WARMONGERS WHO TALK OF PEACE

United States Strategy in Southern Africa

By Brian Bunting

The reaction of the majority of the people of South Africa to the re-election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States was expressed by the publicity secretary of the United Democratic Front in the Western Cape, Mr Jonathan de Vries, as follows:

> "Although the result was expected it still came as a disappointment to us. We can now expect another four years of US connivance with the South African authorities behind a smokescreen of "constructive engagement." Internationally the election result will also be a shock to peace-loving and democratic forces in general. With his belligerent foreign policies President Reagan is one of the greatest threats to world peace."

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the danger resides in the person of Reagan himself. The President is still little more than the B-movie actor he was when he first came to public notice 50 or so years ago; he has merely transferred his activities from the big screen of the cinema to the small screen of television. Far more sinister are the forces behind the President, who manipulate him as a puppet, who write his scripts and feed him gags. It is the military-industrial complex which he represents that constitutues the real danger to the world.

Human Rights and the Western Countries

We will never be able to interpret the politics of the cold war, and in particular the motives of the so-called western democracies, unless we understand that the devotion of their ruling-class politicians to "freedom" is in essence a devotion to "free enterprise," to capitalism as a way of life which they consider superior to all others. The appeal to "democracy" and "human rights" is merely a cover. It is not the alleged violation of human rights that outrages a Reagan or a Carter and inspires them to describe the Soviet Union as an "empire of evil." It is the fact that the exploiters of man by man have been expropriated, that there is neither stock exchange, Wall Street nor Bond Street in Moscow, that fills them with alarm.

It is the pursuit of private profit that turns the wheels of the economy in the United States, Britain, West Germany, Japan and other capitalist countries. After the Russian revolution of 1917, the armed forces of 14 nations invaded the territory of Soviet Russia in an attempt to restore capitalism. They were the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Serbia, China, Finland, Greece, Poland, Rumania, Turkey and Japan. The Red Army beat off the attacks at the time, and in the intervening years a number of those 14 countries have undergone

a change of government and are today also following the socialist road. With one or two exceptions, those who remain form the core of NATO, still desperately hoping to be able to create a situation, by subversion or aggression, in which the historical process of social change can be slowed down or reversed.

It is only when contemporary politics is seen in this context that we can understand why, in the western media, the murder of one Polish priest is considered a greater outrage than the murder of the Archbishop and 40 000 other citizens of El Salvador by right-wing death squads; why the killing of thousands of our people in 1984 by the racist army and police forces is ignored; why the fate of Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa is considered of more consequence than that of Rodolfo Seguel, the Christian Democratic leader of the Chilean copper miners, who has suffered infinitely greater persecution, but whose name has never been mentioned by Ronald Reagan; why our great leader Nelson Mandela rots in gaol while Jonas Savimbi is feted in Cape Town and Washington, as an ally in the fight for "freedom and democracy."

The United States and Liberation Movements

The United States was born of revolution against the tyranny of the British monarchy in 1776, but today stands opposed to revolution against tyranny everywhere in the world. It is a sad fact of life that the US has not supported any genuine liberation movement anywhere at any time. When the Monroe Doctrine was adumbrated in 1823, 43 years after the American revolution, the US President, James Monroe, warned that any intervention by a foreign power in the Western hemisphere would be regarded as "dangerous to our peace and safety." Even at that early stage "our peace and safety" were regarded as justification for US hegemony over the whole of North and South America, and US troops have invaded the territories of Central America alone more than 25 times in the ensuing period in order to preserve that hegemony, culminating in the brutal invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the aggression against Nicaragua in 1984. Nor is US hegemonism confined to the Americas. US warships bomb Lebanon and patrol the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to protect what Reagan calls "our vital interests" — mainly Arab oil, which accounts for 40% of US consumption. And this extension of the Monroe doctrine to cover the whole globe also justifies Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" with the Botha regime to guarantee continued US access to and control over the resources of our sub-continent.

