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André du Pisani and Klaus von der Ropp

The Western/Namibian Initiatives: Past, Present — and Future?

Abstract

After more than a decade of diplomatic activity by various parties to bring about Namibia's independence, there seems at long last to be a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Africa's last remnant of colonial rule, the converging aims of Namibian independence and the termination of South African rule in Windhoek have taken on special symbolic import not only for Namibians but for the international community as well. Namibia has become a litmus test for the capacity of the international community to effect change in Southern Africa and to retain some influence over the vexed question of reform in South Africa itself.

Written to commemorate the tenth anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 435 (hereafter Res. 435), this paper sets out to explore the origins of the western diplomatic initiative on Namibia, to advance reasons for its failure, and to suggest some of the elements required for its revitalisation. Recent attempts to resolve the interlinked problems of Angola and Namibia are contrasted with earlier unsuccessful attempts to settle the Namibian conflict. While fundamental differences in style and substance between current and earlier attempts at mediation emerge, the conclusion is a cautious note of optimism.

> ... the way negotiations are carried out is almost as important as what is negotiated. The choreography of how one enters negotiations, what is settled first and in what manner, is inseparable from the substance of the issues.
>
> Henry Kissinger (1969)

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Introduction

At the end of last year, at a conference of all West German ambassadors based in Africa, the West German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, announced a new attempt by the Bonn government to revitalise the Western/Namibian initiative. He reminded his audience of the ten years of fruitless diplomacy that had passed.

It was in March 1977, at a special UN Security Council debate on South Africa, that the five western members of the Council (the USA, the UK, France, the Federal Republic of Germany [FRG], and Canada) were confronted by the demands of the Third World and East European countries for the imposition of economic sanctions and other coercive measures to force South Africa to terminate its control of Namibia. The Western Five, in countering the pressure, started what later became known as the Western/Namibian initiative.

There followed intensive and often hectic diplomacy by both the Western Five and (after Zimbabwe's independence in April 1980) the six African Frontline States, assisted by Nigeria. These last played a particularly important role as mediators between the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the Western Five. Not surprisingly, their role was most demanding, as SWAPO found it difficult to trust the West. As far as newspaper coverage was concerned, in 1977 and 1978, Namibia was one of the key issues of international politics. The Western/Namibian initiative culminated in the September 1978 UN Security Council Res. 435, aimed at transforming South West Africa into the independent Republic of Namibia, an objective destined to remain unfulfilled. It was largely to the credit of African states that Res. 435 is still on the international agenda.

Africa seems convinced that there is conspiracy between the USA, the UK and the FRG, on the one hand, and South Africa on the other, to maintain the *status quo* in Windhoek (and, by extension, in Pretoria as well). Understandably, it is also desperation that causes African diplomats to adopt more aggressive language. For example, Theo-Ben Gurirab, SWAPO's 'Foreign Minister', shocked the West German delegate when he remarked during the Security Council debate on Namibia in April 1987:

> I have a few specific and serious words to address to the Federal Republic of Germany: my people have very painful memories of the German colonial rule in our country. All of us bear the scars of the genocidal policies ... For some time we felt that progress was being made. The Bonn leadership, particularly in the Foreign Ministry, was forthcoming. Today, however, all is lost. The present Bonn policy is becoming more and more inimical to the interests of the Namibian people.[1]

Gurirab reminded the West Germans and the other western delegates yet again of a situation that Africans find painful and difficult to understand. It is not, therefore, surprising that African states today call for intensified sanctions. Some are asking for more — for example, Peter D. Zuze, a

Zambian diplomat and the President of the UN Council for Namibia, probably articulated the feelings and anger of other African delegates when he remarked:

> South Africa's arrogant attitude towards the United Nations is frustrating and should not be tolerated. The United Nations has intervened before in a military role ... What prevents the United Nations from removing the defiant thieves of Namibia?[2]

For the time being, it is highly improbable that western countries will adopt Zuze's view, regardless of President Kenneth Kaunda's recent restatement of his well-known opinion that white South Africans, and Afrikaners in particular, were the spiritual heirs of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party, and that the West should therefore declare war on them.[3] Moreover, it is unlikely that more comprehensive sanctions will be imposed over the issue of Namibia. A more effective course of action would be the urgent revitalisation of the 1977 diplomatic initiative.

West German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, is especially committed to finding a solution to the Namibian and South African deadlock. Genscher was one of the chief initiators of the West's renewed focus on Namibia, along with Andrew Young and Don McHenry, successive US ambassadors to the UN. He is the only Foreign Minister involved in the original initiative who is still in office. As the USA and the FRG did not differentiate between the Namibian and South African conflicts, the British and French governments — not surprisingly, with their greater experience in Africa — were doubtful of success. Pretoria was also aware that the British and French did not always approve of the American and German approach, and skilfully took advantage of these divisions. From the outset, their cooperation was somewhat reluctant, the French being more openly sceptical than the British. Canada took a more 'progressive' line, but they played only a marginal role.

To revitalise the initiative, the reasons for the 1970s failure must be identified and understood, if repetition of the failure is to be avoided.

The origins of the Namibia initiative

Prior to the Lisbon Coup in April 1974, church organisations and Third World groups predominantly took an interest in Southern African developments. Politically, however, they were without influence.

