

Total Strategy now became official policy.

As outlined in the South African Defence White Paper in 1977, the Total Strategy envisaged a realignment of political forces in both South and Southern Africa. A complex mix of minor domestic reforms and active intervention in Southern Africa sought to modify some of the cruder forms of *apartheid* in order to preserve the basic structure of economic and political power, and to defuse political unrest. Carrot and stick policies offered minor concessions to black political actors willing to cooperate with a reformed version of *apartheid*, and overwhelming military and economic sanctions against those who were not.³

Botha's reforms eased some barriers to social mobility for middle class blacks. However, they did not address the central issue of political rights, but significantly strengthened domestic repression and some basic props of *apartheid*.

IMPLEMENTING THE TOTAL STRATEGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The regional component of the Total Strategy sought to internationalize Pretoria's problems. Instability and conflict in South and Southern Africa were blamed not on *apartheid* but on external intervention. Elaborate conspiracy theories of a total onslaught against South Africa — involving both the Soviet Union and the United States — were proposed.

The Total Strategy argued that South Africa's international isolation could be eroded through a transformation of *regional* relations. All countries would then have to acknowledge South Africa's legitimate interests in its Southern African sphere of influence.

However the overriding goal of Pretoria's regional policy was now defined as the creation of a "Constellation of Southern African States" (CONSAS) — a regional political and economic alliance around South Africa. This proffered joint economic projects and South African development assistance, explicitly designed to lure regional states into non-aggression pacts with Pretoria.⁴

This medium-term CONSAS goal also embodied five short-term regional objectives:⁵

(1) Obliging neighbouring states to end their support for and police the activities of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa;

(2) Ensuring that Soviet bloc powers regained neither diplomatic, political nor military footholds in the region;

(3) Strengthening regional economic dependence on South Africa;

(4) Ensuring that neighbouring states would shield South Africa against demands for sanctions;

(5) Moderating the "heady anti-South African rhetoric" of regional states.

The pursuit of these objectives also led to a systematic reorganization of the *apartheid* state. Under the new "National Security Management System," South Africa underwent a virtual *de facto* military coup. By 1981 effective decision-making had passed from the Cabinet to the military-dominated State Security Council (SSC) — itself responsible only to the Prime Minister. The SSC set up military-dominated parallel administrative structures to coordinate the implementation of its Total Strategy and to oversee domestic and regional planning, administration and implementation.⁶

The military budget more than tripled between 1977/78 and 1986/87 to reach R5.1 billion, with *real* spending estimated at R8.7 billion.⁷ A crash armaments development programme after 1977 transformed the state-owned Armaments Corporation into the second biggest industrial conglomerate in South Africa. New military units were developed for use against neighbouring states. These included dissident groups such as the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR), the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), and so-called "Super-Zapu" in Zimbabwe. Purporting to be indigenous resistance forces, and drawing most recruits from these countries, these groups fall under the strategic control of the South African Defence Force (SADF) Special Forces Command which keeps them supplied and financed.⁸

The Total Strategy also devoted much study to ways in which existing regional economic links could be used either as incentive levers or as disincentive levers against neighbouring states. The former included offers of South African aid or joint infrastructural projects. The latter amounted to large-scale sanctions explicitly designed to change political policies in the region.⁹

THE TOTAL STRATEGY IN ACTION

The ways in which the Total Strategy was applied depended on various external and internal factors. Four distinct phases stand out.

1) 1978-80: CONSAS and SADCC

First proposed in 1979, the Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS) was hinged on the assumption that Zimbabwe would become independent under the pro-South African Bishop Abel Muzorewa and join CONSAS — obliging Zambia, Zaire and probably Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to follow suit. Robert Mugabe's conclusive victory in the February 1980 Zimbabwean independence elections defeated such plans however. Zimbabwe joined the Frontline States and helped form the