United States Interests and South Africa

Reagan was quite open about this when, on television, shortly after coming to office, he called South Africa a "friendly country" and asked:

> "Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we've ever fought, a country that strategically is essential to the free world in the production of minerals we all must have?"

And in 1984, US Secretary of State George P Schultz listed four reasons why Africa is important to the United States:

> "First, we have a significant geopolitical stake in the security of the continent and the seas surrounding it. Off its shores lie important trade routes, including those carrying most of the energy resources needed by our European allies.
>
> "Second, Africa is part of the global economic system. Our exports to Africa have dropped by 50% in the last three years; American financial institutions have felt the pinch of African inability to repay loans. And Africa is a major source of raw materials crucial to the world economy.
>
> " ... Africa is important to us politically because the nations of Africa are now major players in world diplomacy. They comprise nearly one-third of the membership of the United Nations, where they form the most cohesive voting bloc in the General Assembly.
>
> "Finally, Africa is important to us, most of all, in human terms: 11% of America's population traces its roots to Africa."

Missing from these declarations is any real concern for the welfare and happiness of the 100% of the peoples of Africa themselves. Western policies determined by the 'me first' principle of private enterprise, place African interests nowhere. In the capitalist countries. profit comes before principle. Take the record of the United States under President Reagan. Of the 38 resolutions concerning South Africa considered by the United Nations General Assembly from 1981 to 1983. the United States failed to cast a single affirmative vote. It abstained five times and voted 'no' 33 times. It abstained on every resolution concerning Namibia. During 1984, when the South African people were in revolt against Botha's new constitution, which has no place for the African 70% of the population, the United States and Britain abstained on resolutions in both the Security Council and the General Assembly, declaring the new constitution null and void — resolutions endorsed by the overwhelming majority of UN member states.

A Decade of Hypocrisy

The hypocrisy of the west over South Africa has been exposed by the events of the past decade. In 1976 there were disturbances at Soweto and elsewhere as Black children demonstrated against inferior education. Over 1 000 Africans, mostly school children, were shot dead by the police. In 1977 a number of Black Consciousness organisations and newspapers were banned, and world opinion was outraged by the murder of Steve Biko by the security police. On November 4th, 1977, the United Nations Security Council — for once, unanimously — passed Resolution 418, imposing an arms embargo on South Africa, though a call for the imposition of economic and oil sanctions was rejected by the western powers. However, an arms embargo was an achievement for which we had been working for nearly two decades. After the vote was passed, the UN Secretary General said:

> "We have today clearly witnessed a historic occasion. The adoption of this resolution marks the first time in the 32-year history of our organisation that action has been taken, under Chapter VII of the Charter, against a member state."

Hopes that this resolution would be followed by effective action against the racist regime were dashed. On April 9th 1984, the chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, Major-General J N Garba, reported to the Security Council:

> "We had hoped that the mandatory arms embargo would at least reduce the capacity of the apartheid regime to carry on its wars against the people of South Africa and Namibia, and against the independent African states, and indeed persuade it to begin the process of dismantling apartheid. I need hardly tell you that these hopes have not been fulfilled."

Pretoria's Arsenal

On the contrary, the military budget of South Africa increased from R1 650 million in 1977-1978 to nearly R4 billion in 1984, and South Africa's Armaments Corporation (Armscor), the regime's armaments production and procurement agency, now owns assets totalling nearly R2 billion, with 15 factories and a work force of over 100 000 and an annual expenditure of over R2 billion of which about half is spent overseas in countries which are supposed to be implementing the embargo. South Africa's nuclear capacity in particular is due to the support and encouragement it has received from the US, Britain, France, West Germany and Israel.

