<sup>994</sup> At the time the USA attempted to broker peace in Angola so they were very unhappy with

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<sup>983</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 6.

<sup>984</sup> Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. p. 149. Albright, op cit. p. 43.

<sup>985</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 43.

<sup>986</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 153.

<sup>987</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 27.

<sup>988</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 6.

<sup>989</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 250.

<sup>990</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 120.

<sup>991</sup> D. Streak. 1995. *Sunday Times*. January 1998. p. 1.

<sup>992</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 6.

<sup>993</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 42. Malan, op cit. p.222. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 153.

<sup>994</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 183. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 149.

Israel's involvement in SA's nuclear programme. The USA was concerned that if SA has a nuclear arsenal, a nuclear standoff might ensue in Southern Africa and all their hard diplomatic work would have been a waste of time.<sup>995</sup>

In the latter half of 1983, the Reagan administration gave permission to the Westinghouse Corporation of the USA to provide technical equipment and contribute to the maintenance of the Koeberg nuclear power station.<sup>996</sup> It is not clear whether Reagan was aware at the time that SA had already produced a nuclear bomb or not. This event was the last of Reagan's nuclear co-operation with SA, because of the CAAA that was adopted by the House of Representatives on 9 September 1985. The CAAA was passed by Congress in 1986 and came into effect on 1 January 1987.<sup>997</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 3, the American government no longer allowed any nuclear exports to SA after the CAAA was passed.<sup>998</sup> The USA would only reconsider nuclear co-operation with SA once Pretoria signed the NPT.

In 1988, the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha, announced that SA was able to build nuclear missiles should the need arise. Mr Botha would not confirm at the time that SA already had some nuclear weapons; he rather just warned the world that it was a possibility.<sup>999</sup> Pretoria used deliberate ambiguity to make the world aware that SA could defend itself with a nuclear weapon if the need arose. At the same time the South African forces were withdrawing from Angola (see chapter 4) and Pretoria feared that a communist takeover might be imminent. So the announcement by Botha served as a warning that even if SA is withdrawing, they still had one last card to play.

Early in 1989 Soviet and American spy satellites picked up evidence that an Israeli Jericho type missile<sup>1000</sup> was fired from the South African coast. According to the US Defence Intelligence Agency, the missile gave SA the capability to attack Angola with a nuclear warhead.<sup>1001</sup> The missiles could go up to 350km high into the air.<sup>1002</sup> This was of great concern to the USA, USSR and Angola. Israel imposed sanctions against SA two years earlier which entailed that Israel would break all military ties with SA. In the media it seemed as if Israel was keeping to the sanctions, but the firing of the missile was proof that Israel was still working with SA. The White House condemned Israel for lying to the world.<sup>1003</sup>

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<sup>995</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. pp.215-16.

<sup>996</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 7.

<sup>997</sup> Ibid.

<sup>998</sup> Report from Defence Attaché in Washington to the Chief of Staff Military Intelligence. 1989. File nr MI 203/2/ 3 Volume 57 (Top Secret). South African Military Archives. dd 7.4.89 – 5.7. 89. Insameling van Inligting: Eie MA - Washington.

<sup>999</sup> A. J. Venter (Ed). 1989. *Challenge: Southern Africa within the African Revolutionary Context*. Gibraltar: Ashanti. p. 25.

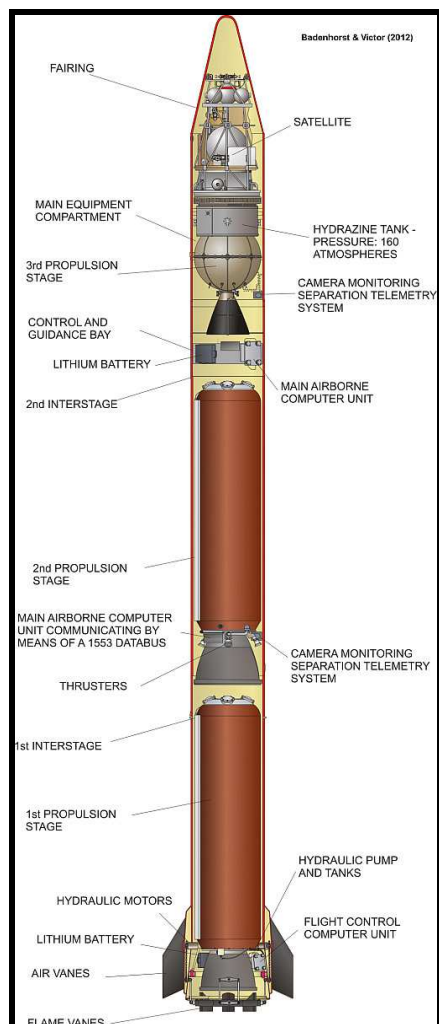
<sup>1000</sup> See Illustration 5.2.

<sup>1001</sup> Defence Intelligence Agency. 1989. Special Assessment, "South Africa: Missile Activity," July 5 1989 in Mokoena, op cit. pp. 167-168.

<sup>1002</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 26.

<sup>1003</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 214.





**Figure 5.2:** Jericho missile<sup>1004</sup>

The South Africans tried to protect their Israeli friends by claiming that it was not a missile, but rather a satellite launch vehicle which formed part of SA's space programme. The CIA was by this time aware that SA had nuclear weapons and the fact that SA now possessed a long range delivery system was worrisome.<sup>1005</sup> The USA demanded that SA and Israel should stop their nuclear cooperation, because there was no real threat to SA anymore seeing that the Border was coming to an end.<sup>1006</sup>

<sup>1004</sup> Illustration found at [http://www.b14643.de/Spacerockets\\_1/Rest\\_World/RSA\\_LV/Gallery/RSA.htm](http://www.b14643.de/Spacerockets_1/Rest_World/RSA_LV/Gallery/RSA.htm) (Accessed 10 October 2015)

<sup>1005</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 112.

