

the governments in the region. Lesotho was cited as an example of a South African-instigated overthrow. It was suggested that South Africa has similar designs in Angola and Mozambique. In analyzing the utility of the concept of regime, O'Meara pointed out that it implicitly supports the status quo, which is not a neutral object, least of all in Southern Africa.

South Africa was characterized as a country of extreme imbalances. Three categories of imbalances were identified as particularly prominent: prior beliefs, power, and perception and learning. Of these, South Africa's perception of itself and its role in the region was seen as central. These perceptual imbalances were dealt with in terms of the content of perception and the processes which reinforce these perceptions. The main South African perceptions are that: i. it confronts a "total onslaught" by a collection of external actors which reinforces the perception that South Africa must ultimately rely on itself and that any alliance is only conditional; ii. no effective (as opposed to symbolic) external force can be brought against it due to prevailing geopolitical realities; and iii. power can be effectively used in all its dimensions (economic, political, military) as a means of furthering domestic and regional policy. With respect to the final perception, O'Meara suggested that although South Africa feels that no government within the region can challenge its dominance (and that thus far it has been able to "live with the costs" of a destabilization strategy), the apparent stalemate in Angola may be starting to challenge this perception.

It was explained that the internal decision making process of South Africa reinforces the perception that the use of force is effective. This has been facilitated by a shift in institutional decision making structures (and therefore