The western countries do not lack reasons — both economic and strategic — for ensuring the survival of the apartheid regime. The United States is South Africa's biggest trading partner, while Britain is the biggest investor in the South African economy. Hundreds of US, British and other western companies are established either directly or through subsidiaries in South Africa, and draw huge profits from the cheap labour system in operation there. It is largely for this reason that General Garba, in his report to the Security Council already referred to, added:

> "The powers concerned — especially the major western powers — have not shown the will to stop the criminal acts of aggression and destabilisation by South Africa, nor indeed helped to preserve peace in Southern Africa"

Aggression and destabilisation: the army of the Pretoria regime.

Under the umbrella of Reagan's policy of "construcive engagement" South Africa has been encouraged to regard itself as a regional power in Africa in the same way as Israel in the Middle East, with the same disastrous consequences. Charging that it is being subjected to a "total onslaught" by "Russian imperialism" and "international communism" the Botha regime tried to draw the western powers into its support — or should we put it the other way round?

The United States and 'Linkage'

US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Chester Crocker, has admitted that it was the United States which gave birth to the doctrine of "linkage" between Namibian independence under Security Council Resolution 435 and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Whichever way one approaches this question, one fact is obvious — that Reagan's re-election will draw still tighter the bonds which unite South Africa and America against what they regard as their common enemy. With striking unanimity, South Africa's business interests, English and Afrikaans (as reported in the *Rand Daily Mail* of November 8th 1984):

> "greeted President Reagan's re-election as a guarantee of economic stability in the US and a spur for the South African economy. The chairman of Anglo-American, Mr Gavin Relly, said policy stability arising from Mr Reagan's victory should be regarded as a plus rather than a minus, but the US's political initiatives in Southern Africa could be taken further."

What are the United States and South African initiatives in Southern Africa? If we are to judge by their input in the Nkomati Accord on Mozambique and the Lusaka Agreement on Angola, the racists and imperialists are united in their determination to strengthen the basis of colonialism of a special kind in South Africa, to preserve or restore the front line states within the orbit of capitalism, and to destroy the liberation movements, the ANC and SWAPO — at least in their present form.

In a speech at the beginning of December 1984, Chester Crocker defended US policies on Southern Africa, insisting that "constructive engagement" with the Botha regime opened the way for peaceful reform, which was preferable to the alternative of violence.

Pretoria Regime — Source of Violence

The fact is, however, that it is the Botha regime's denial of democratic rights to the majority of the population that is the source of all violence in the region, both inside South Africa and beyond its borders. South Africa calls its army a Defence Force, but this is a misnomer. Since its foundation as a unitary state in 1910 South Africa has never been attacked or threatened with invasion by any front line state or combination of states. On the contrary, it has itself been a source of suppression and aggression against its own people and its neighbours. Its posture towards Africa and the world has been aggressive, not defensive.

Everybody has seen in the recent period the mass murders perpetrated by the regime in South Africa and Namibia, where hundreds have been killed by the military and the police and thousands gassed, whipped, baton-charged, detained, tortured and 'disappeared.' Reagan and Thatcher make polite noises about their "detestation" of apartheid, but do nothing to stop the bloodshed. On the contrary, the flow of weapons and the sophisticated technology required by South Africa to pursue its aggressive policies continues without interruption, apart from an occasional hiccup, like the arrest of the Coventry Four.

Let us not forget that it was South Africa's blatant invasion of Angola in 1975 which led to the Luanda government's call to the Cuban government for assistance in repelling this aggression from outside. Today the United States and South Africa have the impertinence to demand the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola before they will consider conceding independence to Namibia in terms of Security Council Resolution 435 — yet South African occupation of Angolan territory — the original provocation which led to the Cuban "intervention" — continues, in spite of the Lusaka Agreement of February 1984, that all South African troops were to be withdrawn from Angola by the end of March 1984. The most recent Angolan proposal setting out, with Cuban backing, a plan for winding down the tension over Angola and Namibia and leading both to Namibian independence and a Cuban withdrawal has met with a negative response in Pretoria and Washington.

