## APPLYING MILITARY FORCE FOR POLITICAL ENDS: SOUTH AFRICA IN SOUTH-WESTERN AFRICA: 1987-1988

by

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DEDICATED TO THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SPEND THEIR LIVES IN AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA.

#### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the research was to consider the relationship of political ends and the use of military force and, using empirical data gathered from South Africa's experience from 1987 to 1988, to consider whether there might be any implications for existing theory. The question that was formulated for research was: What relationship could be distinguished between the South African government's use of military force in Angola and the government's political ends?

The conclusion was reached that the relationship of the application of military force by the South African government to the attainment of political ends was one of *inhibition*. The concept of '*inhibitive war*', refers to the severe restraint on the use of military force, resulting from the influences of environmental conditions on political ends, so that the political ends themselves become a restriction on the achievement of military aims.

<u>KEY TERMS</u>: Angola; Cold War; Cuba; Military Force; Military Strategy; Namibia; National Security; Military Intervention; SADF; UNITA.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGAdministrator General of Namibia
ARMSCORArmaments Corporation of South Africa
CIACentral Intelligence Agency
COINCounter Insurgency
CPConservative Party
CPSUCommunist Party of the Soviet Union
DMCDemilitarized Zone
DTAThe Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
FAPLAForças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola
IDAFInternational Defence and Aid Fund
JMCJoint Monitoring Commission
JMMCJoint Military Monitoring Commission
MAOTMobile Air Operations Team
MPLAMovimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola
NDFNamibian Defence Force
NGKNederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reform Church)
NPNational Party
PLANPeople's Liberation Army of Namibia
RSARepublic of South Africa
SAAFSouth African Air Force
SADFSouth African Defence Force
SANDFSouth African National Defence Force
SWASouth West Africa
SWAPOSouth West African People's Organisation
SWAPOLSouth West African Police
SWATFSouth West African Territory Force
TGNUTransitional Government of National Unity
UNUnited Nations
UNAVEMUnited Nations Angola Verification Mission
UNITAUniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola
UNSCUnited Nations Security Council

UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNTAG	United Nations Transition Assistance Group
USA	United States of America

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**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** 

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

South Africa conquered German South West Africa (SWA) during World War I with the newly formed Union Defence Force and governed it in terms of a mandate from the League of Nations after the war. After the disbanding of the League and the formation of the United Nations after World War II the mandate of the League was ended and South Africa was called upon to grant independence to Namibia. The events surrounding the South African claim to Namibia are set out in the following pages as background to this study.

1.1.1 THE ORIGIN OF SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH-WESTERN AFRICA (1914-1956)

On 4 August 1914 Great Britain declared war on Germany and on 7 August the Government of the Union of South Africa offered to employ the Defence Force of the Union for any duties entrusted to it. This offer was in response to a cable from Britain and an agreement in 1911 at a conference of Imperial Prime Ministers which provided for the occupation of German territories by British colonies and dominions. On 10 August the Union agreed to seize Swakopmund, Lüderitzbucht and the radio stations situated there, as well as objectives in the interior if necessary. The decision to intervene created dissension in Afrikaner ranks but by the 1950's most Afrikaners perceived SWA as an integral part of South Africa and as part of the Afrikaner heritage. Even before the campaign was over General Smuts confirmed that SWA would never be handed back to Germany as Germany was regarded as an undesirable neighbour for South Africa and the occupation of SWA by Germany as detrimental to British interests.<sup>1</sup>

General Botha invaded SWA at Keetmanshoop in the second week of February 1915 to reach Windhoek on 20 May 1915. General Smuts took over Lüderitzbucht in order to advance to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Du Pisani, A. SWA/Namibia: The Politics of Continuity and Change, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1986, p.46

Aus and Keetmanshoop. Having cleared the southern part of the country General Botha drove the German forces northwards along the railway line in the direction of Tsumeb. On 9 July 1915 German rule ended with the surrender of the German armed forces at Khorab near Tsumeb. About 13000 South African troops participated in the campaign. After military occupation by the Union Forces a military governor was appointed to govern the territory on behalf of the Union of South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

On 7 May 1920 the Union of South Africa was designated the mandatory power and accepted the responsibility of submitting an annual report on its administration of SWA to the League Article 22(6) of the League Covenant, classifying SWA as a C-mandate of Nations. entrusted to South Africa, was signed on 17 December 1920 in Geneva. international and domestic criticism, political practice in SWA increasingly resembled that of the Union in that racial and social policy followed the precepts of white ethnic power and the supremacy of settler interests. In 1942 political developments inside SWA provided the motivation for integration. The success of reconciliation between the German and Afrikaner sections and the introduction of a system of individual naturalisation of German nationals, as well as a policy convergence of white political parties on the question of incorporation, stimulated calls for integration with South Africa. The rapid expansion of SWA's mineral, ranching and fishing sectors after 1950 added impetus to incorporation ideas. The all-white Legislative Assembly of SWA called upon the Administrator to request the Union government to incorporate SWA as a fifth province and to terminate the mandate agreement. The United Party of General J.C. Smuts intended to incorporate SWA into the Union of South Africa although SWA was of limited economic importance to South Africa in the period ending in 1949.<sup>3</sup>

After the founding of the United Nations (UN) on 24 October 1945 and the dissolution of the League of Nations in April 1946, the concept of semi-permanent guardianship over colonial peoples in preparation for independence was rejected. Newly independent states of Asia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The course of the war is described in detail by Collyer, J.J., *The Campaign in German Southwest Africa*, Government Printers, Pretoria, 1937.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Du Pisani, A. 'Beyond the Transgariep: South Africa in Namibia, 1915-1989' in *Politikon*, 16: 1, June, 1990, p.28-29.

and Africa that joined the UN dictated that trusteeship should only be a transitional measure leading to the independence of colonies. By 1962 all the mandated territories in Africa had gained independence, except Namibia. <sup>4</sup> The South African government did not regard the UN as the successor to the League of Nations and refused to accept UN supervision of the administration of Namibia. It argued that the mandate had lapsed upon the demise of the League. Defying international public opinion and relying on various views of international law, South Africa continued to extend its control over Namibia and resisted every attempt by the UN to establish its authority over the territory. In addition to the domestic policy of 'apartheid', the South African occupation of Namibia was to become an important factor contributing to the isolation of South Africa by the international community. Negative international opinion against South Africa was mainly the result of South Africa applying its policies of race discrimination, together with economic advancement for the white community, with little attention to the provisions of the League mandate which, inter alia, specifically required the advancement of indigenous people of mandated territories.<sup>5</sup>

The UN argued that the population of SWA was not sufficiently developed to express an opinion on issues regarding their own future and the General Assembly of the UN called on South Africa to accept supervision by the UN. The National Party (NP), which won the elections in South Africa on 26 May 1948, rejected UN supervision in Namibia and ceased reporting on the territory to the UN. The NP continued to make Namibia a 'fifth province' of South Africa. This was unacceptable to the UN and the UN provided a useful forum for the launch of an international campaign against South African rule in Namibia.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Henceforth the term *Namibia* will be used for the purpose of the study.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Katjavivi, P.H. A History of Resistance in Namibia, Unesco Press, Paris, 1988.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Stals, E. & Esterhuysen, P. in Leistner, E. & Esterhuysen, P. (Ed.), Namibia 1990: An African Institute Survey, Colorpress, Pretoria, 1990, p.35.

## 1.1.2 INSURGENCY IN NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA

In 1966 the mandate of South Africa was revoked by the General Assembly of the UN and in 1967 the Council for South West Africa was founded. In 1967 the termination of the mandate was confirmed by the United Nations Security Council. A series of Security Council Resolutions from 1966 onwards and an International Court of Justice ruling in 1971 confirmed that South Africa's administration of Namibia was illegal and called for the immediate withdrawal of South Africa from the territory. South Africa rejected the Court's ruling. In December 1973 South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) was recognised as the only representative of the Namibian population. From 1974 onwards the General Assembly denied South Africa the right to participate in its meetings.