The events that followed the flight of the Portuguese from Mozambique and Angola in 1975 caused western governments to fear that the policies of the remaining white minority governments might lead to the whole of Southern Africa falling under the influence and control of the USSR. At the same time, SWAPO's military wing, PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia), extended its activities beyond Owambo (where the Namibian unrest had started in 1966) into white farming areas, posing a challenge to Pretoria's control over Namibia. UDI Rhodesia's days were numbered, and

in South Africa, the Soweto Uprising in June 1976, which led to nearly eighteen months of unrest, was a major cause for concern. The western powers feared that Pretoria's policies of *kragdadigheid* (force) and *koppigheid* (obstinacy) would drive the entire region — perhaps unintentionally — into the Soviet zone of influence.

In 1977, the United States, Germany and Canada led the initiative, considering a resolution of the Namibian problem as a prelude to solving that of South Africa. With the shift in emphasis in Soviet foreign policy some ten years later from military to politically negotiated conflict resolution since Gorbachev's accession to power, western concern had shifted to the fear that the South African government's domestic and foreign policies would lead to destructive and uncontrollable conflict within the Republic itself, as well as spilling over into the neighbouring states, creating a 'pandemonium of violence'. Both developments would be damaging for the West as South Africa is of considerable economic importance. This led in 1987 to both the US and Germany proposing the idea of a Camp David type summit on South Africa.[4] This plan was abandoned, however, when the more perceptive British convinced their allies that the proposal was somewhat premature. Nonetheless, a successful resolution of the Namibian conflict is a *sine qua non* for any attempt to solve the South African question.

The substance of the UN Peace Plan

UN Security Council Res. 435 of September 1978 is based on UN Security Council Res. 385 of January 1976 and Res. 431 of July 1978. Res. 435 condemns, as did countless earlier UN resolutions, South Africa's policies in Namibia and requests that Pretoria allow free and internationally supervised elections to take place so that the inhabitants of the territory can exercise their right of self-determination. In Res. 435, the Security Council asks the UN Secretary General to appoint a special envoy for Namibia to prepare the groundwork for its transition to independence. Kurt Waldheim nominated the Finnish diplomat and Namibia specialist, Martti Ahtisaari, who spent two weeks in Namibia in August 1978 with a delegation of civil and military advisors. The information they gathered formed the basis of Waldheim's own report that, together with an 'explanatory declaration', became the core of Res. 435.

Res. 435 provides for the free and internationally supervised election of a Namibian constitutional assembly. A key element in the process will be the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG), with members drawn from a number of as yet unspecified countries. UNTAG will be both military and civilian in composition. The military wing, as envisaged in the Secretary General's report, will supervise the cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of all but 1,500 SADF troops from Namibia, the patrolling of Namibia's international border and demobilisation of commando units and Namibian

forces. The existing civilian administration, headed by the Pretoria-nominated Administrator General, would remain for the transitional period. UNTAG's civilian wing will consist of some 360 police officers and more than 1,000 civil servants, whose main function will be to prepare for free and fair elections.

After the UN adopted Res. 435 at the end of September 1978, both the West and the UN were unable to implement it. Numerous attempts to lead Africa's last colony to independence were made, but all were doomed to failure because of South Africa's refusal to cooperate. Among these attempts were, most notably: (1) the Namibia Conference in October 1978 in Pretoria, initiated and led by West German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and which included the Foreign Ministers of the US, the UK, and Canada, and the Secretary of State in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs; (2) an agreement that SWAPO's bases in Angola and Zambia be put under UNTAG control during the transitional period; (3) an unsuccessful attempt to create a demilitarised zone to the north and south of the Angolan-Namibian border, as suggested by the late Angolan President Agostinho Neto in mid-1979; (4) a pre-implementation meeting in Geneva in January 1981; and (5) three diplomatic efforts within the framework of Ronald Reagan's policy of constructive engagement: (a) the elaboration of western-style democratic principles into a constitution of an independent Namibia in October 1981, designed to amplify and strengthen Res. 435; (b) the Cuban linkage; and (c) the Namibia Conference in Lusaka in May 1984, where for the first time the 'internal' Namibian parties were allowed to participate at an international conference on an equal footing with SWAPO. It is difficult to explain why all these efforts failed — why the most powerful western countries seemed no match for Pretoria.

The reasons for the failure of the western initiative

Various analysts[5] have advanced reasons for the seemingly intractable negotiations over Namibia's independence in terms of a formula agreed to ten years ago. While it is not our intention to examine the western powers' failure to bring about Namibia's independence in depth, a critical examination of the major reasons may prove instructive, not only to analysts but to the different parties as well.

On the question why the Western Five were unable to conclude their initiative successfully, three reasons are often advanced. First, the inability of the western representatives at the October 1978 Namibia Conference in Pretoria to agree on the imposition of sanctions. Secondly, no representative of the newly elected US President, Ronald Reagan, was present at the pre-implementation meeting in Geneva in January 1981; and finally, the idea of 'Cuban linkage' that was introduced by the US Administration in 1981. While accepting the contributory nature of the factors outlined above in the

breakdown of negotiations, far more important reasons are frequently overlooked. These include, among others, a lack of understanding as to the nature of the white South African psyche, particularly that of the Afrikaner, by both Washington and Bonn, who were the prime movers of the new policy in 1977. In brief, Pretoria assessed key western negotiators as 'diplomatic lightweights', and paid little attention to their suggestions.