Death and Devastation For The Innocent

South Africa, with the connivance of the US and other western states, has been guilty of military attacks on all the front line states, which have led to death and devastation for hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children. The South African excuse is that it is engaged in "hot pursuit" or "pre-emptive strikes" in the course of defending itself against the "total onslaught" to which it claims it is being subjected. The human and material damage the South African racists have inflicted on the front line states has been a major factor in the planned destabilisation of their governments.

The Nkomati Accord signed by Presidents Botha and Machel last March was aimed to halt the alleged incursions of the ANC into South Africa from Mozambique, while in return South Africa pledged to withdraw support from the MNR rebels operating in Mozamique. The ANC has never operated militarily from Mozambique, but has nevertheless been compelled to withdraw its personnel except for a token mission of ten in Maputo. But the activities of MNR in Mozambique have been vastly extended since the Nkomati Accord was signed, leading to further destabilisation of the FRELIMO government and attempts by South Africa and the US to compel it to change its ideological direction. Behind the ambiguous wording of the October 3rd Pretoria agreement (FRELIMO, MNR and South Africa) can be discerned a clear attempt on the part of South Africa to dictate to Mozambique what type of government it shall have, what policies it shall follow — and even the hope that South Africa will be 'invited' to send its troops into Mozambique to monitor a ceasefire.

Similar pressures are being brought to bear on Lesotho and Botswana, and there is no

doubt the ground is being prepared for further aggression against Angola to compel MPLA to accept UNITA as a partner in government. Swaziland was bludgeoned into submission three years ago. Zimbabwe, too, is increasingly being brought into the line of fire. In all this South Africa is following to the letter the tactics employed by the United States in Central America and Israel in the Middle East — using its military and economic muscle and all manner of dirty tricks to install governments of its choice in the neighbouring states.

Counter-Revolution Imposed

Nor do the ambitions of the racist regime stop there. The leaders of the ruling Nationalist Party have long regarded it as their historic duty to take on the White man's burden allegedly abandoned by the colonial powers and win back the African continent for the West. Shortly after taking office as Minister of Defence in the late 1960s, P W Botha said that in the fight against "terrorism" South Africa should "carry its influence over its borders." (*Rand Daily Mail* April 4th 1968) On April 11th 1984, Defence Minister General Magnus Malan boasted in the White Paper he presented to Parliament that it was South African military aggression that had paved the way for the Nkomati and Lusaka Agreements:

> "Forceful military action by the South African security forces during the last decade or more has provided sufficient time to allow Africa to experience the dangers of Russian involvement in their countries, as well as the suffering and retrogression that follows upon the revolutionary formula."

Yet the peoples of Africa know only too well that the suffering and retrogression they have experienced has been inflicted on them by the counter-revolutionary formula imposed on

An Angolan victim of one of the attacks by the Pretoria regime.

them by South Africa's troops and the imperialists, not by "the Russians," who have no military presence anywhere in Africa.

South Africa's imperialist ambitions can only grow in the wake of Reagan's election victory. Already in September 1984. after the biggest military manoeuvres held in the country since World War Two, the divisional commander in charge, Brigadier George Kruys, was quoted as saying:

> "South Africa has become expert in blitzkrieg-type warfare and intends getting better at it."

Defence Minister Malan added that the exercise had shown that:

> "we could go right through to Cairo."

(*Rand Daily Mail* September 10th and 13th 1984)

Clearly the time has come for the world to administer a decisive rebuff to the ambitions of the South African racists and their imperialist allies. The South African gangsters must not be allowed to run amuck in Africa. They must not be allowed to murder and destroy either in South Africa itself or in the front line states. They must be called to account for the crimes they have committed in war and peace, for their repeated violations of the UN Charter and the various UN declarations relating to Southern Africa.

We Must Fight on All Fronts

The racist-imperialist offensive against the independent states and liberation movements of Southern Africa must be combated on all fronts:

★ The armed struggle must be intensified and ever more weighty blows struck against the enemy.