In 1965 an insurgency in Namibia was initiated by the SWAPO, the most important internal resistance group in Namibia, when guerrillas of its militant wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) established a base at Ongulumbashe in Ovamboland. On 26 August 1966 an attack was launched by South African security forces and the base was destroyed. Activities also included guerrilla and terrorist action, launched from bases in Angola. The task of countering SWAPO's internal activities was initially that of the South African Police (SAP). The vast area caused the SAP to become overextended and SADF units had to be sent to help maintain order in Ovamboland. Ultimately, in 1973 the SADF took over responsibility for counter-insurgency operations against SWAPO entirely. In 1974 a civil war started in Angola after Portugal had decided to hand over power to the Movimento Popular de Libertaçao de Angola (MPLA). Portugal's abandoning its commitments in the former colonies left the South African government in Namibia vulnerable to operations from across the Namibian borders. The independent states, including Angola

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Apart from the account by Katjavivi, op. cit., who presented the war mainly from a SWAPO point of view, South African versions of the history of military operations in Southwestern Africa can be found in an article by Nöthling, C.J., 'Kort Kroniek van Militêre Operasies en Optredes in Suidwes-Afrika en Angola (1914-1988)' Militaria, 2:19, 1989, p.5-17; as well as a version by the Institute for Strategic Studies of the University of Pretoria 'The War in SWA/Namibia' Pergamus, October 1987, p.7-9.

and Zambia, served as base areas for guerrilla movements in their efforts to topple the minority governments in Namibia and South Africa.<sup>8</sup>

After July 1974, when the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) and the União Nacional para Indepêndencia Total de Angola (UNITA) had been driven from Luanda and the coastal towns of Angola by the MPLA, the South African government was approached by both the FNLA and UNITA independently for military assistance. As the MPLA, like SWAPO, was supported by the Soviet Union, Cuba and other Marxist countries, the South African government decided to intervene in the civil war in Angola. Operation Savannah was launched with the limited objectives of protecting the Ruacana/Calueque hydroelectric project and increasing the bargaining power of UNITA and the FNLA. The conquest and occupation of any part of Angola was never an objective of South Africa.

The decision to intervene depended on a measure of support by the USA, support that was not always forthcoming. After the intervention the South African government felt that the West in general, and particularly the United States of America (USA) and France, left the South Africans in the lurch. South African forces stayed on in Angola after 11 November 1975 on the grounds of undertakings by the CIA and France that they would expand their military support to South Africa and its allies in Angola. However, after the American experience in Vietnam, those opposed to increased involvement by the USA in secret operations lobbied for support for their viewpoints and eventually funds for military aid were not approved. On 19 December 1975 the 'Clark amendment' was accepted in the USA preventing the CIA from receiving additional funds for operations in Angola. A personal message was received from Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger that no more weapons would be supplied to the FNLA or UNITA. Subsequently the initial advance by the SADF, FNLA and UNITA towards Luanda came to a halt and the SADF withdrew from Angola in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Conflicting accounts of the campaign were presented by Spies, F.J. du T. Angola: Operasie Savannah 1975-1976, South African Defence Force, Pretoria, 1989; and Hallet, R. 'The South African Intervention in Angola, 1975-76' African Affairs, 77: 308, July 1978.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Hallet, R. op. cit., p.367.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Du Preez, S. Avontuur in Angola, Van Schaik, Pretoria, 1989, p.40.

March 1976. Although the military capabilities of the SADF were tested and important military experience was gained, the intervention did more harm than good. South Africa could not prevent the MPLA from providing base facilities to SWAPO and in an effort to achieve that, it became an ally to UNITA, a movement which proved to be fighting a losing war without South African assistance.<sup>11</sup>

After 1975 an independent Angola provided SWAPO's military wing, PLAN, with wider access to Namibia and improved lines of communication. SWAPO was thus able to expand and develop its armed struggle against RSA occupation of Namibia. PLAN units began to operate throughout the northern region, including the Kavango and Caprivi, and reached places in the interior such as Tsumeb and beyond. Some units became part of the local communities. The war was nevertheless confined to Northern Namibia. In 1976 SWAPO chose socialist development and, like other radical national liberation movements in Southern Africa, chose to resist 'white minority regimes'. SWAPO succeeded in challenging the illegal occupation by South Africa through political mobilisation and an armed struggle. Thousands of Namibian refugees in Zambia and Angola were organised into communities and gained considerable international standing and support. 12

In 1978 UNITA began to receive large-scale military and other support from the South African government since it was hoped that this would curb SWAPO's activities from Angolan territory. Cross-border attacks by SWAPO increased after the retreat by the SADF and the civil war in Angola proved to be one of the turning points in SWAPO's struggle for control over Namibia.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African Defence Force, Die Militêre en Politieke Milieu van die Konflik tussen die Suid Afrikaanse Veiligheidsmagte en PLAN in die Kunene-Provinsie en die Rol wat FAPLA en UNITA in die Stryd Vertolk, (1975-1980)' (unpublished official study by M.C. Dempsey in possession of the author), 1983, p.305.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> This version of events by Katjavivi, op. cit., p.128, can be regarded as accurate. These events were also observed by the author during his presence in Namibia from 1976 to 1981.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Jaster, R.S. *The 1988 Peace Accords and the Future of South-Western Africa*, Adelphi Papers 253, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1990, p.10.

On 4 May 1978 Operation Reindeer into Angola was launched. The operation consisted of an air and airborne attack on the main training and logistical facilities of SWAPO at Cassinga and a ground attack by a mechanised force on several bases in the border area. Many SWAPO personnel were killed and a substantial quantity of PLAN equipment was either captured or destroyed. The loss in trained personnel and the intelligence material obtained by the SADF was a major setback to SWAPO.<sup>14</sup> In this operation the SADF seized the military initiative but became the aggressor in the eyes of the international community and the black population of Namibia. The military capabilities of PLAN were disrupted but the SADF failed to destroy the movement. PLAN was allowed to reorganise and recover its military capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

The international dispute over the future of Namibia entered a new phase with the formation of the so-called Western Contact Group in the first half of 1977. The five Western members of the UN Security Council (UNSC), namely the USA, France, the United Kingdom, West Germany and Canada, were to join forces in working out proposals for a new constitution for Namibia and to demand free and democratic elections. The Western powers would no longer oppose mandatory UN sanctions if South Africa refused to change its viewpoints on the Namibian settlement. A list of punitive measures were compiled in 1978 but eventually the Western powers never supported African demands for mandatory sanctions. They relied instead on the threat of sanctions to elicit the desired response from South Africa. Improved relations and acceptability to the international community were major themes used in persuading South Africa to cooperate. <sup>16</sup>

Operation Safraan into Zambia was launched late in 1979 and took place after an artillery attack from Zambian soil on the SADF bases at Katima Mulilo. The follow-up operation resulted in SWAPO closing its operational bases in the border area with the Eastern Caprivi and PLAN operations from Zambia ceased altogether. With good intelligence about the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Nöthling, C.J. op. cit., p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Die Militêre en Politieke Milieu van die Konflik..., p.307.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Geldenhuys, D. *The Diplomacy of Isolation : South African Foreign Policy Making*, Macmillan, Johannesburg, 1984, p.222.