<sup>1006</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 216-7.

### 5.3 THE TERMINATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

*“South Africa is still the only country in the world to have voluntarily agreed to dismantle its nuclear weapons programme.”<sup>1007</sup>*

The combination of the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola and the end of communism after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 left SA with no reason to have nuclear bombs.<sup>1008</sup> The USA was concerned that SA's nuclear bombs might fall in the hands of an international terrorist organisation or a “black African” state. As a result the USA placed even more pressure on Pretoria to sign the NPT and to dismantle its nuclear weapons. In August 1989 F.W. De Klerk replaced P.W. Botha as president which gave the USA hope that SA might finally end its nuclear weapon programme.<sup>1009</sup> De Klerk was of the opinion that SA's nuclear programme was not just redundant, but it also hampered SA's development of international relations after years of isolation.<sup>1010</sup>

As the political landscape was changing in Pretoria, SA's nuclear arsenal remained a headache for the USA. Pretoria knew that they won't be accepted back in the international political scene whilst still being busy with a covert nuclear research. Due to the pressure from the USA and the rest of the world Pretoria opened talks by 1990 to end its nuclear weapons programme. Pretoria also decided that they could now sign the NPT. Even though the military threats against SA started to wither, they still wanted to use the bombs to their advantage for as long as possible. The nuclear weapons were still to be used as leverage when negotiating on an international level.<sup>1011</sup>

On 10 July 1991 Pretoria signed the NPT, but they did not announce it publicly.<sup>1012</sup> The order to dismantle the nuclear weapons had already been given in February 1990 by President De Klerk. Over a period of 18 months, Pretoria dismantled and destroyed its nuclear weapons and the facilities before signing the NPT.<sup>1013</sup> All the documents that accompanied the SA nuclear weapon programme were also destroyed.<sup>1014</sup> In 1994 the USA gave Pretoria approximately US\$ 500 000 to destroy the last remaining nuclear equipment. This signalled the end of SA's nuclear programme.<sup>1015</sup>

When SA's nuclear weapon programme was abandoned SA had one bomb that was ready to be tested at an underground facility, five completed nuclear bombs and the seventh bomb

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<sup>1007</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 17.

<sup>1008</sup> De Klerk, op cit. p. 4.

<sup>1009</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 38. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 218.

<sup>1010</sup> De Klerk, op cit. p. 4.

<sup>1011</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 220-221.

<sup>1012</sup> Pabian, op cit. p. 1. De Klerk, op cit. p. 2.

<sup>1013</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1014</sup> Steyn, Van der Walt and Van Loggerenberg. op cit. pp. 98-99.

<sup>1015</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 222.

was almost half way to completion.<sup>1016</sup> According to President de Klerk SA's nuclear weapon objective was to produce seven nuclear bombs.<sup>1017</sup>

There are numerous sceptics who are of the opinion that SA did not only build six and a half bombs. According to these conspiracy theorists SA had at least 20 bombs. The conspiracy theorist thinks that the remaining bombs are in the hands of right wing Afrikaners or that the bombs were clandestinely given to Israel.<sup>1018</sup> There are no official documents to confirm these conspiracy theories, so until solid evidence are found, these theories will remain conspiracies.

## 5.4 THE USA-SA NUCLEAR RELATIONSHIP

### 5.4.1 The USA's Role in the Development of SA's Nuclear Capability

*“With a plentiful supply of natural uranium and its own separation plant, South Africa can produce all the weapons grade uranium it wants. This capability strengthens South Africa's position militarily, diplomatically and economically. When the inevitable showdown comes in southern Africa, Pretoria can threaten ultimate disaster unless it gets its way.”* (US Congressman Les Aspin)<sup>1019</sup>

SA's large reserve of uranium ore made it an essential partner to have a nuclear relationship with. The USA required large amounts of uranium for the development of their own nuclear weapons programme. A nuclear relationship with the USA was beneficial for SA not only because they would receive technological advancements, but SA would also reap financial benefits.<sup>1020</sup> According to Bissel “the United States bought over 43 000 tons of uranium for about US\$ 1 billion.”<sup>1021</sup>

The mutually beneficial relationship led to the signing of the 1957 Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy between SA and the USA. This agreement was centred on cooperation with regards to nuclear research. It entailed an exchange programme of students and scientists between the USA and SA. The agreement was signed to be binding for an initial period of 20 years. Due to the building of the Koeberg nuclear reactor and an increasing need for exported enriched uranium from the USA, the agreement was extended towards the end of 2007.<sup>1022</sup>

Most of SA's nuclear scientists of the time were educated in American universities or funded to do nuclear research by the USA government as a result of the agreement. For example, in

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<sup>1016</sup> Malan, op cit. p.222.

<sup>1017</sup> De Klerk, op cit. p. 3.

<sup>1018</sup> Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. pp. xix – xx. Polakow-Suransky, op cit. pp.222-3.

<sup>1019</sup> Aspin objected to the US nuclear assistance to SA because of the possible military implications. A. Seidman and N. Seidman. 1977. *U.S. Multinationals in Southern Africa*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House. p. 93.

<sup>1020</sup> M. Reis. 1988. *Without the Bomb: The Politics of Nuclear Non-Proliferation*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 182.

<sup>1021</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 107.

<sup>1022</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 233.

