

ments in history when the old order finally begins to collapse, but a new order is not yet able to impose itself. The regime has lost – morally, ideologically, politically, but not yet militarily; and the organized black opposition has largely won – morally, ideologically, politically, but not yet militarily.

As President Botha and his generals have regularly warned, they have not yet begun to use all the force at their command. Events of the past year have demonstrated that, as they lose their grip on political power, they will unleash simple violence, not only on their own population, but on the peoples and governments of neighbouring countries.

Thus, the essential terrain on which power will now be contested is *military*. The main black opposition group, the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) has begun to escalate its armed attacks – the number tripled during 1985 – and has warned that it will take the armed struggle into white areas. While the ANC has in the past rejected the use of terrorism, it has declared that it can no longer guarantee that there will be no civilian casualties.

Apartheid has clearly entered its terminal crisis and the final convulsive death throes can be expected to be prolonged and extraordinarily violent. Two pressing questions loom for anyone concerned with the future of the country:

- How long will the collapse of apartheid take?
- How much damage will be done to the people and economies of Southern Africa in the process?

A key variable is international pressure. It will not, by itself, bring down apartheid, but a coherent programme of international action founded on a strategic perspective can hasten the final collapse of the regime and significantly reduce the damage done in the process.

Canada's Role

Canada is uniquely placed in the international community to play a significant role, far out of proportion to its level of involvement in the economies of Southern Africa, and to its ranking among the nations of the world. Because the US "constructive engagement" policies have failed dismally, there is a vacuum of leadership in the West. Canada could take on a leadership role.

The main opponents to new international action against apartheid remain the US, Britain, and West Germany – with the position of the new French government still unclear.

Canada, as a member of both the Commonwealth and the Francophone community, can play a crucial brokerage role to develop concerted international action against apartheid. The Canadian government will very soon have to choose between siding with Britain on this issue or working with the Third World members of the Commonwealth (who already have the support of the two other former "white dominions," Australia and New Zealand). Direct pressure on Mrs. Thatcher by Canada will probably not work but, through the Commonwealth, a North/South consensus for action can be built which will make it far more embarrassing for the Thatcher government to maintain its intransigent position.

Canada could also create a parallel consensus in Europe by working with the Nordic countries and the European Economic Community (EEC) – beginning with the smaller countries, and then moving up to France and West Germany. At February's Francophone summit Canada was prominent in the tough position adopted against apartheid.

What Kinds of Action?

It is crucial to recognize that even if the US, Britain and West Germany do not support further international action, a great many highly effective steps can be taken by Canada. Sanctions are not an 'all-or-nothing' package, nor are they the only available options. Any new policies should be based on a hierarchy of options, moving from the easiest to the most difficult.

The easiest and least costly measures are political. The first step would be to downgrade diplomatic links with South Africa, acknowledging that the legitimacy of the regime has been destroyed. In addition, recognition of the ANC, or regular high-level public contacts with the ANC leadership, would be an important acknowledgement of the political reality inside South Africa. To reinforce these contacts, CIDA could resume the provision of matching funds for ANC welfare projects in

Southern Africa, ended by the Clark government in 1979.

Such steps would begin to move policy away from symbolic gestures and towards effective action at the political level. At the economic level, the actions suggested at the Nassau Commonwealth Conference in October 1985 would be effective first steps. They should be combined with increased assistance to South Africa's neighbours, already reeling under the effects of the regimes' economic destabilization. CIDA has already begun a feasibility study in this area.

The peculiar vulnerability of the South African economy, in combination with the escalating costs of sustaining apartheid, mean that both disinvestment and economic sanctions can be effective. Pressure for disinvestment has so far come almost exclusively from non-governmental groups, and South African businesses have acknowledged the impact of these measures. Economic sanctions, on the other hand, are the realm of governments. There is a pressing need to combine private disinvestment and official economic sanctions into an effective package. It might be useful for the Canadian government to convene an international forum for the detailed discussion of peaceful action against apartheid. The last detailed study of sanctions was completed in 1980 and is now badly dated.

The Canadian policy package must combine punitive actions against apartheid with measures to protect its victims from inevitable retaliation. The desperate situation inside South Africa makes effective, coordinated action literally a matter of life and death to thousands of people in South and Southern Africa. Canada is in a position to play a leading role. The Mulroney government has got the rhetoric right and has begun to take real action. It is time to take action much further. □



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