No outsider would ever be able to say with certainty whether the Pretoria government was ever committed to the implementation of Res. 435, as this would inevitably have led to a landslide victory for SWAPO. Aspects of Pretoria's regional security policy - notably, attempts to coerce its neighbours, often by military means — and the consequences of a SWAPO takeover for the South African domestic scene militated against this possibility. The Western Five governments appreciated this and therefore, during the time preceding the October 1978 Namibia Conference in Pretoria, their representatives in New York, South Africa and elsewhere, created the impression that sanctions would be imposed if Pretoria proved uncooperative. Only the French correctly anticipated the failure of the October 1978 conference, yet Genscher remained hopeful and insisted on sanctions. Britain's David Owen, no doubt out of consideration for British economic interests in South Africa, and the United States' Cyrus Vance, made it clear that they would not follow Genscher.

Three years later, Chester Crocker, the able US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was to use both the US' non-participation at the 1981 Geneva conference and Washington's introduction of the Cuban linkage issue in attempts to regain Pretoria's confidence. Nonetheless, conservatives had vainly hoped that in the meantime white South Africa would seize the unique opportunity provided by Washington's constructive engagement policy to settle the Namibian and South African conflicts.

With South Africa's adoption of the (as yet unspoken) inflammatory and pugnacious 'Do your damnedest' as the motto for its diplomatic escutcheon, the failure to judge the South African character adequately meant that in 1977 and 1978, during the heyday of the Namibian initiative, the US and the FRG overestimated Pretoria's weakness following the Soweto Uprising in 1976/77 and in particular, consistently underestimated the staying power of Afrikanerdom. Their main thrust was directed at reducing the long-neglected SWAPO's suspicion of the West and creating a degree of trust without which the liberation movement, with its vast following in Namibia, would not collaborate in the search for a solution to the conflict. Their bid succeeded, but at the same time also alienated Pretoria considerably. It is arguable that it would actually have been possible to gain SWAPO's trust without forfeiting that of Pretoria. Ultimately, the West suffered a double defeat — it lost Pretoria's confidence for a considerable period and was unable to retain SWAPO's nascent trust.

Pretoria concluded — perhaps with reason — that the Western Five, realising that SWAPO was by far Namibia's strongest political movement, would no longer act as honest brokers but rather with a distinct bias towards SWAPO. A number of pointers seem to indicate this, although only a few can be discussed here. For instance, until the early 1980s, the Contact Group took virtually no notice of the 'internal' parties which, although weak (with the exception of the National Party of South West Africa), had Pretoria's backing and therefore were a factor in the overall equation. On his first visit to Bonn in October 1980, SWAPO's President, Sam Nujoma, was even received by the FRG Foreign Minister with the protocol due to a head of state.

All the member states of the Western Contact Group had approved in July 1978 a UN Security Council resolution that advocated the 'reintegration' of Walvis Bay into Namibia, even though, in terms of western international law, this South African enclave had never been legally a part of Namibia, despite SWAPO's legal interpretation to the contrary. During a tour of the Frontline States in January 1979, Martti Ahtisaari made demands that SWAPO also be granted military bases in northern Namibia for the duration of the transition period. The West took this into consideration, even though Res. 435 did not make such a provision.

South Africa, understandably, took objection to these moves, but even more disastrously, leading spokespersons for the Carter Administration as well as Genscher asserted time and again in the UN Security Council that what was to happen in Namibia (one-man one-vote in a unitary state) would be a model for South Africa (and of course Rhodesia/Zimbabwe).[6]

It should be noted that at the time the FRG's foreign policy met with broad approval among West Germany's governing coalition parties (the Social Democrats [SDP] and the Liberals [FDP]). It therefore came as a surprise when no less a formidable personage than the Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt (SPD), confronted US Vice President Walter Mondale in May 1977 and asked, although it was clear that the West must do everything in its power to force Pretoria to abolish apartheid, the real question was ' ... and replace it with what?'. The response of Genscher and the majority of West German politicians was to dismiss the question as 'obsolete'. No-one in South Africa or the FRG seemed to take into account that one of West Germany's most astute politicians, Egon Bahr (SPD) had answered Schmidt's question with his usual perceptiveness. He rejected such 'model solutions' as 'one-man one-vote in one state' and 'radical geographical partition', advocating instead 'a hitherto unknown model of coexistence with equal rights and special protection for minorities' for South Africa.[7]

Whatever the reasons, the views of such sober politicians did not prevail. Bonn demanded and still demands a transfer of power in both Windhoek and Pretoria. In short, the FRG wants white South Africans to capitulate before

the dictum 'Bite on the bullet of SWAPO power in Namibia, and then you will get what you fear most — an ANC government in Pretoria!'.

Bonn, Washington and Ottawa so burdened their Namibian policies with a kind of 'South African mortgage' that they, from being the prime movers, became the gravediggers of their own initiative as early as the second half of the 1970s. If the Bonn government truly desired to contribute to resolving the Namibia dispute — and there is no doubt that this would be in the interest of all parties, including South Africa — then it would have to proclaim publicly, preferably before the UN Security Council, two cardinal truths: the solution found for Namibia on the basis of Res. 435 cannot automatically serve as a model for South Africa. On the contrary, Egon Bahr's maxim needs to be propounded: that the West must help *all* South Africans to find a solution *sui generis*. Leading representatives of the Reagan Administration have now taken this view, although it has always been that of the French and British governments.