★ The struggles of the oppressed peoples in South Africa in the schools and colleges, in the townships, in the factories, on the buses, in the bantustans, must be raised to a new level and co-ordinated. The underground presence of the ANC and SACP inside the country must become an effective reality so that the moblisation of the masses can become a continuous process, and proper political leadership provided to the people. More determined efforts must be made to win to our side increasing numbers of White democrats.

★ International solidarity action must be stepped up to isolate the South African regime militarily, politically and economically.

We Have a Reservoir of Support

Let us not be dismayed by the apparent drift to the right in the western countries. The reactionary policies pursued by Reagan and Thatcher represent a frantic attempt by the counter-revolutionaries to claw back something of the sweeping gains registered by the progressive forces world-wide in the 1970s. The mass struggles being waged against imperialism everywhere are a guarantee that in due course the tide will once more turn in our favour.

Furthermore, for all their claims of "sweeping successes" in this year's elections, neither Reagan nor Thatcher enjoys majority support among the electorate. Reagan was returned to office winning 59% of the votes cast in a 56% poll, which means that only 33% of US voters actually voted for him. Mrs Thatcher was likewise returned to office despite the fact that she was rejected by the majority of Britons who went to the polls. These figures mean that in our international solidarity work we can appeal to a substantial reservoir of opinion in the leading western countries which does not support the adventurous and reactionary policies represented by Reagan and Thatcher.

The African National Congress is now recognised nationally and internationally as the leading force in the liberation movement, the force most capable of uniting the South African people of all races in the struggle to overthrow the apartheid regime, and in the genuinely free and democratic society which will be established thereafter on the lines set out in the Freedom Charter. Even the enemies of the ANC have been compelled to recognise its strength and authority. During 1984, approaches were made to the ANC by both the US administration and the Botha regime, indicating the lines on which "talks" may be arranged to settle the conflicts in Southern Africa.

We must beware of warmongers who talk of peace. The Crocker-Botha plan which is be-

ing mooted amounts to a call for total surrender by the ANC. It has three main objectives:

★ The ANC must abandon its tactic of armed struggle.
★ The ANC must abandon its alliance with the SACP.
★ The ANC must sever its relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

