

TOTAL DESTABILIZATION

The axe fell first on Lesotho. A total blockade by Pretoria in January 1986 precipitated a *coup d'état* which replaced the independent-minded government of Leabua Jonathan with one more amenable to Pretoria. South Africa's May raids against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe scuttled the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group initiative just when some progress seemed possible. Clandestine hit squads targeted ANC sympathizers in Lesotho and Swaziland.

Once again, however, the major burden fell on Angola and Mozambique. A further large-scale military incursion into Angola was made in August 1986. In September, 12,000 South Africa-backed MNR dissidents attacked central Mozambique from Malawi. This offensive was designed to cut the narrow Beira corridor linking Zimbabwe with the Mozambican port of Beira, and split Mozambique in two. In early October, Pretoria threatened military action against Mozambique and deported thousands of Mozambican workers. Barely a week later the Mozambican president, Samora Machel, and 28 of his aides died in a suspicious air crash.²⁵

In 1987 Pretoria's undeclared wars with Angola and Mozambique had shifted significantly. The Angolan government launched a major military offensive against UNITA in September. Its reported significant early successes led to the sixth major South African invasion of Angola. While thousands of Angolan troops were apparently killed, South Africa also took unprecedented losses — including a number of fighter aircraft. One British journal reported the "decimation" of South Africa's notorious 32 Battalion and South African newspapers reported mutinies in two others. Pretoria has admitted it intervened to prevent the defeat of UNITA.²⁶ Coupled with the visit by President Botha and senior Cabinet ministers to SADF positions in Angola, this has confirmed UNITA's status as a simple South African surrogate. And Pretoria is being sucked deeper into a war it cannot win.

In Mozambique the MNR offensive in the central provinces was finally contained. Pressure by the Frontline States appears to have ended Malawi's covert support for the MNR, and Malawian troops now patrol the northern rail line. The war has shifted sharply into southern Mozambique. MNR attacks are now carried out by concentrations of up to 500 trained, well-equipped and highly mobile men, many of whom are believed by the Mozambican government to have served with the SADF in Angola. The random terrorist attacks on the population have now escalated into regular large-scale massacres of civilians, employing a savage level of cruelty. These seem designed to spread terror throughout southern Mozambique, isolate the capital, Maputo, and accentuate the urban discontent stemming from the deep cuts in social spending decreed

by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

These tactics are now also being used in Zimbabwe. Throughout the whole of Southern Africa, Pretoria's war of destabilization grows ever more brutal. South African death squads roam the region. Responding to journalists after South Africa was obliged to return Swiss citizens kidnapped from Swaziland by one such death squad — in yet another violation of the non-aggression pact with Swaziland — Foreign Minister Pik Botha stated that the regime was no longer interested in diplomatic niceties.²⁷

Pretoria has made it very clear that it will use its overwhelming regional economic and military power to pursue four broad objectives in Southern Africa:

1) to destroy the ANC and punish any state which can be even remotely connected with this or that ANC incident;

2) to undermine the SADCC initiatives, not just in the transport sector but also in the new SADCC emphasis on production and intra-regional trade;

3) to undercut sanctions in the region, shift the burden of sanctions on to its neighbours;

4) finally, the coup in Lesotho — and possibly the death of Samora Machel — points to a new desperation in Pretoria's regional politics.

In the past, destabilization was geared "to change political behaviour, rather than political structures."²⁸ Now Pretoria seems intent on replacing what it sees as hostile regimes. This was relatively easily done in Lesotho. Again Mozambique seems to be the focus of this effort. How it will work out will largely depend on international involvement. However, the peoples of Southern Africa will continue to pay a hideous price.

CONCLUSION: THE COSTS OF DESTABILIZATION

The human casualties of over a decade of destabilization have never been reliably measured. Close to two million people have been displaced as refugees. Almost 10% of Namibia's population are either refugees or in exile. The Southern Africa specialist, Joseph Hanlon, estimates the number of deaths due to destabilization of Angola and Mozambique *alone* between 1980 and 1986 at a staggering 735,000:

Mozambique war	50,000
Mozambique famine	100,000
Angola war and famine	50,000
Mozambique children	215,000
Angola children	320,000
TOTAL	<u>735,000²⁹</u>

In 1985 SADCC estimated that "South African aggression and destabilization had cost the nine member countries in excess of US\$10 billion" between