1961 the USA “awarded a grant of \$100 000 to the Bernhard Price Institute of Geophysical Research at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.”<sup>1023</sup> This grant would allow South African nuclear scientist to improve methods of monitoring nuclear testing.<sup>1024</sup>

As mentioned earlier in the chapter the USA helped SA to build its first nuclear reactor, SAFARI-1, in 1962. American companies also supplied the fuel that was needed to run the reactor. These companies included U.S. Nuclear, Gulf Oil, United States Steel, Texas Nuclear and Gulf General Atomic.<sup>1025</sup> During 1964 the USA-SA nuclear relationship came under scrutiny. It was time for the USA to provide SA with the fuel rods that would enable the SAFARI-1 reactor to go active. The Johnson administration felt that they could not be seen providing SA with the fuel rods as it would give the impression that the USA was enabling SA to build nuclear bombs. Johnson decided to delay the delivery of the fuel rods probably until after the American elections. Eventually the fuel rods were delivered on 10 February 1965 without any media attention drawn to the event. The USA continued to provide SA with the necessary nuclear fuel until 1975.<sup>1026</sup>

During the early 1970s an agreement was reached between the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and South Africa’s electricity utility ESCOM. The agreement entailed that the AEC would provide ESCOM with nuclear enrichment services for its nuclear power station at Dupefontein. This agreement also guaranteed that the USA would continue to receive uranium oxide from SA needed to run American nuclear plants.<sup>1027</sup> This agreement was worth US\$ 120 million at the time.<sup>1028</sup>

Once the USA cut its nuclear ties with SA in 1978 because of SA’s refusal to sign the NPT, Pretoria looked for new allies to supply them with the necessary expertise and equipment to continue their nuclear weapon programme. The only option open to the USA was to try to convince SA to sign the NPT and to keep an eye on the development of SA’s nuclear weapons programme.

#### 5.4.2 Getting SA to Sign the NPT

The USA tried for many years to convince the South Africans to sign the NPT of 1968. To get SA to adhere to the safeguards of the IAEA was one of the USA’s biggest priorities. It frustrated the USA that the rest of the West was not as adamant as them that SA should sign the NPT. It led to tensions between the USA and its European allies, especially France.<sup>1029</sup>

Pretoria knew that Washington saw the signing of the NPT as a very important issue. Resultantly Pretoria “steadily raised the ‘price’ to the United States for adherence, to a level

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<sup>1023</sup> Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 198.

<sup>1024</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1025</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 188.

<sup>1026</sup> Bissel, op cit. pp.107-8.

<sup>1027</sup> Cawthra, op cit. p. 107. Seidman and Seidman, op cit. p. 93.

<sup>1028</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 188.

<sup>1029</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 104.

unacceptable to overall U.S. policies.”<sup>1030</sup> SA’s unwillingness to sign the NPT indicated to American analysts and the rest of the world that Pretoria might be busy with a covert nuclear weapon programme.<sup>1031</sup> But Washington could not think of reasons why SA would want to build nuclear weapons.

During Carter’s administration the only viable reason why SA needed nuclear weapons was because SA wanted to use the weapons as a bargaining chip to get support from the USA. The USA consequently based their nuclear policies toward SA on the presumption that SA was not going to use nuclear weapons aggressively - if they were ever able to build such weapons. During June 1977 the American Sub-committee on Africa of the House of International Relations Committee held hearings about SA nuclear development. The sub-committee heard that South African government officials illegally entered the USA to purchase the most advanced nuclear enrichment technology. Even with the information that SA now had the most advanced enrichment technology available, there was still no urgency in the US policy to prevent SA from building nuclear weapons.<sup>1032</sup> The Carter administration decided to use its nuclear relationship with SA as leverage to bring about political change in SA. In 1980 the Carter administration placed an embargo on all nuclear fuel deliveries until Pretoria would agree to sign the NPT.<sup>1033</sup> This plan failed dismally, SA was not really concerned about the USA’s withdrawal of support in the nuclear field.<sup>1034</sup>

### 5.4.3 Keeping an Eye on SA’s Nuclear Programme

SA quickly found new nuclear allies in countries such as France, Israel, Switzerland, Belgium and Taiwan.<sup>1035</sup> The French was criticised by the USA for selling nuclear reactors for the Koeberg plant. SA also sent more than a hundred nuclear technicians to France to receive training on how to operate the Koeberg reactor. When confronted by the USA, France reacted by arguing that SA already had a nuclear military capability at the time and that the French reactors did not add anything to SA capability. The USA was adamant to determine the extent of SA’s nuclear capability.<sup>1036</sup>

The American government tried its best to stop SA from building or obtaining nuclear weapons, but was unsuccessful. None of the American administrations were able to stop Israel from helping SA to build a nuclear arsenal. Israel helped SA develop advanced nuclear missile technology, whilst SA presented Israel with the necessary raw materials and testing space to increase their nuclear arsenal as well.<sup>1037</sup> There was nothing that the USA could do to stop this alliance between Israel and SA.<sup>1038</sup> All that the USA could do was to gather intelligence to stay in touch with how SA’s nuclear capability was developing. It is

<sup>1030</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 104.

<sup>1031</sup> Spencer, op cit. p. 112.

<sup>1032</sup> Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Citizens (Ed), op cit. p. 189.

<sup>1033</sup> Mokoena, op cit. p. 117.

<sup>1034</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 105.

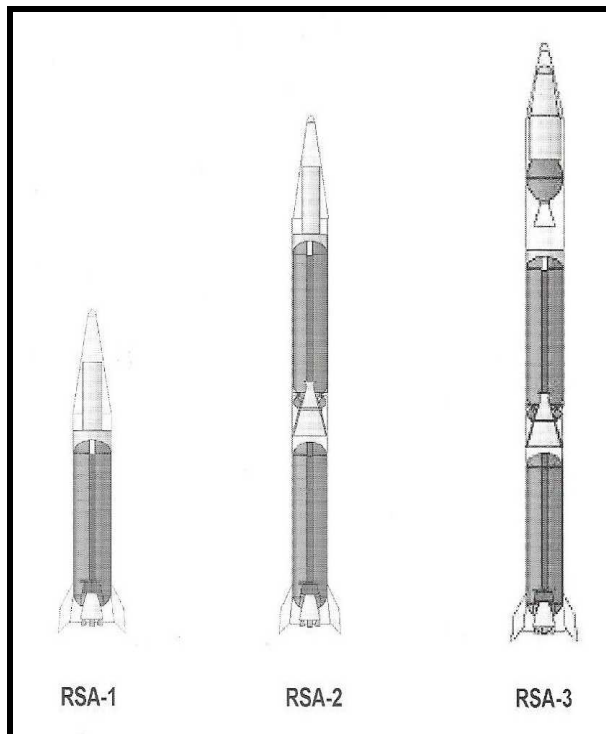
<sup>1035</sup> Burgess, op cit. p. 520.

