

years, enabling black and white voters to adjust to one another and power eventually to be transferred with less resistance than might otherwise be the case. Such is the optimistic scenario. It presumes that reasonable people will be allowed to sit down and negotiate sensible compromises. But the pressures and expectations building up on both sides may deprive de Klerk and Mandela of that luxury.

The ANC, in particular, is confronted with some fundamental dilemmas. On one hand, it has to support the process of peaceful negotiation; on the other, having foresworn armed struggle, its only means of bringing pressure upon de Klerk is to resort to mass protest action, which usually results in violence. Mass action, imposed arbitrarily, is anathema to *Inkatha*, and has been the proximate cause of much of the fighting in black townships. Yet the more the ANC eschews protest and becomes drawn into negotiation and compromise, the more difficulty it has in sustaining its image as the party of the people and the vanguard of the liberation struggle.

Nowhere is the ANC's difficulty more acute than over the question of economic sanctions. In private, ANC leaders acknowledge that sanctions are exacerbating the economic plight of the country, and queering the pitch for any future administration. Yet the organization cannot afford to have sanctions lifted by the international community until some form of interim administration is in place. What is more, the ANC's contradictory and confusing utterances on economic policy and foreign investment are doing it positive harm in the eyes of many of its Western sympathizers.

Another factor bedeviling matters for both the ANC and the government has been the introduction of a Valued Added Tax (VAT) system to replace the inefficient General Sales Tax. The extraordinarily bad timing of the measure has presented militant trade unionists with a heaven-sent opportunity of mobilizing grassroots support around the emotive issue of "taxation without representation." But the VAT controversy has also brought to the surface strategic differences in the ANC-Cosatu (Congress of South Africa Trade Unions) alliance. While ANC moderates are reluctant to allow the uproar over VAT to impede negotiations, they are having to defer to more radical elements in the alliance, who are determined to use the VAT issue to establish firmly the principle that no economic restructuring can take place without their say-so.

ADDING TO THE CURRENT MOOD OF UNCERTAINTY AND PESSIMISM IS THE wave of violence – political and criminal – which has claimed thousands of lives in the past year and shows no signs of abating. Its causes are manifold – unemployment, recession, rapid urbanisation, ethnic rivalries, the breakdown of black family life, and the availability of firearms – but the situation is being exacerbated by a series of political assassinations carried out by shadowy elements, thought to be dissidents in the security forces.

The activities of the so-called "Third Force" has caused serious strains in the personal relationship between F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela. The ANC leader accuses the government of having a double agenda, of simultaneously negotiating with the ANC and undermining it by violent means. He believes de Klerk could root out the trouble-makers if he really wished. The President counters with the argument that violence is not in anyone's interest, but the security forces are hard-pressed to cope with the fratricidal battle for supremacy between the ANC, *Inkatha* and other black organizations. His Minister of Law and Order argues that one reason for the high crime rate is that the police are being taken away from their normal duties in order to quell political violence in the townships.

Notwithstanding all the turmoils of 1991, progress towards a negotiated settlement continues. A factor influencing even the most radical groups is the changed international environment, and the almost universal execration of Marxism-Leninism, hitherto one of Africa's most admired doctrines. Even the once Stalinist Communist Party of South Africa now proclaims the virtues of pluralism and private ownership.

When it comes to questions of foreign policy, the differences between the contenders for power in South Africa are no less marked. The most recent example of dissonance occurred during the Persian Gulf War, when Pretoria enthusiastically backed the Western Alliance while the ANC and groupings to its left showed sympathy for the "anti-imperialist" Saddam Hussein.

DESPITE THE NEED FOR A POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA TO HAVE ITS act together when seeking foreign aid, there are few signs of convergence, or even discussions, between the parties over foreign policy

at present. While de Klerk's reformist policies have opened doors in Western chancelleries hitherto closed to him, the ANC has a much wider range of foreign missions and diplomatic contacts than he does.

Nonetheless, on the assumption that South Africa will have a multi-racial government sooner rather than later, it can be safely predicted that the country will rejoin the Commonwealth and become a member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) within the foreseeable future. In both these organizations, South Africa has the potential – by virtue of its size and relative economic strength – to play an influential role.

Within both the foreign policy establishment and black opposition ranks, moreover, there is confidence about the new South Africa's ability to become the economic locomotive of the subcontinent and, together with Angola and Zaire, to lead the region

towards economic recovery. Perennial optimist Pik Botha, South Africa's long-serving foreign minister, believes that South Africa is poised to play a pivotal role in forging the prosperity of one hundred million people in eleven countries of the region. "Together, these eleven nations can make a deal with Europe to our mutual benefit. We can do better than Eastern Europe," he says.⁴

While Botha sees Europe as holding the key to Southern African prosperity, it is by no means certain that the ANC and its allies think likewise. Once in government, they will probably look first to the interests of their African neighbours, to the extent of forging alliances which may conflict with those of the US and Western European interests.⁵

Even those who hold less bullish views on the region's economic potential concede that an internationally accepted South Africa is one of Africa's last and best hopes for the future. It would be one of the crowning ironies of this extraordinary century if the country which for so long has united the OAU and other organizations in opposition to its racial policies were to revive Africa by setting the pace towards non-racial, multiparty, market-based democracy. □



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1. Donald Horowitz, *A Democratic South Africa: Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
2. P. Fabricus and S. Johnson, *The Star International Weekly*, 4 September 1991.
3. *The present constitution which took effect in September 1984 provides for a tricameral parliament: the first house is elected by "white" voters, another by "coloured" voters and a third by "Indian" voters. Black citizens of South Africa have no vote at all under the existing constitution. They are expected to exercise a vote in their tribal "homelands."*
4. Quoted by Harvey Tyson in "South Africa's New World," *Leadership Publications*, 1991.
5. Tyson.