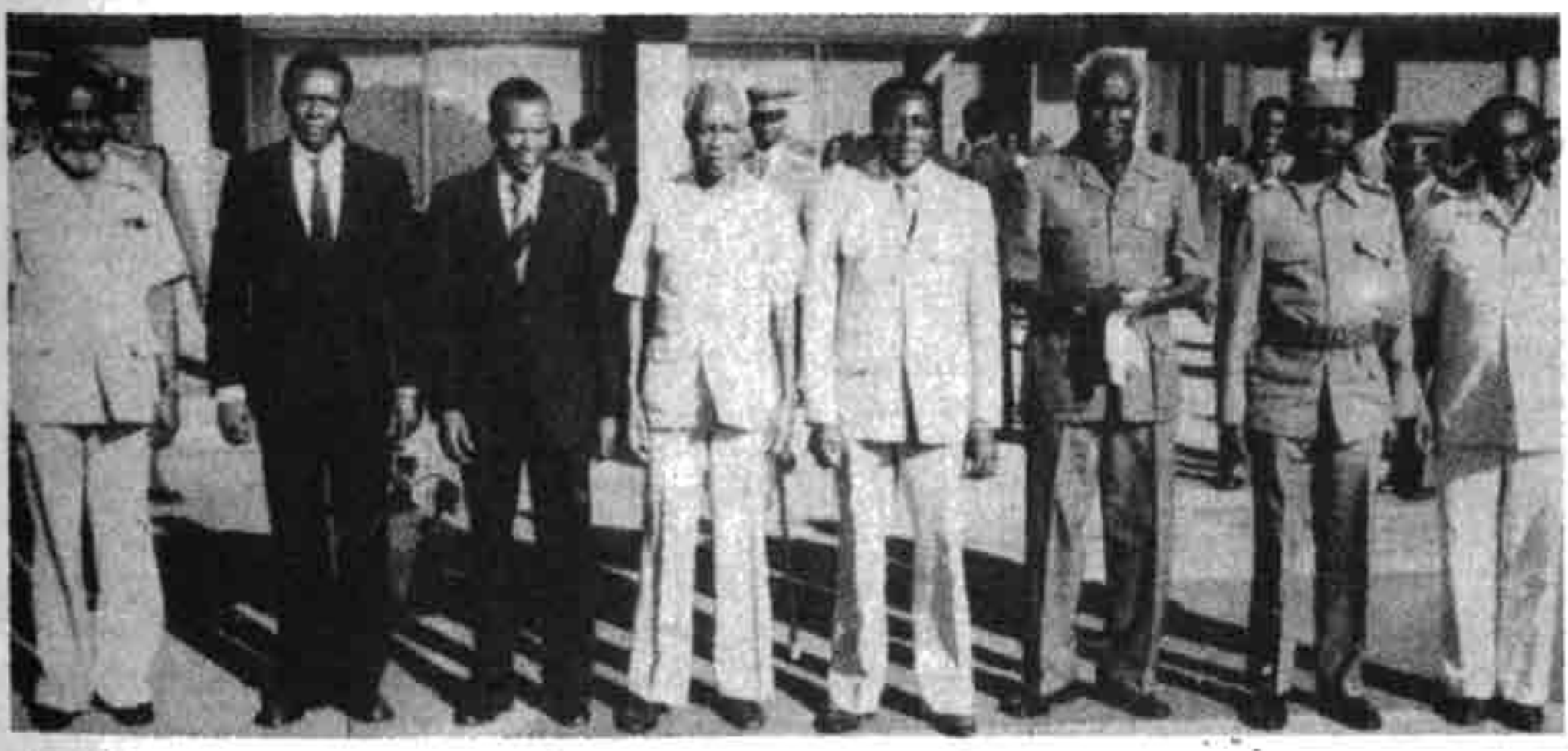
Were these conditions to be accepted, the ANC would go into the debating chamber naked and defenceless, having thrown all its weapons away. Nevertheless, we can expect the Crocker-Botha offensive against the ANC to be intensified in the wake of Reagan's re-election, for the destruction or subversion of the ANC is, after all, the main objective of the racist-imperialist strategy.

The ANC Must Defend Its Gains

The ANC must defend its hard-won gains. Nothing must be allowed to disrupt the unity it has built in its ranks, and between itself and its allies. We must all recognise that the hostility of a Reagan or a Botha to the ANC is not due only to the ANC/SACP alliance or the ANC's relations to Moscow, but to the fact that the ANC has developed its own anti-imperialist philosophy on the basis of its own historical experience. The anti-Communist and anti-Soviet line adopted by the enemy in its approach to the ANC is merely another form of the old imperialist tactic of "divide and rule." Separate the ANC from its allies, bring division into its ranks, undermnine it, weaken it, subvert it, then it will collapse — that is the enemy's strategy.

We must cherish the unity that has been built in decades of bitter struggle like the apple of our eye. In the crucial coming period, we must not allow ourselves to be diverted or sidetracked by witch-hunts or red herrings; we must allow nothing to distract us from our main task, which is to gather strength to implement our decisions and defeat the enemy. Far from narrowing our alliances, we must broaden them, seek new friends on the basis of our basic principles. In Africa we must work to strengthen the front line states so that they are in a position to withstand the Crocker-Botha pressures, sabotage and subversion. We must call on the OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement and the UN to help us in this task.

Our front line, the front line states, must be aided and strengthened; the Botha regime must be isolated and weakened. That must be our battle-cry in the coming period. That is the way to victory.



Southern African leaders:
Nujoma, dos Santos, Masire, Nyerere, Mugabe, Kaunda, Machel, and Tambo.