PLAN's intentions to attack available to the SADF, PLAN was allowed to fire the first shots, making them the aggressors, thus creating the opportunity for South Africa to launch an incursion into Barotseland.<sup>17</sup>

South Africa, now realising that its strongest point was the use of military force, capitalized on previous successes in an effort to destroy SWAPO. Operation Sceptic was started in June 1980 with an attack on a SWAPO base in Southern Angola and developed into an extensive operation as more and more SWAPO caches were discovered. It was during this operation that the first serious clashes in the eighties with Angolan mechanised forces and the PLAN took place.<sup>18</sup>

## 1.1.3 UNSUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY AND ESCALATING WAR (1981 - 1987)

In January 1981 the Geneva Conference was held to discuss the implementation of the Western settlement plan and was attended by all the major parties involved in the dispute. The conference frustrated the efforts of the Western powers and it became apparent that the South African government and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) were only using the occasion as a public relations exercise to present the DTA as a credible alternative to SWAPO. South Africa used issues like UN partiality towards SWAPO and the Cuban presence in Angola to gain time for the DTA to improve its credibility and weaken SWAPO militarily. The coming into power of the Reagan administration in 1980 proved to be to the advantage of South Africa as the Reagan government revised the settlement plan to make it more acceptable to South Africa. The linking of Cuban troop withdrawal with the independence of Namibia (by then a firm South African viewpoint) was first introduced into the settlement initiative by the USA and was raised by Mr William Clark, then Deputy Secretary of State, on his visit to South Africa for talks on Namibia in June 1981.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Personal observation during participation in operations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Nöthling, op. cit., p.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Geldenhuys, D. op. cit., p.226.

Most Western powers were not in favour of linking the Namibian and Angolan issues, but President Reagan was prepared to exert pressure to rid Southern Africa of the Cubans, although he was reluctant to become militarily involved in Angola. A diplomatic campaign was launched by the USA to win over the Western powers, African governments, the Soviet Union and Cuba. The involvement of other members of the Contact Group faded after 1982 and the linkage issue became a joint USA-South African concern. The new negotiator in the Western Contact Group, Dr Chester Crocker, played a crucial role in this regard.<sup>20</sup>

In 1982 agreement had been reached on the monitoring of SWAPO bases in Angola and Zambia, the question of impartiality during the implementation process and most of the principles regarding an election supervised by the UN as well as a constituent assembly. The only remaining obstacle to the implementation of Resolution 435 was the presence of Cuban forces in Angola. The increase in the number of Cuban troops as the war in Angola escalated became a major concern for South Africa. A Soviet-Cuban military presence in Windhoek had to be avoided at all costs. South Africa insisted on the repatriation of the Cubans before the implementation of Resolution 435 or the termination of assistance to UNITA.<sup>21</sup>

From 1983 onwards the influence of those arguing for constitutional autonomy for Namibians increased. A small group of people in South Africa shaping policy on Namibia, the 'autonomists', were not opposed any more to the independence of Namibia. They argued that the best way to promote independence in Namibia was to make it clear to Namibians that South Africa was no longer prepared to take sides in the constitutional debate in Namibia but that the imposition of a regime by force would not be acceptable. The aim was to make it clear to Namibians that they would have to share the country after independence. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.14; and Crocker, C. High Noon over Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1992, passim.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Republic of South Africa, House of Assembly, *Debates (Hansard)*, *Address by the State President the Honourable P.W. Botha*, 24/8/1988, col. 15963.

'traditionalists', however, were in favour of constitutional structures for ethnic selfdetermination in Namibia.<sup>22</sup>

Against this background and in the belief that an international diplomatic solution was still far off, the SADF, now experienced and with reliable equipment, was once again used in an effort to destroy SWAPO and to put pressure on SWAPO's allies. Because of previous attacks by the SADF, the PLAN decided to deploy its bases close to FAPLA installations to discourage further attacks. The logistical system of the PLAN became interlinked with that of FAPLA. Operation Protea, the largest mechanised operation by the SADF since World War II, was launched to destroy SWAPO facilities. As the FAPLA air defence system posed a serious threat to the SADF in operations against the PLAN, it was decided to initiate the attack with a series of air strikes against FAPLA radar installations and key points. A mechanised force also attacked and captured Xangongo (the HQ of the north-western front of PLAN) while other SWAPO bases in the south and east of the town were destroyed. Xangongo was isolated from any possible interference by FAPLA from the north and northeast.<sup>23</sup> A main force continued to capture Ongiva, after which SWAPO facilities in and around the town were destroyed. South Africa capitalized on these successes with Operations Daisy and Meebos, in which the command and control and logistical facilities of SWAPO were further disrupted. After it had become clear that SWAPO was planning a major infiltration into Namibia in 1984, Operation Askari was launched on 6 December 1983 to disrupt the logistics and infrastructure of the PLAN. Although the attacks were launched against PLAN targets, the SADF became involved in major battles with FAPLA. Four mechanised combat groups of the SADF attacked targets. The major battle between the SADF and the Cuban military contingent occurred on 3 January 1984 near Cuvelai when Cuban and FAPLA forces reacted to attacks by the SADF on a PLAN base near the town.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Cleary, S. 'The Impact of the Independence of Namibia on South Africa' South Africa International, 19: 3, January 1989, p.121.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Own observations during participation in Operations Protea and Daisy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Nöthling, op. cit., p.11.

In January 1984 Operation Askari led to a military aid agreement between the Soviet Union and Angola and in the following 18 months Angola was supplied with sophisticated weapons such as T-62 tanks, MI-24 assault helicopters and advanced surface-to-air missiles.<sup>25</sup> The Soviet Union and Cuba decided to extend military aid to FAPLA to an amount of US\$ 3,5 billion. Although the PLAN suffered serious setbacks the air superiority of the SADF was challenged in Angola through the deployment of a sophisticated integrated air defence system, including radar installations and missiles. The Soviet Union strengthened the Angolan air force by supplying additional Mig-21 fighter aircraft and effecting other arms transfers. Soviet-equipped radar installations formed the basis of a comprehensive command and control network and a sophisticated air defence system in Angola. Eventually Angola enjoyed 70 percent control over its own air space, including Northern Namibia, thus undermining the air superiority of the SADF.<sup>26</sup>

The Lusaka Agreement of February 1984 followed after talks by the USA and South Africa with representatives of the MPLA on Mindelo Island in the Cape Verde Republic in January 1984. The Mindelo talks revolved around indications that the MPLA was willing to discuss the withdrawal of the Cuban troops if South Africa discontinued its support for UNITA and made peace with SWAPO. In Lusaka it was decided that a demilitarized zone (DMZ) would be established on the border between Namibia and Angola on Angolan territory to be monitored by a Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC).<sup>27</sup> The Lusaka agreement failed when SWAPO confirmed its commitment to the armed struggle during talks in Moscow in 1984. By May 1985 the JMC, rife with dissension, was disbanded.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile assistance by South Africa helped to develop UNITA into a serious challenge to the Angolan government. Apart from the series of cross-border raids against PLAN, FAPLA and Cuba, the South African government also developed a surrogate relationship with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Ackerman, J.T. 'The RSA and Angola: Air Superiority' Strategic Review for Southern Africa, X: 2, November 1988, p.46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Du Pisani, SWA/Namibia: The Politics of Continuity and Change..., p.78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.15.