Nevertheless, a number of the Christian Democratic Union's (CDU) members have recently published their answers to Schmidt's question, particularly Karl Heinz Hornhues, the leading authority on Southern Africa in the Bundestag, and Hans Hugo Klein, a Justice at the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe.[8] Both look for a solution *sui generis*, as does Otto, Count Lambsdorff ('White security is the key to black liberation'[9]). It is perhaps ironic that it was a South African scholar, Deon Geldenhuys of the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, who drew attention in a perceptive article to the West German debate on South Africa's political options in the post-apartheid era.[10]

It seems clear that a reorientation of Bonn's policies, as outlined here, would facilitate the deliberations that are taking place between Angola, Cuba, South Africa, the United States and the USSR in an attempt to find solutions to the armed conflicts in Angola and Namibia.

Other major elements in the failure of the western initiative arose from the subjective approach of the Group's members. The Western Contact Group was wracked by internal division, but the entire western diplomatic initiative was ill-conceived in other important respects. To begin with, there was no clear definition of the problem. The US, the FRG, Canada and, to a lesser extent, France, attempted to use the Namibian initiative to enhance their own bargaining positions with regard to effecting change within South Africa itself. This not only undermined their efforts concerning Namibia but confirmed Pretoria's worst suspicions that South Africa was the real target — which resulted in a second weakness — an attempt to accommodate everyone's point of view even at the early diagnostic stage of negotiations. This was a serious flaw: not only did each party change its position as it saw fit — at times on a daily basis during talks — but the negotiations never generated a sufficient degree of trust to even move ahead.

The western intermediaries failed to understand that agreement between the protagonists was a vital precondition for the accommodation of the views of the secondary parties and that the problem lay in the relationships *between* the parties, not *within* each party. Therefore, the principals never managed to define the relationship either — for instance, South Africa/Angola and South Africa/Cuba never interacted during the initial stages of negotiation, although their cooperation was vital for an agreement with durable consequences. Peripheral goals such the reintegration of Walvis Bay (as mentioned earlier) were also given too much prominence. Another factor was the high profile given to major personalities involved, for instance, the acrimonious exchange between South African Prime Minister Mr John Vorster and US Vice President Walter Mondale in Vienna in May 1977, as well as various unhelpful outbursts between Vorster and SWAPO President Sam Nujoma.

The Contact Group's persistent lack of understanding concerning key aspects of the situation after almost ten years, embroiled the principal parties more deeply in a conflict which became progressively more costly and more internationalised. The Contact Group had to recognise that their attempts at building trust were undermined because negotiations failed to establish the *interdependence* of the principal parties — that all had something to gain and something to lose — nor could they offer any certainty of an early and mutually profitable return on the basic agreement for any of the principals.

Finally, Pretoria's regional designs militated against settlement, especially when the role of the South African military in neighbouring states increased in the form of transborder raids (*vide* Botswana and Mozambique), and a semi-permanent presence in the Angolan theatre.

All the above considerations must be viewed against the backdrop of Pretoria's Namibian strategy, for it provides clues towards understanding the daunting nature of the task confronting the western intermediaries in their attempts to resolve the interlinked conflicts of Angola and Namibia.[11]

South Africa's Namibian strategy

From the outset, South Africa negotiated in terms of a two-track strategy. Externally, Pretoria accepted Res. 435 as a basis for settlement. Internally, it tried to exercise as much control as possible over the transition process. Informed by three core interests — regional security, the interface between Namibia and South Africa, and the nature and timing of political transition within Namibia — Pretoria has followed a policy of controlled change.[12]

This policy was given additional thrust with the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference (September 1975 to October 1977), which was designed to work out a constitution for an interim government. After 1977, Pretoria actively pursued a related political objective — the establishment of a moderate anti-SWAPO alliance, essentially dependent on South Africa for its security and economic livelihood, and subservient to South African interests. Since 1979,

the various interim governments, culminating in the present Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) established in June 1985, have all functioned more or less in accord with this objective.

After more than three years in office, however, the TGNU seems doomed to suffer much the same fate as its predecessors. It is heavily dependent on South Africa for finance and security, and has to function within a context largely determined by extraneous factors. The divisive and still continuing legacy of South Africa's policies of ethnic fragmentation has made it difficult for the TGNU to generate a legitimacy of its own. For a great many Namibians, the TGNU is seen as a Pretoria stratagem to externalise nationalist political organisations such as SWAPO, and to frustrate Namibian independence for as long as Pretoria wishes.[13]

The TGNU has also shown weakness in two other areas. First, it is unable to initiate dialogue between itself and opposition parties, such as the exiled SWAPO, the Damara Council or Peter Kalangula's Christian Democratic Action Party (CDA). In a very real sense, therefore, the TGNU contributes to the continued fragmentation of the Namibian body politic. Secondly, the TGNU has shown itself to be poorly institutionalised, with limited competence over constitutional matters. Forced to adhere to the South African government's dictates on the spurious issue of group and minority rights, its fragile credibility is further and humiliatingly undermined. Cynically, one could say that the TGNU has to fail because of its bastard parentage — South Africa sees it only as a delaying and spoiling mechanism with which to withstand SWAPO and world opinion, deliberately deprived of real authority; the Namibian parent on the other hand, sees it initially and perhaps naively as a modest springboard towards something indigenous and democratic — if flawed — but destined to remain in frustrated adolescence under the heavy hand of the Administrator-General.