<sup>1036</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 109.

<sup>1037</sup> See illustration 5.3.

<sup>1038</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 7.

possible that Washington was not too concerned about Israel's help to Pretoria, because SA still received the help that was needed for its nuclear programme, but no fingers could be pointed to the USA.



**Illustration 5.3:** The South African version of the Jericho missile<sup>1039</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 3, SA Military Intelligence during April 1979 covertly searched the American diplomatic plane that was stationed at Waterkloof Air Force base and found photos that the Americans took of the Pelindaba site.<sup>1040</sup> This could be interpreted that the USA did not know what the South African nuclear capability was at the time, hence the photos. It is possible that the photos could have helped to determine how much uranium was being enriched at the plant. In early 1980 the South African government claimed that a group of American spies entered SA in order to learn SA's nuclear secrets.<sup>1041</sup> So it is arguable that the USA had no idea whether Pretoria had the capability to build weapons of mass destruction. Both Venter and Albright confirm that the South African government was very good with keeping secrets from the international world as well as from the South African public.<sup>1042</sup> Venter also writes that the CIA did not have any intelligence about the activities happening at the Kentron circle where the bombs were built and stored.<sup>1043</sup>

<sup>1039</sup> H. Steyn, R. Van der Walt and J. Van Loggerenberg, op cit. p. 58

<sup>1040</sup> Malan, op cit. p.201.

<sup>1041</sup> Bissel, op cit. p. 109.

<sup>1042</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 38. Venter, op cit. p. 9.

<sup>1043</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 37.

During the late 1970s the CIA managed to recruit a South African scientist that studied in the USA to work for the CIA in return for American citizenship. But the USA lost interest in SA's nuclear programme by the early 1980s as there were more important nuclear related concerns in the forms of India and Pakistan according to Bissel. This gave SA the room to continue building and upgrading its nuclear weapon capabilities.<sup>1044</sup>

Polakow-Suransky confirms that the CIA was clueless about the details of SA's nuclear capability. The CIA knew that SA had a good nuclear relationship with Israel, but they were not able to confirm that Israel was helping SA with the bombs, or whether SA was helping Israel with building nuclear bombs.<sup>1045</sup> Van Wyk argues that the CIA might have intentionally turned a blind eye to SA's nuclear programme, because the CIA was supporting SA with its fighting in Angola.<sup>1046</sup> In 1981 a Study Commission on US policy toward SA reported that it was difficult to determine and define the relationship between SA and Israel.<sup>1047</sup> It was in fact a mutual relationship where both countries received benefits from the relationship. It is also rumoured that China might have helped SA with its nuclear weapon programme. According to Venter, there "...is some evidence that Pretoria bought roughly 60 tons of lightly enriched uranium (LEU) from Beijing in the early 1980's..."<sup>1048</sup> Venter is of the opinion that Beijing might have shipped some missile propulsion units and fuel with the batch of LEU.<sup>1049</sup>

#### 5.4.4 The Revival of the US-SA Nuclear Relationship

With the election of Reagan as the American president during late 1980, it could be expected that there would be a revival of the USA-SA nuclear relationship. It was discussed in chapter 3 and 4 how Reagan was much more sympathetic to SA than his predecessors. His supportive stance to SA was also applicable to the nuclear relationship between the two countries. Reagan was of the opinion that to isolate SA in the nuclear arena would be just as inefficient as the arms embargoes proved to be.<sup>1050</sup>

In 1981 the Reagan administration declared in a State Department document that "[t]he United States place a high priority on the resumption of nuclear cooperation with South Africa and the provision of fuel for the Koeberg reactors."<sup>1051</sup> After a meeting in May 1981 between Secretary of State, Alexander Haig and the South African Foreign Minister (Pik Botha) it became clear that the USA was serious about reviving the USA-SA nuclear relations. The USA showed willingness to assist South African scientists with research on low enriched uranium fuel fabrication and to further assist with training South African scientists in the

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<sup>1044</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 142.

<sup>1045</sup> Polakow-Suransky, op cit. p. 153.

<sup>1046</sup> Van Wyk, 2007, op cit. p. 210.

<sup>1047</sup> The Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, op cit. p. 308.

<sup>1048</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 42.

<sup>1049</sup> Ibid

<sup>1050</sup> Van Wyk, M. 2010. Sunset over Atomic South Africa: United States-South African Nuclear Relations, 1981-93. *Cold War History*, Vol 10, No 1. February 2010. p. 55.

<sup>1051</sup> US State Department. 1981. Draft Talking Points, "South Africa-Nuclear Issue," April 3 1981 in Mokoena, op cit. p. 150.

USA.<sup>1052</sup> Reagan's lenient nuclear policy towards SA made sense from the perspective of his Constructive Engagement policy.