UNITA. After the Lusaka Accord the RSA directed its efforts toward strengthening UNITA's position in Angola and internationally. A military stalemate persisted in 1984 in Angola with UNITA making headway along the Zambian border and in Lunda North, while FAPLA, supported by the Cubans, controlled the central, eastern and northern provinces. An urban offensive by UNITA in Luanda failed. In March 1984 the MPLA and the Soviet Union declared that the cessation of aid to UNITA by the USA and South Africa was a precondition for Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola. In turn the South African government demanded UNITA's inclusion in any regional settlement. Savimbi decided to escalate the civil war to force the MPLA into discussions with him and in 1984 and 1985 demonstrated UNITA's capability to carry out attacks in any part of the country.<sup>29</sup>

The 'Clark Amendment' was repealed by the US Congress in July 1985, enabling the Reagan administration to provide covert aid to UNITA. In October 1985 the president of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, confirmed the arrival of Stinger missiles from the USA. South Africa then continued to provide direct military assistance to UNITA, including the training of semi-conventional forces and direct logistical assistance, according to Du Pisani to an amount of R400 million.<sup>30</sup>

In 1985 UNITA's activities were rapidly bringing Angola to a standstill and a major offensive against the heartland of UNITA in South-east Angola was launched to cut off UNITA from supplies from the SADF in Namibia. Support by the SADF to UNITA included the deployment of a mechanised unit and air attacks on the armoured columns of FAPLA.<sup>31</sup> The aim of the Angolan armed forces was to recapture the Cazombo salient and Mavinga from UNITA. Mavinga was intended to be used as a base area from which further offensives could be launched at the UNITA stronghold at Jamba in South-eastern Angola. The concern of the South African government was that UNITA could be defeated and that the Western Caprivi and the Kavango could be threatened by SWAPO. This fear resulted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Ibid., p.25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Du Pisani, 'Beyond the Transgariep'..., p.36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.15.

in increased support to UNITA, including artillery and air support. The Cazombo salient was occupied by FAPLA, but the main offensive was stopped by UNITA infantry with air support from the SADF. This prevented the base area of UNITA at Mavinga from being captured in 1985. In 1986 a similar offensive by FAPLA failed owing to a lack of fuel and spares, made worse by direct involvement of the SADF in raids on logistic facilities. Contrary to the MPLA's intentions, UNITA had not been defeated nor even temporarily neutralized. Moreover, the greater the pressure on UNITA the greater the support by the SADF to UNITA had become. This in turn resulted in increased support by the Soviet Union, as well as an increase in direct Cuban military involvement in Angola. From 1985 onwards logistical and combat assistance from South Africa increased substantially and subsequently South Africa was blamed for unsuccessful military operations by FAPLA against UNITA. The military operations by the PLAN were also subsequently confined to mainly Ovamboland as a result of UNITA's control of South-eastern Angola bordering the Kavango and Caprivi. To fight UNITA the MPLA had to deploy members of the PLAN to assist FAPLA forces. 32

After mid-1985, following a major decline in the home economy and widespread urban violence and sanctions, South Africa could no longer afford the same level of involvement in Angola and Namibia. A reorientation in policy became necessary. It became clear that growing military involvement in Angola could result in serious regional over-extension of resources. By mid-1986 South Africa had reassessed its policy on South-western Africa and realised that political ends would have to be clarified as events in Namibia would increasingly become linked with and dependent on the outcome of the war in Angola. It became clear that a strategy including support to UNITA and cross-border raids against SWAPO to create political freedom of action and to establish a moderate regime in Namibia had a limited chance of success and would place too heavy a burden on the resources of South Africa. The only alternative was a political settlement of the interlinked conflicts in Namibia and Angola.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>This synopsis is based on the version by Heitman, H-R. War in Angola, Ashanti, Gibraltar, 1990, p.10-19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Du Pisani, A. 'Beyond the Transgariep'..., p. 37.

#### 1.1.4 THE FINAL INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA

In 1986 important changes in the international environment appeared to create an opportunity to end conflict in the region through negotiations. Closer co-operation between the superpowers, the USA and Soviet Union, on regional issues, as well as domestic problems in South Africa, resulted in the South African government becoming increasingly vulnerable to influence and pressures for changes in domestic and foreign policy. Eventually the government decided on a more pragmatic attitude on the independence of Namibia. But the presence of a large Cuban military force in Angola and the insurgency in Namibia were major stumbling blocks which had to be removed.<sup>34</sup>

In 1987 a renewed offensive was launched by FAPLA against UNITA-occupied territory in South-eastern Angola and the SADF intervened in reaction to a request by UNITA. There were clear indications at the beginning of 1987 that FAPLA and the Cubans were busy with preparations to recapture UNITA-controlled areas in South-eastern Angola. By July 1987 FAPLA and Cuba had begun area operations east of the Cuito river to establish a bridgehead from where an offensive could be launched to capture Mavinga. A second phase would have involved the establishment of a firm base at Mavinga from where an operation could be launched to capture the UNITA headquarters at Jamba. Cubans were in control of the planning and execution of the operation and were involved even on tactical/operational level. Cubans manned the anti-aircraft weapons and were part of a tank force. Cuban aircraft operated under their own ground control radar which was deployed with forward formations. On 14 August 1987, eight FAPLA/Cuban brigades supported by artillery, tanks and antiaircraft launched the offensive from the bridgehead at Cuito Cuanavale along two advance routes. From July 1987 to December 1987 the SADF intervened to stop the offensive against Mavinga and Jamba. Heavy fighting took place in the vicinity of the Lomba river and the offensive was finally stopped on 3 October 1987 when 47 Brigade was destroyed by the SADF and UNITA. The enemy was then forced back to Cuito Cuanavale. In October 1987 the offensive was eventually stopped by a combined SADF and UNITA force.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Crocker, op. cit.; and Debates (Hansard) Address by P.W.Botha..., col. 15963.

After the forced withdrawal of FAPLA forces the SADF advanced toward Cuito Cuanavale to prevent a further military threat against UNITA-occupied territory. The SADF had to leave the battlefield in such a way that the enemy could not regroup and launch a renewed offensive. UNITA had to base its future defence on Cuito Cuanavale and therefore the SADF decided to exploit and strengthen the Cuito river as an obstacle.<sup>35</sup> As the situation developed the SADF adapted its force levels but the maximum number of troops deployed at any stage was a brigade of about 3000 men with among others, G5 artillery and tanks. Operations Hooper and Packer were launched from December 1987 to March 1988 to put UNITA in a favourable position in Angola and Operation Displace took place from March 1988 to August 1988 to prevent a FAPLA offensive in 1988. By March 1988, after several battles in the vicinity of the Chambinga river, FAPLA was forced into a bridgehead around Cuito Cuanavale. The operation was then stopped because of considerations such as the cost-effectiveness of the operation and the effective defence of Cuito Cuanavale by a joint FAPLA/Cuban force.<sup>36</sup>

In May 1988 the appearance of the 50th Cuban Division in south-western Angola was interpreted by South Africa as a serious threat that could culminate in an invasion of Namibia. Units of the Citizen Force were mobilized, together with units of the SADF already deployed in South-western Angola, to form 10 Division. The purpose was to deter Cuban forces from entering Namibia. Skirmishes between elements of 50 Division and the SADF near Techipa in Angola, as well as an artillery bombardment of Cahama by the SADF, resulted in severe Cuban casualties. These were followed by a Cuban air strike launched at targets at Calueque dam in which ten SADF soldiers died. Subsequently the risk of escalation of the military situation became unacceptable to everybody involved in the conflict.

On 1 June 1988, during the Moscow summit, the United States and the Soviet Union announced their support for 29 September as a target date for reaching an agreement on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Interview on 23 February 1993 with General Geldenhuys, former Commanding Officer SWATF, Chief of the Army, and Chief of the South African Defence Force during the intervention of 1987 and 1988, (henceforth 'Geldenhuys Interview').