The TGNU, therefore, having failed in crucial respects, and the South African government having realised that it had not worked, constituted a sound reason for Pretoria to revise its Namibian policy. Other reasons relate more to the Angolan equation and to changes in the style and substance of diplomatic intervention, no longer under the aegis of a divided Western Contact Group but under that of the superpowers — the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as among the principal parties themselves. We will consider the significance of these changes for the diplomatic process in the next section, and will reflect on what might be required to revitalise Res. 435 and to enhance its prospects for implementation, particularly in the light of the ever-increasing pressure for settlement of the Angolan issue.

Recent attempts to revitalise a resolution of the interlinked conflicts in Angola and Namibia

At the time of writing (September 1988), the United States and the Soviet Union are mediating a new attempt to resolve the continuing interlinked

conflicts in Angola and Namibia. To date, they have successfully negotiated an acceptance between the three principal parties South Africa, Angola and Cuba — of 'a set of essential principles to establish the basis for peace in the southwestern region of Africa'* on 20 July 1988. This agreement followed a series of many different meetings between the parties. Especially important were the meetings in London, Cairo, New York and Geneva, with US Assistant Secretary of State, Chester Crocker, acting as mediator and chairman. The earlier bilateral meeting at ministerial level between South Africa and Angola in Brazzaville on 12-13 May 1988 enabled South Africa to Africanise the diplomatic process, thus preventing the other parties, especially the superpowers, from claiming credit for a settlement over Pretoria's head.

The Moscow Summit, held between 29 May and 2 June 1988, signalled a new and different approach to that followed by the abortive Western Contact Group. Not only did the superpowers agree on a date for the implementation of Res. 435 — 29 September 1988 (its tenth anniversary), which also coincides with the IMF's consideration of the MPLA's loan application — but both powers cemented their roles as arbitrators. Coming in the wake of their painful and costly experiences in Afghanistan and Southern Africa, the new leadership in the Kremlin was aware of the dangers associated with 'regional overstretch', therefore, the incentive to work towards a political resolution of the linked conflict in Angola and Namibia became more compelling. In the context of the ongoing Angolan negotiations, the Soviet Union has learnt another important lesson — if it can demonstrate a genuine interest in trying to assist the other parties to reach their objectives, while at the same time retaining its own, yet making the two appear compatible, Soviet prestige would be considerably enhanced. More importantly, Moscow would be seen as essential for validating an eventual agreement. Unlike the fragmentation that characterised the Contact Group's earlier attempts, the two superpowers have opted for joint action, which in turn leaves less room for brinkmanship by the other parties.

The meetings in London and Brazzaville were about pre-negotiations to enable the parties to articulate their respective positions and to familiarise themselves with each other. The Cairo meeting was more diagnostic — opportunities and a framework for further talks were explored. Cairo put the possibility of negotiations on Angola and Namibia beyond doubt and further strengthened the superpowers' mediatory role.

Although Pretoria is willing to shed some of the burden of Namibia, it has failed to find credible black politicians to 'take up the right bits', as *The Economist* remarked recently. Having for so long administered Namibia against the edicts of the United Nations and much of the international

*See Southern Africa Record No. 51, 1988.

community, Pretoria is keen to rectify its legal status by giving Namibia political independence, while still retaining some control over the country's economic and geostrategic direction. Further, the South African government is increasingly frustrated by the very parties in Namibia they had chosen to support.

The crux of the political dilemma Pretoria faces is that after decades of involving itself in Namibia's politics, it is no closer to creating a credible alternative to SWAPO. The TGNU is weak and very divided. As mentioned earlier, although the TGNU is subordinated to a South African-appointed Administrator-General, some of the parties within it have recently come alive, refusing to play ethnic politics and insisting on non-ethnic second tier authorities, as well as a universal franchise. It seems doubtful, nevertheless, whether this will be enough to restore a semblance of legitimacy to the TGNU.

The significance of the agreement on 'essential principles' for the basis of a peaceful settlement between South Africa, Angola and Cuba in New York on 11–12 July 1988 stems from several considerations. It was the first such agreement that involved Cuba. The previous bilateral agreement between South Africa and Angola that had been mediated by Crocker in Lusaka in February 1984 fell apart almost as soon as it was signed. Given Pretoria's concern about the Cuban presence in Angola, Castro's commitment to total withdrawal introduces a new element, one that hinges on subjective perceptions and a willingness to take political risks. Secondly, although the principles focus primarily on Namibian independence in accordance with Res. 435, they also include South Africa's military disengagement from Namibia, as well as Cuban withdrawal from Angola. Although it is not explicitly stated, this implies that the Cuban and Angolan governments both recognise the linkage between the two issues, on which both Pretoria and Washington have insisted since 1981. Thirdly, this implied reciprocity gives support to the positions of both Pretoria and Havana. Pretoria can claim some justification for its insistence on Cuban withdrawal before implementing Namibian independence, and Havana can do likewise with regard to its refusal to withdraw unless Namibian independence follows the terms of an internationally validated formula.[15]

One must emphasise that unless these expressed intentions are translated into action so that agreement can be reached on the mechanisms of verification and a timetable for Cuban withdrawal, the window of opportunity that now exists may be lost. In this regard, the Agreement on Principles is of particular significance, because it underlines the interdependence of the different parties and thus reduces the chances of default.