The USA Congress started to question the White House's increasing exports of nuclear material, computers and high-technology to SA during 1982. The Reagan administration defended the exports by explaining that all the equipment that was exported to SA was to be used for peaceful nuclear research and application. This was not entirely true, because some of the material e.g. Helium-3, could be used to build nuclear explosives. The Cyber 170/750 computers that were sold to SA could be used in nuclear weapon research, especially with regards to the modelling of nuclear explosions.<sup>1053</sup> It was clear that the Reagan administration was much more flexible on the export of grey-area materials than the Carter administration.<sup>1054</sup>

By December 1982 the US Congress and several anti-apartheid movements were very suspicious about SA's nuclear programme. The US Congress was worried that SA were able to build nuclear weapons with the equipment that the Reagan administration was selling to SA. Consequently the Congress proposed legislation that would prohibit the export of any nuclear material, equipment or technology to SA. Reagan dismissed the proposed legislation by arguing that:

- "the 1978 Nuclear Non-proliferation Act effectively precluded significant nuclear commerce with South Africa;
- that the approved exports were readily available to South Africa from other nuclear suppliers, which would probably not require the stringent safeguards requirements of the US;
- that the exports did not involve the transfer of classified or sensitive information and therefore represented no proliferation risk;
- and that the proposed legislation would eliminate any chance of influencing Pretoria to accept full-scope nuclear safeguards."<sup>1055</sup>

By January 1984 there was a slight shift in SA's attitude towards signing the NPT. This was probably to divert suspicion about the true nature of Pretoria's nuclear programme. Pretoria assured the USA that they would in the future abide to the rules and regulations of the NPT as to not contribute to the nuclear proliferation problem. Even though Pretoria made this assurance, they still refused to sign the NPT because the USA and the rest of the world would then have discovered that SA already possessed nuclear weapons.<sup>1056</sup>

In 1985 the USA-SA nuclear relationship once again made international headlines when it came to the light that around forty American citizens were illegally working as nuclear reactor

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<sup>1052</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 233.

<sup>1053</sup> Ibid. p. 234. Van Wyk, M. 2010. *Sunset over Atomic South Africa*, op cit. p. 57.

<sup>1054</sup> Minty, op cit. p. 194. Davies, op cit. p. 101. Mokoena, op cit. p. 117

<sup>1055</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. *Sunset over Atomic South Africa*. p. 58.

<sup>1056</sup> Ibid.



operators in SA.<sup>1057</sup> Lulat describes the US citizens working on the South African nuclear programme as nuclear mercenaries.<sup>1058</sup> The Americans working on the South African nuclear programme were violating the Atomic Act of 1954 which entailed that American assistance to foreign nuclear programmes may only take place once the Secretary of Energy authorised such assistance. In this instance the US Secretary of Energy claims that he had no idea that American citizens were working in SA.<sup>1059</sup>

During July 1985 the US Senate voted that all nuclear related trade between the USA and SA should be stopped and banned for the future.<sup>1060</sup> Consequently on 9 September 1985, Reagan issued an Executive Order which prohibited the export of any nuclear goods or services to SA.<sup>1061</sup> It can be argued that the newly implemented ban on nuclear trade with SA was effective, because by early 1986 Pretoria indicated that they might be willing to sign the NPT. There were also other reasons that could have led to the mounting willingness of Pretoria to sign the NPT. Firstly, Pretoria was still fighting an ongoing war in Angola and did not want to alienate the USA any further. Secondly, Pretoria was fighting an internal war with the liberation movements that fought against the apartheid regime. During the mid-1980s attacks on South African soil by these liberation movements were becoming a regular phenomenon. Lastly, Pretoria was under sanctions in almost every possible sphere. All the combined sanctions could have played a role in Pretoria's decision making of the time.

Even though Botha showed willingness to sign the NPT, he could not convince the rest of his administration to allow him to sign the NPT. Washington would not accept anything less than the signing of the NPT and the signing of an IAEA safeguard agreement.<sup>1062</sup> By October 1986, the noose around Pretoria's neck became even tighter when the USA Senate instituted the CAAA as was discussed in Chapter 3. During September 1987, Pretoria announced that they were willing to have formal negotiations to possibly sign the NPT. Once again nothing came from the announcement. By July 1988 Pretoria requested talks with the USA, Great Britain and the USSR to inform them that Pretoria would allow IAEA inspectors to visit SA's nuclear institutions. Pretoria admitted that the Valindaba plants were able to produce enriched uranium, but denied that the plants were ever used for the purpose of building nuclear weapons. If Pretoria were to sign the NPT then they would have to allow inspectors from the IAEA to investigate the facilities and most probably discover that SA had nuclear weapons.<sup>1063</sup>

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Foreign Minister Pik Botha announced during August 1988 that SA had the capability to build nuclear weapons if they wanted to.<sup>1064</sup> But he never admitted that Pretoria had any nuclear weapons at the time. It is important to remember that

<sup>1057</sup> Urnov, op cit. p. 233. Walters, op cit. p. 113.

<sup>1058</sup> Lulat, op cit. p. 235.

<sup>1059</sup> Mokoena, op cit. p. 117.

<sup>1060</sup> C. Crocker. 1993. *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball. p. 264.

<sup>1061</sup> Van Wyk, 2010, op cit. *Sunset over Atomic South Africa*. p. 61.

<sup>1062</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1063</sup> Ibid. pp. 62-63.

<sup>1064</sup> Venter, op cit. p. 25.

this announcement was made almost at the same time when SA was withdrawing its forces from Angola.

By December 1988 it was clear that the war in Southern Africa would soon come to an end. South Africa, Cuba and Angola signed the tri-partite agreement, so the main threat according to Pretoria existed no longer.<sup>1065</sup> High level officials of the ruling National Party realised that they could soon be forced to hand over the government to the ANC and they did not want the new ANC government to inherit the nuclear weapons.<sup>1066</sup> The USA now even placed more pressure on Pretoria to sign the NPT. This was because Washington also did not want the ANC to get their hands on nuclear weapons seeing that the ANC had close links with Libya and Cuba.<sup>1067</sup>

On February 26, 1990 newly elected President F.W. De Klerk wrote an official instruction to inform all the agencies involved that SA must terminate the production of nuclear weapons. The instruction also ordered that all the finished nuclear devices should be dismantled.<sup>1068</sup> By 1992, the nuclear dismantlement process was completed.<sup>1069</sup> When Fidel Castro asked Nelson Mandela what happened to South Africa's nuclear weapons, the ex-president told him that he had no idea because the military leaders of the SADF never told him.<sup>1070</sup> It is believed that that all the material used in SA's nuclear programme was melted down and sent to the AEC.<sup>1071</sup>

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

South Africa's rich uranium deposits allowed Pretoria to bargain for a research reactor and enriched uranium from the USA and Britain. This was SA's first move into the nuclear world. The USA-SA nuclear relationship did not draw much attention until the mid-1970s when SA refused to sign the NPT. The Vastrap incident and the nuclear flash in the Indian Ocean caused some American agencies to believe that SA might have had nuclear weapons. There is still no consensus on whether or not SA tested a nuclear weapon, but it is not implausible. The USA might have covered up that SA tested a nuclear weapon. It is possible that the White House covered up the incident, because it pointed out how ineffective the USA's nuclear test detection capability was.