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Contending explanations of events will be discussed in Chapter 4.

withdrawal of all foreign troops from Angola and the independence of Namibia. On 20 July 1988 South Africa, Angola and Cuba announced the ratification of an agreement on principles, which called for the staged and total withdrawal of Cuban troops and the implementation of Resolution 435. On 5 August 1988 the Protocol of Geneva was signed, stipulating inter alia the complete withdrawal of the SADF from Angola by 1 September 1988 and the northward redeployment of Cuban forces and SWAPO guerrillas. This protocol was honoured for all practical purposes and on 22 December 1988 a trilateral agreement was signed by Angola and Cuba on the one hand and South Africa on the other. It made provision for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978, which included stipulations for the withdrawal of all military forces of South Africa from Namibia and the independence of Namibia. On the same day a bilateral agreement was signed between Cuba and Angola for the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola.<sup>37</sup>

The SADF completed its withdrawal from Angola on 30 Aug 88. After the final military actions in April 1989 against a SWAPO invasion, the SADF units in Namibia were restricted to base until their final withdrawal from Namibia in November 1989. The SADF could therefore not react when FAPLA launched a renewed offensive against UNITA in 1989. UNITA was subsequently put under such pressure that the movement could not influence events in Namibia, while freedom of action was created for SWAPO. In November 1989 elections took place in Namibia, resulting in a clear SWAPO majority. On 27 March 1990 Namibia became independent under a SWAPO government. By 1 July 1992 all Cuban units had been withdrawn from Angola.

#### 1.1.5 SUMMARY

If military intervention by the South African government in Angola is seen in historical context it is found that the perpetuation of control over Namibia was a vital end envisaged

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>The course of diplomatic events is well covered by the United States of America, Department of State, *The US and Angola, 1974-88: A Chronology' (a Department of State Bulletin of February 1989)*, as well as a brochure issued by the Republic of South Africa, Department of Foreign Affairs, *The Independence of Namibia and Cuban Troop Withdrawal*, State Printers, Pretoria, 1989.

in military intervention. Throughout the history of the conflict in South-western Africa, international and domestic circumstances restricted the use of military power by South Africa. This was also experienced during the campaign of 1987 and 1988 when international and domestic circumstances had a decisive influence on the choice of political ends and the means to pursue them.

## 1.2 THE PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES<sup>38</sup>

The nearly 74 years of South African rule over Namibia and the use of military force by the South African government to promote its political ends created many unanswered questions that need further investigation. Subsequently the approach to the study, the research problem and hypotheses will be discussed.

#### 1.2.1 APPROACH TO THE STUDY

The approach to the study is determined by the historic nature of the data and the requirements for the selection of a valid research problem. The view of Garnett,<sup>39</sup> that strategy is the rational and artful behaviour of competitors whose aim it is to win, and the realisation that it could be made applicable to events in South-western Africa, initially stimulated thought on the approach to the study.

A further motive for the study was the proposition by Osgood that military strategy is the overall plan for utilizing the capacity for armed coercion, in conjunction with the economic, diplomatic and psychological instruments of power, in order to support foreign policy effectively by overt, covert and tacit means.<sup>40</sup> This proposition provided further motivation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>The work by Leedy, P.D. *Practical Research*, Macmillan, New York, 1989, provided valuable guidelines for this part of the study.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Garnett, J. Theories of Peace and Security, MacMillan, London, 1970, p.15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>Osgood, R.E. *NATO: The Entangling Alliance*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962, p.5.

for an ends-means approach to be followed in the study of South African intervention in Angola.

It was decided that an ends means-approach would be followed as it provides valuable criteria for selecting problems and relevant data. The nature of the study deals with ends and means as part of political life, the reasons for these, as well as the interpretation of phenomena such as the desires and purposes of political actors; the reasons for actions; the methods employed and limiting conditions.<sup>41</sup> The approach does not deal with political processes, but with the results of the processes in the form of ends and means as stipulated by policy. This provides valuable delimitations for selection of the problem and identifying relevant data. The endsmeans approach as discussed by Van Dyke is descriptive and does not readily provide for an explanation of phenomena, but if political ends and means are described, together with causes and limiting conditions, the interpretation of the facts can lead to explanatory conclusions.<sup>42</sup>

## 1.2.2 THE PROBLEM

The aim of the research was to determine the relationship between the intervention of the SADF from 1987 to 1988 in Angola, and the political ends of the South African government. The analyses must eventually lead to the description of this relationship. The ultimate research problem to be solved, or question to be answered was: What was the relationship between the use by the South African government of military force in Angola and the government's political ends? In order to achieve this, a distinction will be made between ends and means, as well as between categories of ends (see par. 4 for definitions of concepts). In this regard the following subproblems will have to be considered:

(a) What was the relationship between the ultimate political ends, the intermediate political ends of the South African government and changes in the international and domestic environments,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>Van Dyke, V. *Political Science : A Philosophical Analysis*, Stanford University, California, 1960, p.117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p.155.

- (b) What was the relationship between South Africa's intervention in Angola and the political ends regarding Namibia?
- (c) Were any implications for theoretical consideration revealed by the empirical study?

#### 1.2.3 HYPOTHESES

Initially successful South African operations in Angola against FAPLA and the subsequent escalation of the conflict from 1987 to 1988 were directed at the maintenance of UNITA as a viable military force that would be in a favourable position to share power in Angola or even take control of the Angolan government, which would be beholden to the South African government. A government such as this would, it was hoped, be obliged to exclude SWAPO from maintaining bases and facilities in Angola. UNITA could dominate an important part of the Angola/Namibia border area to prevent SWAPO guerrillas from intervening in the political processes in Namibia. Against the background of this explanation the following hypothesis will be tested: The employment of military force in Angola in 1987 and 1988 can be explained as a response to requirements of national interests as perceived by the South African government who wished to create secure conditions for the installation of a government in Namibia that would not be hostile to the South African government.

## 1.3 <u>DEFINITION OF MAIN CONCEPTS</u>

Although there are many definitions for the concepts used, the following definitions will be used for the purpose of the thesis:

- 1.3.1 <u>Military Intervention</u>. The employment of military force by an external actor in the domestic disputes of a country.
- 1.3.2 <u>Political Ends</u>. The hierarchy of ultimate political ends, intermediate political ends and immediate aims.

- 1.3.3 <u>Ultimate Political Ends</u>. Those ever-present and sometimes unformulated national interests, based on the core values and interests of society or a specific community within society, pursued by policy makers in order to ensure national security of the state or the self-preservation of an interest group within the state.
- 1.3.4 <u>Intermediate Political Ends</u>. Those medium and long term goals formally stated by governments or interest groups as part of foreign policy, for the purpose of creating ideal political conditions within a specific time limit.
- 1.3.5 <u>Immediate Aims</u>. The desired political effect of specific foreign policy operations, including the immediate aims of military operations.
- 1.3.6 <u>Military Objective</u>. The physical object of action taken, e.g. a definite tactical feature, the seizure and/or holding of which is essential to the commanders plan.
- 1.3.6 <u>Limited War</u>. A military campaign taking place under deliberate restrictions on the use of military means, ends to be achieved and limitations on destruction.
- 1.3.7 <u>Escalation</u>. The increase in the intensity of military action, expansion over a wider geographical area or additional military campaigns.
- 1.3.8 <u>Internal War</u>. A war between contenders for political power in a state where violence dominates political processes.
- 1.3.9 <u>Domestic Circumstances</u>. Those political, economic, social and security conditions, as well as leadership within a state, influencing decisions on political ends to be pursued.
- 1.3.10 <u>International Circumstances</u>. International trends influencing domestic circumstances and subsequently political decision-making within the state.
- 1.3.11 <u>Military Force</u>. The military forces available to the South African government, including the SA Army, SA Air Force, SA Navy, SWATF and UNITA.

1.3.12 <u>Deterrence</u>. The maintenance and deployment of military capabilities in order to persuade an adversary not to employ or escalate the use of its military force.

### 1.4 **DELIMITATIONS**

The National Party from 1948 to 1989 will serve as unit of analysis regarding ultimate political ends. The government under P.W. Botha from 1978 to 1989, will serve as unit of analysis regarding intermediate goals on South-western Africa.