On closer analysis, the four principles relating to security (D to G), included at Pretoria's insistence, are identical to the four clauses in the

Preamble to the Nkomati Accord signed with Mozambique in March 1984. Principle H (see Appendix) is also remarkably similar to a clause in the Nkomati Preamble. Unlike Nkomati, however, the principles are not formally binding on the signatories, but the inclusion of particular security concerns is consistent with Pretoria's attempts to conclude security or non-aggression pacts with its neighbours. If these principles are to be formalised in future agreements, they will have significant implications for the relationship between South Africa and UNITA, and between Angola and the ANC and SWAPO — an important change in both Pretoria's and Luanda's policies.

The vexed issue of verification and monitoring of compliance introduces another element into the diplomatic equation by involving the five permanent members of the Security Council as guarantors for their implementation. This implies recognition by the principal parties — South Africa, Angola and Cuba — of the legitimate interests not only of the three western powers but also of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. No provision was made for independent verification in the Nkomati Accord, so it would seem as though South Africa has learnt from previous experience.

Pretoria's acceptance of the role of the five permanent members of the Security Council is related to a careful re-evaluation of the role of the Soviet Union in regional conflicts and to the shift in Moscow's policy on the need for political rather than military settlement. This strengthens the United States' bargaining position and reduces the East/West rivalry that has complicated previous attempts to resolve conflict in this and other regions. For Pretoria, Moscow's changed attitude has undercut the local military and security establishment's hawkish perception that they were acting against Soviet expansionism in the region. The SADF therefore finds it harder to justify its presence in southern Angola and northern Namibia and ironically, strengthens Pretoria's diplomatic initiatives, despite some rumblings of dissent from the military.

In terms of revitalising Res. 435, some of the necessary elements are present in the current negotiations, but one must use considerable caution in any attempt to assess the prospects for peace in the immediate future. South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, has spoken of reaching only the foot of the mountain, with a long climb to the summit ahead. Chester Crocker has expressed the view that acceptance of the principles clears the way for 'hard bargaining' to begin. While negotiations continue there is hope, but it would be premature to talk of resolution at this stage. A great many difficult issues must still be tackled, some of which are outlined below.

* The position and behaviour of military forces — the South Africans in northern Namibia and the Cubans in southwestern Angola. Further military engagements will have to be avoided and tension reduced. From

their stronghold at Cuito Cuanavale, the Cubans may launch offensives against UNITA in an attempt to weaken Savimbi's forces.

* Timetables for the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola and South African forces from Namibia will have to be synchronised and accepted by the principal parties. At present, there is a wide gulf between the two sets of proposals for withdrawal of the respective troops. The Cubans and Angolans have proposed a phased Cuban withdrawal over three years, while the SADF must withdraw within seven months in terms of Res. 435. This is a real obstacle, as both South Africa and the United States support more or less simultaneous withdrawals. Pretoria has suggested that the Cubans withdraw over twelve months, to be more consistent with Res. 435's requirements.
* Political accommodation between UNITA and the MPLA, as well as direct communication between them, has not been on the agenda. For Pretoria, this remains central to its wider regional designs, and some attempts have been made to bring about a rapprochement between the rival movements, with the assistance of Cuban and African intermediaries. Nonetheless, the MPLA remain adamantly opposed to direct negotiations with Savimbi. If no conciliation between them is reached, it is likely that the SADF, the CIA and other foreign backers will continue to support UNITA, extending the civil war in Angola indefinitely and reversing any successes made at the diplomatic level now.
* The agreement on principles reached in New York, augmented by the Geneva Accord, has to be cast in treaty form. There are some aspects, notably the presence of ANC bases in Angola and the monitoring of SWAPO activities, that could delay implementation and undermine trust.
* Although the South African proposals and time schedules for SADF and Cuban withdrawals announced on 2 August 1988 indicate their willingness to begin implementing Res. 435, the mechanics for verification of this process must still be agreed to by all parties. South Africa's latest proposals show that Pretoria is at last willing to risk the possibility of a SWAPO government coming to power in Windhoek. Details of the proposals include: establishment of a monitoring commission by 9 August 1988; signature of a ceasefire by 10 August 1988; complete SADF withdrawal from Angola by 1 September 1988; implementation of Res. 435 beginning 1 November 1988, with independence for Namibia coupled to total Cuban withdrawal from Angola by 1 June 1989.
* An outstanding issue of some import, especially to South Africa, relates to the cost of implementing Res. 435, calculated to be about R1,8 billion. Pretoria has suggested that the permanent members of the

Security Council share this burden. Related to this is economic assistance for Namibia after independence — a vital issue, given South Africa's own economic problems.