The USA tried to prevent SA from having a nuclear arsenal. They failed dismally. It would have been impossible for SA to build their six and a half nuclear bombs without the help of the foreign governments like Israel and France and possibly China. The USA's efforts to isolate SA from the rest of the world backfired when SA build its own military industrial complex that was able to produce nuclear bombs with very little help. The French also

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<sup>1065</sup> Albright, op cit. p. 46.  
<sup>1066</sup> Burgess, op cit. p. 523.  
<sup>1067</sup> Burgess, op cit. p. 523.  
<sup>1068</sup> Hounam and McQuillan, op cit. p. 47. Albright, op cit. p. 46.  
<sup>1069</sup> Burgess, op cit. p. 523.  
<sup>1070</sup> Ramonet, op cit. p. 317.  
<sup>1071</sup> Albright, op cit.

helped SA to enhance their nuclear capability by helping Pretoria to build the Koeberg nuclear reactor. Pretoria showed the USA that they could build nuclear weapons without help from the Americans. This must have been a headache to Washington. As a result, the South Africans were able to use their nuclear weapons to blackmail the USA in providing them with assistance where needed.

SA felt compelled to build its own nuclear capability as a result of international sanctions against the country. The Soviet and Cuban presence in Angola was a good enough reason for SA to argue that they needed nuclear weapons to protect the country if things went haywire in neighbouring Angola. SA was also aware that the USSR might use a nuclear attack in Angola, so SA needed the necessary arsenal to enable them to retaliate. In the end SA's nuclear weapons was most effectively used in the diplomatic war. The weapons also gave the South African government a sense of accomplishment, because they attained the status of being part of the global nuclear club which was reserved for only a few countries.

The USA was involved in South Africa's nuclear programme from the beginning to the end. Initially it was the USA who helped SA to be able to start a nuclear programme. As the political landscape changed in Southern Africa between the 1950s and the 1990s so did the USA's position towards South Africa's nuclear programme changed. It can be argued that Washington in many instances turned a blind eye when it came to Pretoria's nuclear weapons, because Pretoria was preventing the communist from over running Southern Africa.

Had the Border War not come to a conclusion when it did and if South Africa's military operations in Namibia and Angola failed, the history of Southern Africa might possibly have included some nuclear attacks. The South African government would probably have targeted cities like Luanda and Dar es Salaam. But in the end SA's nuclear weapons were not used (or at least not used in areas where humans reside). South Africa remains until today the only country in history to voluntarily dismantle its nuclear weapons and nuclear weapon programme

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.1 SUMMARY

The USA has enjoyed diplomatic relations with SA since 1799 and it remained cordial throughout the nineteenth century. During the Second World War (1939 – 1945), forces from the Union of South Africa fought alongside their American counter-parts against Fascism. During the Berlin Airlift (1948-1949) SA again assisted the USA and its Western allies where South African aircrews delivered 8 333 tons of humanitarian aid to the people of West Berlin. In 1950, Washington once again called upon its South African ally for help. This time the request was that SA should join the USA and the West in the fight against communism in Korea (1950-1953).

By 1960 the Cold War was a reality and the communist influence was rapidly gaining ground in Africa. South Africa with its apartheid government was the anti-communist bastion in Southern Africa. The newly independent African states raised their concerns in the international arena about SA's human rights abuses and the inequality of black people in SA. This created a problem for the USA, because the USA was jockeying for the support of the newly independent African states, but Washington did not want to alienate their strategic partner - SA. The American foreign policy during the Cold War was based on the promotion of democracy and human rights but the most prevalent issue in USA foreign policy during the Cold War was the containment of communism. South Africa was a staunch anti-communist force, but its apartheid laws violated the human rights of the majority of the country's inhabitants. The USA professed its commitment to democracy as a moral value and the advocacy of this approach formed an integral part of US attitudes as early as its involvement in the Second World War, perhaps even earlier. Yet frequently moral standpoints were overridden by interest - and even when morality and interest intersect in foreign policy, the weight of national interest surpasses morality.

The USA-SA relationship had to be balanced between promoting the notion of a free and a democratic world and the reality of the Cold War where it was a fight between the West and the communists. Through its Cold War rhetoric of being anti-communist, the apartheid government were able to convince the USA that the fight against communism in SA is more important than the human rights of people. The banning of the ANC and its ally the SACP in 1960 showed the USA that Pretoria was not going to tolerate any socialist or communist ideas in the country. The ANC and the SACP turned to the USSR and its communist allies for support. In the Cold War context, this gave the USA even more reason to support the apartheid government. Although the USA relied on SA to defend Southern Africa from a perceived communist invasion, the USA still proclaimed that apartheid was wrong. South Africa's mineral wealth was another important motivation of American support to the apartheid government. If the USA did not buy SA's strategic minerals and Pretoria sold it to the USSR instead, then the USSR would have controlled 90% of the strategic minerals that were needed by the USA.