The thesis will not only deal with the characteristics of the ends pursued, but also with limiting conditions that influenced the political ends sought and the employment of military means by the South African government. The domestic environment and international environments in 1987 and 1988 will therefore serve as further units for analysing limiting conditions.

The SADF and UNITA will serve as units of analysis regarding military force. Apart from describing the major characteristics of such forces, limiting conditions, including hostile actions of enemies like SWAPO FAPLA and Cuba, will also be described.

The discussion of the characteristics of military force will be mostly on the departmental and operational level. An attempt will be made to explain the interaction between international, domestic, defence departmental and operational levels.

The discussion of the use of military force will take place in a historical context, but will focus on South African military involvement in Angola from 1987 until its withdrawal from Angola in 1988.

## 1.5 REASONS FOR THE RESEARCH

There is a need for a comprehensive and scientific analysis of events in South-western Africa which can serve as a basis for further scientific research on the subject as well as related theoretical work. Previous research with similar or related titles was restricted to academic

papers of limited scope and mainly based on press reports and personal impressions, published works for commercial or propaganda purposes and unpublished official top secret accounts were also of limited scope. No scientifically founded paper or more extensive study with a similar title has been published yet. The subject under discussion will therefore be original as an academic study.

The events from 1987 to 1988 present one with concrete examples of the interaction between political and military events. Now that the outcome of the interaction between military operations and negotiations in South-western Africa is known, conclusions may be drawn.

## 1.6 FRAMEWORK

The thesis will be presented in six chapters. The aim of chapter 2 will be to present a body of theory that can serve as a guide to the inquiry. After the evaluation of various theories on the relationship between political ends and military intervention a review of empirical literature will be presented. Indicators will be identified as a further guide to inquiry.

Chapter three will deal with the connection between the ultimate political ends and intermediate political goals of the South African government, as well as conditions in the international and domestic environments that influenced the identification of political ends. The historic values and interests of the white South African society that determined the ultimate political ends regarding Namibia, as well as the resulting intermediate political ends, as these manifested themselves and changed in the era of P.W. Botha, will be discussed. The causes for the adaptation of intermediate goals will be presented.

Chapter four will deal with the course of the military intervention by the SADF in Angola in 1987 and 1988. The intervention in 1987, the subsequent escalation of the conflict by the SADF and Cuba, as well as the success or failure in reaching immediate military objectives, will be discussed.

Chapter five will deal with the consequences of the intervention in order to determine the relationship of the political ends of the South African government in 1987 and 1988 regarding Namibia, and the military intervention.

The final chapter will consist of a summary of data and findings in the previous chapters. Final conclusions will be presented in an attempt to solve the research problem. Recommendations will be made regarding further research to be done.

## 1.7 THE COLLECTION AND TREATMENT OF DATA

#### 1.7.1 THE MAINTENANCE OF ETHICAL STANDARDS

The study presents a particular challenge regarding the maintenance of ethical standards. The author was privileged to have been part of SADF involvement in Angola and Namibia from sub-unit level and later served on the staff of the Chief of the SADF. Although this personal exposure poses the underlying danger of bias, the student took special care to ensure that this experience was only used to improve insight into events. Eventually it only contributed to the maintenance of scientific standards.

Interviews with prominent officials and military leaders closely involved in the political events were conducted, mostly to verify facts contained in, and conclusions reached in the relevant literature. Particular care had to be taken to maintain confidentiality and to account for the personal views of these persons.

Official procedures regarding the treatment of classified material were followed but the SANDF did not forbid the inclusion of any information. This contributed to the maintenance of the required scientific standards.

## 1.7.2 COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

Based on an initial review of published material, the resulting hypotheses, selected and defined variables, the conceptual framework and selected indicators, a pilot study was

undertaken in the form of interviews with selected people, representing different viewpoints. The aim of this pilot study was to ensure that the right questions were being asked. In this regard Mr Sean Cleary (former advisor to the South African negotiating team regarding the independence of Namibia and Cuban troop withdrawal), Dr Vladimir Lebedev (former Political Advisor to the Soviet mission in Angola), Advocate Louis Pienaar (the Administrator General of South Africa in Namibia before Namibian independence) and General Jannie Geldenhuys (Chief of the SADF during the period under discussion) presented valuable pointers.

Data was then collected from available literature, specifically concentrating on the work of scholars and participants as the 'research population'. In view of the broad scope of available material in this regard, it was decided to use the publications of participants, scholars and official publications, representing as many different views as possible, as 'samples'.

Access to primary sources posed no problem. Permission for access to all available classified material was granted by the SADF. Similar permission was, however, not granted by the Department of Foreign Affairs. After discussions with Angolan officers it was concluded that no documentation would be available from Angola in the near future and that the Angolan version of the history of the war would probably have to be based on personal accounts. For practical reasons, and because the case study focused on the role of South Africa, it was decided that access to Soviet and Cuban archives would be unnecessary and not cost-effective. The absence of this material was compensated for by personal interviews with Angolan officers visiting South Africa and publications of the viewpoints of participants such as President Fidel Castro.

### 1.7.3 EVALUATION OF DATA

The following criteria for admissibility were established before data were arranged:<sup>43</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>The ideas of Barzun, J. & Graff, H. *The Modern Researcher*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1977 were used for the establishment of these criteria.

- It must deal with the explanation of facts presented, including causes and implications.
- The reasons for differences from other accounts should be clear.
- An awareness of historic time and space should be evident.
- The chronology of historic events should be explained in prose form. A simple list of events without explanation was regarded as of little value.

Textual criticism of other sources and comparisons enjoyed preferential treatment. The applicability of the data to the research problem, conceptual framework and hypotheses, as well as indicators, was ensured before the data was classified according to the predetermined classifications.

The reliability of the source was determined by establishing as far as possible

- the distance and barriers in communication between events and the source;
- the probability of selective reporting;
- the level of persuasiveness; and
- the personal background, including qualifications, of the source.

The accuracy of data was then determined by establishing correlation with other reliable data, the degree of explanation inherent in findings and by judging/sensing what was wrong, good or suspect regarding the data.

#### 1.7.4 INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Sufficient accurate data, obtained from reliable sources, was finally integrated to determine the frequency of similar comments on the association between the established variables in the hypotheses and propositions in the theoretical framework. This enabled the researcher to make certain generalizations and conclusions about the meaning and implications of means applied and ends pursued in an attempt to test the hypotheses and to solve the problem, as well as to identify further needs for investigation.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The ends-means approach, as discussed in Chapter 1, requires that an interrelated set of propositions be formulated to describe and explain the relationship between ends and means, as well as the variables influencing them.<sup>1</sup> Concepts that are to be discussed must therefore be organised in a conceptual scheme that will include propositions on interrelationships to explain certain phenomena,<sup>2</sup> to present limitations on the range of facts that were researched, to define the specialized vocabulary used by the strategist, to develop a system of classification,<sup>3</sup> and to provide propositions that can be empirically tested.<sup>4</sup> The aim of this chapter is therefore to establish a conceptual framework, based on a literature study.

Theory on ends and means in the political sciences is not new. Only those propositions that could make a direct contribution to the solving of the research problems have, however, been selected. Empirical literature of scientific value and relevant to the problem is restricted and mostly representative of the views of the different actors involved in the conflict.