South Africa's recent proposals could be seen in two different yet related contexts. The first relates to the status of the negotiations themselves, which at the time of the announcement were poised on the brink of the 'process' stage. Pretoria tried to jump the gun in an attempt to regain the diplomatic initiative after the Cairo and New York talks. The announcement should not be seen as a calculated attempt to sink the talks, but rather as a stratagem to allow Pretoria to regain some control over the Namibian situation. Secondly, the proposals indicate Pretoria's relatively low pain threshold in Angola, its willingness to implement Res. 435 and to accept the implications of doing so - even at the risk of a SWAPO government in Windhoek. This latter explanation hinges on three related factors: the shift in the military balance in Angola and Pretoria's realisation that it is unlikely to be reversed; the effects of regional overstretch, especially in terms of escalating costs and risks to all parties; and the political malaise in Namibia, where South Africa's strategy of the past fifteen years has not yielded the anticipated results and now is even less likely to do so.

On reflection, both interpretations seem credible, especially if one considers that Pretoria was fully aware of the Cuban/Angolan proposals for Cuban withdrawal. Despite this, however, Pretoria went ahead and announced its own proposals publicly at a time when each party's representatives were involved in delicate negotiations in Geneva. Pretoria seems to have calculated that it had little to lose by doing so; on the contrary, it was perhaps an attempt to discredit the Cuban/Angolan proposals by offering something more attractive and constructive of its own, particularly in the area of phased withdrawal already mentioned. Pretoria violated one of the ground rules of negotiations — confidentiality — in the hope that it would win back the international spotlight and so show up the inadequacies of the Cuban/Angolan proposals. On balance, the tactic seems to have hit its mark in the international community.

An alternative approach could have been to pressure the Angolans and Cubans to reduce their withdrawal period by a year or so, the intention being to force a compromise of sorts. Luanda and Havana can hardly refuse such a 'compromise' in the face of Pretoria's more 'reasonable' proposals, and if they did, Pretoria could lengthen its own time schedule while retaining credibility. South Africa's strategy all along has been to make proposals — even premature and controversial ones — to keep the other parties engaged in the process. So far this strategy has worked, if only because the other parties must entertain the possibility that Pretoria is serious about negotiations. If this explanation is accepted, the next logical question is: what would bring Pretoria to go the 'whole hog' on Res. 435? Ironically, the United States has

used similar tactics with surprising success to ensure that Pretoria also remains involved in the process by moving events swiftly between Cairo, London and Geneva.

Conclusion

The Cuban/Angolan strategy has been remarkably successful in the Angolan conflict, although at great cost to Angola itself. South Africa's involvement in the Angolan theatre has become prohibitively expensive. Balanced against South Africa's own increasing economic and political problems, current prospects for a peaceful settlement of the interlinked conflict in Angola and Namibia must arguably be the best now than over the past decade.

It would nevertheless be premature to assume that agreement on the complex issue of Cuban withdrawal and its verification will necessarily result in a resolution of the conflict. Solutions at one level do not guarantee finding solutions at every level. It is therefore important to remember that Cuba plays an independent role in Angola, emphasising its 'internationalist' mission in Africa. Cuba has demonstrated this independence of action not only by increasing its military involvement in southwestern Angola — ostensibly at the personal behest of Fidel Castro — but has done so *despite* Soviet insistence on the urgency of a political settlement of the thirteen year old Angolan war.

Therefore, while considerable progress has been made since the meetings in Geneva on 22 August 1988 — the SADF withdrew from Angola by 1 September 1988 and a Joint Military Monitoring Commission, with representatives from the SADF, Cuba, Angola's FAPLA and the United States, has been established, which is functioning well — many issues remain unresolved. These include a timetable for the redeployment of Cuban forces to the north and their staged withdrawal from Angola; the issue of ANC bases in Angola, notably at Viana, Quibaxe, Pango, and the Quatro Rehabilitation Centre; effective political control over the actions of SWAPO; the long-standing question of UN impartiality; and the problem of UNITA's integration into the political life of Angola, complicated by the MPLA's particular objections to Jonas Savimbi's leadership. At the time of writing, an African initiative is being launched in an attempt to mediate between UNITA and the MPLA.

The most likely compromise at this stage would be a timetable for the redeployment of the Cuban forces to the north of Angola, rather than complete withdrawal before Res. 435 is implemented in Namibia. Pretoria is perturbed about the potential psychological impact the Cubans might have on elections in northern Namibia and by the assistance they might give SWAPO during elections. If the Cubans redeploy to the north, both concerns will be removed.

Finally, it is premature to assume that either the South African government, UNITA or the MPLA are coherent actors. All three are plagued, to a greater or lesser degree, by internal division and differences in perception.

Appendix

Principles for a Peaceful Settlement in Southwestern Africa

The Governments of the People's Republic of Angola, the Republic of Cuba, and the Republic of South Africa have reached agreement on a set of essential principles to establish the basis for peace in the southwestern region of Africa. They recognise that each of these principles is indispensable to a comprehensive settlement.