The Sharpeville massacre of 21 March 1960 focused the eyes of the world on the hard-handed modus operandi of the apartheid government. It was expected that president Eisenhower would follow the rest of the world and break ties with SA or at least criticise Pretoria. Instead Eisenhower was upset that an American official criticised Pretoria on behalf of the American government. Eisenhower even called the SA Ambassador in Washington to apologise for the article that criticised the Sharpeville massacre. To save face with the international world, the USA continued to voice their abhorrence for apartheid. Many countries withdrew their investments from SA after Sharpeville. It seemed as if the South African economy was going to crumble and that Pretoria would have to abolish apartheid in order to bring back foreign investment to SA for survival. Instead of also withdrawing its business from SA, American businesses increased their investment in SA during this period and helped the apartheid government to save the economy.

In 1961, J.F. Kennedy was voted in as president of the USA. It was a time of hope for the liberals and black people of SA, because Kennedy promoted himself as a leader that would unwaveringly fight against racism and oppression. Unfortunately for them Kennedy was kept busy with other theatres of the Cold War where the USA was more heavily involved than in SA. Apartheid did not get as much attention as was hoped for. Kennedy was not in favour of long term investments in SA, but American businessmen saw excellent investment opportunities in SA and helped the South African economy to flourish. Kennedy felt that economic sanctions would hurt American economic interest and would hurt the black people of SA much more. Thus, sanctions were staved off for the moment. The Kennedy administration vetoed two applications for an arms embargo against SA before eventually caving in to international pressure. By 1963 Kennedy could no longer ignore the demands from the American public and other African countries when he eventually supported an arms embargo against SA. This was a facade to convince the world and especially African countries that the USA was serious about bringing an end to apartheid.

When President Johnson came into power in late 1963 after Kennedy's assassination, apartheid was once again on the agenda. Once more, much was said about the abhorrence of apartheid, but not much was done to end it. Johnson was aware that economic sanctions against SA would damage American business interests. He further argued that economic sanctions would not only hurt the white people of SA, but the black people would also suffer the consequences of economic sanctions. As a result he also tried to block sanctions against SA as far as possible. Johnson maintained a neutral economic policy towards SA, just like his predecessor, Kennedy. Johnson did however stall the process of apartheid being exported to Namibia when he issued NSAM 295. The issuing of NSAM 295 even under criticism from American businessmen and politicians showed that Johnson did want to make an effort to oppose apartheid but he did not have the full backing of the American governmental system.

When President Nixon was voted in, the hopes of black South Africans and liberals once again flared up. This was because Nixon constantly mentioned the abhorrence of apartheid during his election speeches and that it should be ended in order to satisfy the needs of the

liberals. Nixon however was aware that white minority rule was good for American economic and strategic interests in SA. Where Kennedy and Johnson at least made it look as if they cared about the wrong doings of apartheid, Nixon openly supported the apartheid government in many instances. Nixon's foreign policy towards SA was guided by Option 2 of NSSM 39 which entailed that American business and strategic interests were paramount in SA. All decisions made on SA during his presidency firstly considered what the consequences for USA interests would be. This was good news for the apartheid government, because white rule in SA was beneficial to the USA from a business perspective and from the USA's Cold War perspective of the containment of communism. The Nixon administration defended its aggressive investment in SA by saying that an increase in American businesses in SA would allow the USA to undermine apartheid. The rationale behind this thinking was clear – American businesses could make huge profits from the cheap black labour in SA. Even though Nixon supported the apartheid government economically, he was opposed to SA's occupation of Namibia and even requested American investors to refrain from investing in Namibia. The Nixon administration was especially willing to slacken the terms of the arms embargo against SA and to find ways to bypass the arms embargo.

The strong USA-SA relationship was maintained when President Ford took control of the White House in 1974 after the Watergate Scandal and Nixon's subsequent resignation. The situation in Southern Africa took on a new dynamic with the withdrawal of the Portuguese in 1974. The White House had to adjust its foreign policy toward SA accordingly, because SA was now surrounded by black-ruled states which could become valuable assets to the communist forces in the ideological East-West Cold War battle. The Ford administration also vetoed arms embargoes and economic sanctions against SA in order to preserve the last bastion of white rule and anti-communism in Southern Africa.

President Carter's victory in the American electoral race in late 1976 worried the apartheid government. They had reasons to believe that Carter was going to show his support to the black majority in SA if he would keep the promises that he made during his presidential election campaign. Pretoria felt that Carter was not going to continue the struggle against communism like his predecessors. Consequently Pretoria started to make new friends who they regarded to be anti-communist. Carter laid down certain requirements that SA had to meet if they wanted a continuation of the good relationship they had with the USA. The apartheid government found these requirements outside the scope of its own national interest and therefore turned to their new allies such as France, Argentina and Israel. Carter's cold stance toward SA gave Pretoria reason to embark on a clandestine propaganda operation to change the world and the American public's opinion about SA in order to change Carter's foreign policy toward SA. This operation was exposed and became known as the Information Scandal or Muldergate. USA-SA economic relations flourished under Carter despite the dire political relationship between the two countries. Carter argued that American businesses in SA should show SA how to treat workers of all races hence the Sullivan Principles were introduced to American businesses operating in SA. Carter refused to have a military relationship with apartheid SA. He voted in favour of the most comprehensive

arms embargo that was ever imposed on SA. The spy plane incident of 1979 further soured the USA-SA relationship.

The apartheid government was very optimistic when Ronald Reagan won the USA presidential race in 1980. They hoped that the mutually beneficial USA-SA relationship could be renewed. Pretoria was not disappointed and within a short period the USA-SA relationship was stronger than ever. Reagan, despite the views of the UN General Assembly, openly sided with the white government of SA. By implementing his policy of Constructive Engagement he allowed the apartheid government to maintain its hold over Namibia and the black people of SA. Economic relations between the USA and SA also flourished under the Reagan administration. When the USA Congress realised that Constructive Engagement did not enforce any real reform by the apartheid government, they implemented the CAAA. The opinion and pressure of the American public influenced the USA Congress to implement the CAAA. Reagan tried to veto the CAAA, but the Congress outvoted him. The CAAA led to an almost absolute discontinuation of the USA-SA relationship and paved the way for actual reforms in SA.