Based on the research problem, as stated in Chapter 1, a review of selected literature will be presented. The report will be based on propositions and definitions by selected scholars and participants, explaining the relationship between political ends and military intervention. The first part will deal with theories and propositions by contemporary scholars on the concepts of political ends and military intervention. The second part will be a broad overview

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Walizer, M.H. & Wiener, P.L. Research Methods & Analysis: Searching for Relationships, Harper & Row, New York, 1978, p.506.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Van Dyke, V. *Political Science : A Philosophical Analysis*, Stanford University, California, 1960, p.100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Goode, W.J. & Hatt, P.K., *Methods in Social Research*, McGraw-Hill, New-York, 1952, p.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Walizer & Wiener, op. cit., p.78.

of empirical literature. Finally the indicators that served as guide to further empirical investigation will be formulated and a conceptual scheme will be suggested.

## 2.2 MILITARY INTERVENTION

In order to analyze South Africa's intervention in Angola, it is important to review certain propositions by scholars regarding military intervention, as well as their political ends. The following pages will deal with selected propositions on military intervention and the motives for these, especially propositions that can be made applicable to African conditions.

### 2.2.1 PROPOSITIONS ON MILITARY INTERVENTION AND POLITICAL ENDS

Art offered a description of military intervention by categorizing the interrelationship between military force and the purposes it can serve.<sup>5</sup> A conceptual scheme was offered which proved to be a valuable guide to further conceptualization.

Type of Force	Purpose	Mode	Targets	Characteristics
Defensive	Against attacks	Peaceful or physical	Primarily military Secondarily industrial	Dissuasive or aggressive
Deterrent.	Prevent adversary from initiating first strike	Peaceful	1.Civilian 2.Industrial 3.Military	Threats of retaliation and second strike preparations
Compelling	To stop or initiate action by an adversary	Peaceful and physical	Civilian, military or industrial	Justified on defensive grounds
Swaggering	Prestige	Peaceful	None	Can be threatening

These propositions are directly related to variables identified in the research problem. Firstly they put the ends of military intervention in a broader perspective. Furthermore, Art shows that military intervention is not the only way in which military force can be employed. The identification of targets is an indication of what the immediate aim of intervention can be.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Art, R.J. 'To What Ends Military Power?' *International Security*, vol. 4, Spring 1980, p.3-35.

Frederick S. Pearson presented valuable propositions on external military intervention and domestic disputes in a clear conceptual scheme, providing a useful and relevant discussion as guidance to the scholar<sup>6</sup>. He defined foreign military intervention as the movement of troops or military forces by one independent country or a group of countries across the border of another independent country, or actions by troops already stationed in the independent country. Pearson classified intervention according to influence (hostile or friendly), political circumstances, or issues of concern to the intervening government. He listed several motivations for intervention, including:

- territorial acquisition;
- the protection of social groups in the target country; and
- the promotion of an ideology or belief system.

Furthermore, he stated that domestic conflict in one state might influence the interests of another state and cause it to send troops, or the leaders of the state might seek external conflict diversion and send troops externally. Furthermore, states might use fear of negative influence from a neighbouring territory as justification for an intervention to pursue their own interests.

Military intervention in the domestic conflicts of other states entails considerable costs and risks:

- The 'wrong' faction might win.
- Intrigue and interference might be revealed publicly, causing reactions detrimental to the cause of the intervener.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pearson, F.S. 'Foreign Military Intervention and Domestic Disputes' *International Studies Quarterly*, 18: 3, September 1974, p.259-289.

Domestic conflict may escalate and intensify.

The concepts used by Pearson can be useful in determining indicators and collecting data regarding the intermediate ends of the South African government, especially if the propositions of scholars regarding political ends are taken into consideration. It presents a clear guide to further conceptualization and explanation of South African intervention in Angola and the relationship of this with the immediate ends regarding Namibia. It will therefore play an important part in the development of a conceptual scheme for this study.

According to Holsti military intervention as a method of promoting or putting down revolutions inspired by nationalist and liberal movements, has become a common phenomenon since the nineteenth century. In the more or less 200 revolutions that occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, some form of foreign intervention took place. Even weak nations did not fail to use subversion and military means to influence the domestic politics of other countries to achieve ends or promote political values. This proved to be generally ineffective, however, because of public opposition to external operations, as well as inexperience and restricted capabilities on the part of sponsoring states. As a means of achieving ends, defending interests or promoting social values, governments may organize, train and arm a group of foreign dissidents to conduct guerrilla warfare or subversion in the home country of the dissidents. Contact with an external group by a government eventually becomes a commitment and, if the external group is seriously threatened by another force, the supporting government may use military force to intervene. A combination of diplomatic interference, demonstration of force, clandestine political action, subversion and support to guerrilla warfare are important techniques for influencing or coercing other nations and exploiting or settling domestic crises in unstable political systems.<sup>7</sup>

If the 'framework for analysis' by Holsti is compared with the work of other scholars such as Art and Pearson, a conceptual framework may be formed to serve as a mechanism for the collection of data related to the research problem. It also stimulates introspection and allows

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Holsti, K.J. *International Politics : A Framework for Analysis*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1983, p. 244-266.

for the testing of possible empirical manifestation of propositions regarding South African involvement in South-western Africa, especially regarding the long-range ends of the National Party government, the substance of intermediate goals and the core values and interests directing the use of military force by South Africa in Angola. Empirical examples were, however, taken from the whole international system by the authors and are not always applicable to Africa.

## 2.2.2 MILITARY INTERVENTION AND POLITICAL ENDS IN AFRICA

The restriction on the studies of Art, Holsti and Pearson in that they do not deal with intervention in an African environment, was to an extent overcome by the analysis by Zartman, who presented a concise framework on the techniques of military intervention in West Africa.<sup>8</sup> After distinguishing between violent and non-violent techniques, violent techniques were presented according to the following scheme:

Instrument	Aim	
Regular Army	Replacement or Destruction of the Authority of the Target Government	
Guerrillas		
Terrorist Agents	Weakening of Authority of Target Government	

Zartman stated that the pursuit of national interest depends on the development of a hierarchy of values and the realistic appraisal of needs, goals, threats and opportunities. Successful national interest policies depend on the ability to compromise at the proper time.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding environmental influences, the concepts were made applicable to Africa. In this regard the institutionalized charismatic nature of leadership and decision-making, as focused in the presidency, was pointed out. The prominence of the cabinet and political party officials, as well as advisors in the military and foreign ministries, were emphasised.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Zartmann, I.W. *International Relations in the New Africa*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1966; and 'Intervention Among Developing States' *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 22, 1986, p.188-197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Zartmann, International Relations in the New Africa..., p.63.

Zartman viewed public opinion on foreign policy as the opinion of the elite. He proposed that choices in African politics are severely limited by the external environment.<sup>10</sup>

A further contribution to the theory of military intervention was made by Dunér. <sup>11</sup> Analysing military interventions of the 1970s among 'less developed countries', including the intervention of South Africa, Cuba and the Soviet Union in Angola; that of Zaire in Burundi, as well as that of several countries in Rhodesia, he found that 'less developed countries' were predominant as interveners and that their lack of military resources did not hold them back as interveners. Even small developing countries can be important interveners.