A. Implementation of Resolution 435/78 of the Security Council of the United Nations. The parties shall agree upon and recommend to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a date for the commencement of implementation of UNSCR 435/78.
B. The Governments of the People's Republic of Angola and of the Republic of South Africa shall, in conformity with the dispositions of Resolution 435/78 of the Security Council of the United Nations, cooperate with the Secretary-General with a view towards ensuring the independence of Namibia through free and fair elections, abstaining from any action that could prevent the execution of said Resolution.
C. Redeployment toward the North and the staged and total withdrawal of Cuban troops from the territory of the People's Republic of Angola on the basis of an agreement between the People's Republic of Angola and the Republic of Cuba and the decision of both states to solicit the on-site verification of that withdrawal by the Security Council of the United Nations.
D. Respect for the sovereignty, sovereign equality, and independence of states and for territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.
E. Non-interference in the internal affairs of states.
F. Abstention from the threat and utilisation of force against the territorial integrity and independence of states.
G. The acceptance of the responsibility of states not to allow their territory to be used for acts of war, aggression, or violence against other states.
H. Reaffirmation of the right of the peoples of the southwestern region of Africa to self-determination, independence, and equality of rights.
I. Verification and monitoring of compliance with the obligations resulting from the agreements that may be established.
J. Commitment to comply in good faith with the obligations undertaken in the agreements that may be established and to resolve the differences via negotiations.

K. Recognition of the role of the Permanent Members of the Security Council of the United Nations as guarantors for the implementation of agreements that may be established.
L. The right of each state to peace, development, and social progress.
M. African and international cooperation for the settlement of the problems of the development of the southwestern region of Africa.
N. Recognition of the mediating role of the Government of the United States of America.

Notes

1. United Nations Security Council, *S/PV 2740*, 6 April 1987, pp 24-47.
2. *ibid*, pp 18-23.
3. Andrew Meldrum, 'Interview with President Kenneth Kaunda', *Africa Report*, December 1987, pp 43-46. Kaunda was interviewed in his capacity as current chairman of the OAU, as 'spokesman for Africa'.
4. Klaus Freiherr von der Ropp, 'A "Political Initiative" for South Africa — A (West) German View', *Politikon*, No.1, 1987, pp 3-14.
5. Of the different studies, the following are particularly useful: Sue Cullinan, 'Military Policy and the Namibia Dispute', *South Africa Review*, No.1, 1983, pp 33-41; Robert Jaster, *South Africa in Namibia: The Botha Strategy*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1985; André du Pisani, 'Namibia: On Brinkmanship, Conflict and Self-Interest — the Collapse of the UN Plan', Vol.8, No.1, June 1981, pp 1-16; *idem*, 'Beyond the Barracks: Reflections on the Role of the SADF in the Region', Occasional Paper, Johannesburg: SAIIA, 1988.
6. See the interview with Andrew Young in *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt* (Hamburg), 28 January 1979, p.8. See also the text of the press conference with Walter Mondale in May 1977 in Vienna, published in Colin Legum (ed), *Africa Contemporary Record, Annual Survey and Documents 1977-78*, New York & London, 1979, pp C27-31. Of the many speeches of Hans-Dietrich Genscher on these subjects, see for example his address to the UN Security Council on 27 July 1978 in *Bulletin* (Bonn), 1 August 1978, pp 797-798: 'Wir hoffen und wünschen, dass Namibia zu einem Modell des friedlichen Zusammenlebens und Zusammenwirkens aller Bevölkerungsteile und gruppierungen wird' (We hope and wish that Namibia will prove a model of peaceful coexistence and cooperation of all ethnic groupings); *idem*, address to the Security Council on 29 September 1978 in *Bulletin* 13 October 1978, pp 1084-1085: 'Wir wollen (Namibia) zu einem Modell des Friedens für das südliche Afrika machen ... Verhindern Sie einen Rassenkrieg' (We want (Namibia) to be a model of peace for the Southern African region ... You must prevent racial war). See also the address by the West German Ambassador to the UN, Rüdiger Baron von Wechmar, on 26 April 1978 in *Bulletin*, 29 April 1978, pp 385-388, in which he quotes Genscher: 'Namibia ein Modell sei, in dem Schwarze und Weisse friedlich und gleichberechtigt zusammenleben' ([that] Namibia might be a model in which Blacks and Whites will coexist in peace with equal rights).
7. Quoted in an interview with the *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt*, 10 July 1977, p.10.
8. Karl Heinz Hornhues, 'Südafrika — Strategie für einen friedlichen Wandel', in Volker Rühe (ed), *Herausforderung Aussenpolitik . . .*, Herford, 1988, pp 143–160; Hans Hugo Klein, 'Über mögliche verfassungspolitische Optionen Südafrikas', in Walter Fürst *et al* (eds), *Festschrift für Wolfgang Zeidler*, Berlin & New York, 1987.
9. Robert von Lucius, 'Lambsdorff kritisiert die Südafrika-Politik der westlichen Länder. Teilung des Landes als letzter Ausweg? ...', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Frankfurt, 8 August 1986, p.5.
10. 'German Views on South Africa's Future', in *Aussenpolitik*, No.1, 1985, pp 82-100.

11. This point is well argued in I.W. Zartman, *The Negotiation Process: Themes and Applications*, Beverley Hills, Ca: Sage Publications, 1978.
12. André du Pisani, 'Namibia: From Incorporation to Controlled Change', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol.1, No.2, 1982, pp 281-305.
13. *idem*, 'South Africa in Namibia: Variations on a Theme', *International Affairs Bulletin*, Vol.10, No.3, 1986, pp 6-18.
14. See *Principles for a Peaceful Settlement in Southwestern Africa*, mimeo, 20 July 1988.
15. John Barratt, 'Angola/Namibia: Prospects for a Peaceful Settlement', Brief Report No.69, SAIIA, August 1988, 3pp (with annexure).