The election of President Bush in 1989 was the last nail in the coffin for the relationship between apartheid SA and the USA. Bush made it known that he genuinely wanted to end apartheid. It was under his reign that the Border War ended, Pretoria started to make actual reforms towards a one man one vote policy, Namibia got independence and the Cold War also ended.

South Africa's strategic position on the world map made it a compulsory ally to have from the USA's point of view. The sea lanes around SA were crucial when the USA was denied access to the Suez Canal. The deep ports of SA were also beneficial to the USA Navy to replenish or repair their naval ships that were operating far from American soil. South Africa was further perfectly situated for an American long-range missile testing site. South Africa's strategic position gave them the upper hand when it came to negotiations on USA support to SA.

Pretoria never hesitated to remind Washington that they would lose a very valuable strategic and military ally if they do not provide SA with the goods that they needed. The USA bypassed the arms embargoes by classifying the equipment as civilian equipment rather than military equipment. During the Carter administration the export of all equipment – civilian or military – were banned. American weapons and equipment then had to find its way to SA illegally through, American businessmen and the CIA without Carter's knowledge. The South African intelligence agencies and the CIA had a good working relationship throughout the Cold War period. The CIA was especially helpful when it came to providing reports on the situation in Angola.

South Africa's occupation of Namibia was another headache to the USA, because the whole world condemned SA's illegal occupation of Namibia. The USA was wary of criticising SA too much on the Namibia issue, because the USA had too much to lose in terms of an economic and strategic ally in SA. It was only under the Carter administration that the USA

started to acknowledge that SA had to grant Namibia its independence. The USA, as part of the Contact Group, took the lead in negotiating Namibia's independence from SA. Namibia's struggle for independence against SA and the civil war in Angola were inextricably linked. The SADF executed regular attacks on Angolan soil as a result of SWAPO soldiers seeking refuge in Angola. SA and the USA also supported anti-communist forces in Angola in their fight to take away the governance of Angola from the Cuban and Soviet backed MPLA. The CIA tried to keep its support to anti-communist Angolan forces as covert as possible.

The USA was involved in the Angolan conflict even before Portugal withdrew from Angola and maintained its support to the anti-communist forces and SA in Angola for the rest of the Cold War. Even when the US Congress implemented the Clarke amendment that banned USA support to Angola, the CIA continued to be covertly involved in Angola because of their fear of a communist takeover in Southern Africa. Cuba showed willingness to withdraw from Angola if SA would give independence to Namibia and also stop their support to UNITA in Angola. This prompted the USA to act as a mediator in the conflict in Southern Africa, because there was an opportunity to get communist Cuba out of Southern Africa. After years of negotiations between all the parties involved in what was known as the Border War, an end was brought to the conflict with the signing of the New York agreements on 22 December 1988 when SA and Cuba both agreed to withdraw from the conflict in Angola and SA complied with giving independence to Namibia. Even though SA and Cuba withdrew from Angola, the USA still continued to support UNITA's effort in Angola until the end of the Cold War.

The apartheid government felt threatened by the communist presence of Cuba in Angola. Pretoria was not sure if they were going to be able to withstand the perceived communist onslaught from within SA and from its neighbouring countries hence they embarked on a programme to build nuclear weapons following in the footsteps of the major Cold War actors such as the USA and France. The build up of a nuclear capability by the USSR and the fear of international Communism contributed to this choice. The South African nuclear weapons were to be used as bargaining chips in negotiations and as a last resort if Pretoria saw that SA might fall to the communist backed forces. The USA and SA had nuclear relationship since 1950. As with all the other elements of the USA-SA relationship, the nuclear element was also a see-saw affair. The USA in conjunction with other Western countries provided SA with the necessary equipment and expertise to start a nuclear weapon programme. Pretoria did however never admit that they were going to use the American technology and equipment to build nuclear weapons. When the USA realised that SA possibly had a nuclear weapon programme, they tried to force SA to declare all its nuclear assets by signing the NPT. Pretoria refused to sign the NPT on numerous occasions and this led to a break down in the USA-SA nuclear relationship. Pretoria then found new nuclear friends like France, Israel, Belgium and Taiwan. Pretoria was very good at keeping its nuclear weapon programme a secret to those that were not involved. However, from time to time the apartheid government would create an event to keep the USA and the rest of the world guessing whether or not SA had nuclear weapons, e.g. the Vastrap incident and the possible testing of a nuclear bomb in 1979. When Reagan came into power the USA-SA nuclear



relationship was renewed and American equipment and personnel was once again used to help develop SA's nuclear bombs. By 1990 when Pretoria started to dismantle its nuclear weapons, SA had already built 6 and half nuclear bombs with help from the USA and other nuclear allies.

The Cold War was essentially an ideological battle between the East and the West. The apartheid government of SA sided with the West under the leadership of the USA. Pretoria adjusted its foreign policy to fit in with the anti-communism foreign policy of the USA. This enabled SA to be an invaluable ally to the USA in one of the most strategic positions of the world. This leads to the answer to the research question posed in chapter 1: Were the relationships between the USA and SA ambiguous for public consumption or were these realistic strains that could not be resolved because of the Cold War mythology?

The USA-SA relationship during the Cold War was a love/hate relationship which was dictated by personalities and world events. Most American presidents were against apartheid, but they had to consider American national interest, their foreign policies and also the American public's opinion when they made decisions on SA. South Africa was able to play in on the USA's foreign policy of containment of communism as well as providing the USA with an excellent business and military/strategic partner during the Cold War. As a result the USA-SA relationship sometimes had to continue without the knowledge of the American public in order to protect American national interests and to withhold the communist USSR from world domination as perceived by the USA during the Cold War. In the end the US moral advocacy of democracy was compromised by the continued overt and covert support of the minority state in Pretoria.

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