Conclusions by Hughes and May on the use of African armies as an instrument of foreign policy in relations between states, disclosed that civilian regimes are more likely to use their national armies on external missions than military regimes. These conclusions also indicated that financial constraints need not prevent external military intervention in Africa and that technical constraints may be more important. Furthermore they found that domestic instability and economic crisis encourage military intervention by super powers or other non-subregional middle powers.<sup>12</sup>

In 1985 Neil Macfarlane analyzed a number of cases of coercive military intrusion into internal political conflicts in the third world, including the intervention of South Africa, Zaire and the Soviet-backed Cuba in Angola; Tanzania in Uganda; Libya in Chad; Somalia, South-Yemen, the Soviet Union and Cuba in Ethiopia; as well as forces of the OAU and France in Chad, seeking to determine the sources, patterns and consequences of such intrusions. He found a growing incidence of intervention by Third World states in the affairs of their neighbours and reduced capability of the super powers to control the course and outcome of Third World conflicts. Furthermore, military intervention was executed by means of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>*Ibid*., p.65-81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Dunér, B. Military Intervention in Civil Wars, Gower, London, 1985, p. 168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Hughes, A and May, R. 'Armies on Loan: Towards an Explanation of Trans-national Military Intervention Among Black African States: 1960-1985' in Baynham, S. (ed.) *Military Power and Politics in Black Africa*, Croom Helm, New York, 1986, p.177-202.

combat roles of either the regular military forces of the external power or of irregulars acting in the interests of the intervening power.<sup>13</sup> Macfarlane continued to describe the factors conducive to intervention, factors constraining intervention, and factors triggering intervention:

	Factors Conducive to Intervention	Factors Constraining Intervention	Factors Triggering Intervention
The Target Country	Deep internal divisions in the target country	Internal stability in the target state and opposition to external intervention.	Response to the request of a client in the target state whose survival is at stake
The International Community	Regional Instability  Ideological divisions among states in the region  Asymmetry in the distribution of power	The risk of escalation including super power involvement and counter-intervention by extra-regional powers  Legal constraints (international law and UN Charter/Resolutions)	
The Intervening State	Unpopular Governments Incapable Governments Military dominance in Decision-making	Available military force including logistic capabilities  Economic Constraints  Other domestic constraints like a lack of public support or opposition to military operations.	The situation poses a serious risk to the interests of the external actor  The emergence of a new opportunity for the furthering of interests of the external actor

He furthermore identified ideology, influence, status and prestige, strategic motivations based on political interests, and economic considerations as motives of military intervention.

Regarding the outcome of the intervention he emphasised that success in the longer term must be judged in terms of the durability of the political solution, the degree to which the internal forces against which the intervention is aimed remain active, the nature of the political and military advantages gained by the intervener, as well as the cost to the intervener. The criteria for successful intervention is a well-integrated target society, popular support and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Macfarlane, N. *Intervention and Regional Security*, Adelphi Papers No 196, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1985, passim.

military proficiency, limited ends and little likelihood of counter-intervention. Defence expenditure, refugees, casualties, internal displacement, economic costs, a short-term stabilizing effect on the target country and negative impact on international relations in general are consequences listed by Macfarlane.

The views of Zartman, Hughes and May, as well as Macfarlane can, to a considerable extent, be made applicable to the situation of South Africa in Namibia and Angola. If the explanations of the scholars are taken into consideration the following questions can serve as indicators for testing the hypothesis as stated for this thesis.

What were the motives of South African military involvement in South-western Africa?

What global trends have influenced the decisions/compromises on political ends and military intervention since 1986?

What were the constraints of domestic conditions, especially leadership and public opinion, on South African military intervention in Angola and the political ends to be achieved?

What precipitated the South African intervention in Angola in 1987?

What technical/occupational constraints were experienced in the execution of the military intervention in Angola?

Were political ends achieved? What were the other consequences of the intervention?

## 2.2.3 SUMMARY

Based on the theoretical views of scholars that can make a direct contribution to the study, a conceptual scheme can now be established. Indicators have already been identified in the form of questions. The author will attempt to answer these questions by making conclusions from relevant data. The framework of indicators furthermore served as mechanism for the identification of empirical literature and data and contributed to the expansion of insight into

military force and political ends in general, and in South-western Africa specifically. As it discussed the interrelationship of military force and political ends the following conceptual scheme was used as instrument to guide research.

National Interests	International and Domestic Factors Influencing Military Intervention?	The Impact of Intervention on Ultimate Political Ends
Military conquest?		
Welfare of the community?		
Security and territorial integrity?		
Trade and other economic interests?		
Prestige?		
National Power and Influence?		
National Survival?		
Independence?		
Perpetuation of 'Apartheid'?		

Intermediate Goals of South African Military Intervention in 1987?	Triggers?	Methods and Targets?		Goals Achieved?
Occupation of Angolan Territory?	Threat to the	Conventional	Guerrilla	
the protection of UNITA?  survival of UNITA?		Military?		
Victory over the Angolan Armed Forces?	A serious	Industrial?		
The protection of the DTA against the activities of SWAPO from Angolan soil?	security risk for Namibia?	Civilian?		
The protection of Namibia against Angolan intervention?	Opportunity to further South			
Destabilisation of Angola?	Africa interests in the region?			
Maintenance of the regional power balance/regional stability?				

## 2. 3 A REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

A significant body of literature is available on the broad spectrum of the political ends of the South African government regarding South-western Africa, marked by diverse and contradictory perspectives. Various dimensions can be distinguished, of which the nature of persuasiveness and explanation is considered most important. Linked to ideological

positions, nine schools of thought can be identified in the available literature.<sup>14</sup> The related literature can broadly be categorized as anti-Western/anti-South African, pro-official South African and compromise literature.

#### 2.3.1 ANTI-WESTERN AND ANTI-SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT LITERATURE

Anti-Western literature links 'apartheid' to Western values and interests. This school of thought makes the interpretation that South African foreign policy is in the service of Western imperialism and therefore undesirable. Strong conflict terms are used and different levels of persuasiveness can be found. The literature varies from highly descriptive to highly prescriptive. Explanations are in terms of empirical generalizations derived from Marxist theory.

United Nations resolutions, publications by the United Nations Institute for Namibia, UNESCO<sup>15</sup>, the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF)<sup>16</sup>, Campbell<sup>17</sup> and Brittain<sup>18</sup> are examples in this regard. This category also includes the highly biased accounts of Castro,<sup>19</sup> as well as Soviet views.<sup>20</sup> The views that are normally put

These categories are a simplified version of categories of literature on South African foreign policy towards her region as identified by Muller, M.E. 'n Oorweging van die Literatuur oor die Suid Afrikaanse Regionale Beleid in die Era van Konflik' *Politikon*, 19: 2, June 1992, p.41-59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Katjavivi, P.H. op. cit., passim.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>International Development Aid Fund, Apartheid's Army in Namibia, London, 1982.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Campbell, H. 'The Military Defeat of the South Africans in Angola' *Monthly Review*, April 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Brittain, V. 'Cuba and South Africa' in *New Left Review*, no. 172, November/December, 1988, p. 117-123; and *Hidden Lives, Hidden Deaths, South Africa's Crippling of the Continent*, Faber & Faber, London, 1988.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Castro, F. Direct translation of a speech on Radio Havana on 10 December 1988, *The Caribbean*, 12 December 1988; and Barber, S. Speech by President Fidel Castro to the Cuban Council of State on 19 July 1989, *Defence & Foreign Affairs*, September 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Devitt, A. 'Southern Africa and Soviet-American Talks' Novosti, May 1988.

forward are that the SADF lost the war in Angola and was forced to withdraw by Cuban forces. The literature is secondary in nature and mostly based on newspaper reports and discussions with individual participants.

Anti-South African government literature varies from very critical towards the West to pro-Western<sup>21</sup> and can even include compromise viewpoints. It is, however, clearly opposed to the South African government, mainly because of its policy of 'apartheid'. The literature consists mostly of secondary sources that are clearly judgemental about South African foreign policy and sometimes even anti-imperialistic and anti-capitalistic, as well as Marxist. The literature is characterized by broad generalizations based on theory, the use of strong conflict terminology, prescriptiveness and persuasiveness. The emphasis is very much on the role of the 'apartheid establishment' in the use of force, as well as the 'dove-hawk' manifestation in South Africa. South African regional policy is described as the use of all possible instruments aimed at the subjection of the region to South Africa, either in the pursuit of capital or in the interest of white South Africans. This school of thought is mostly Afrocentric but can also include work by Western scholars, mainly to put South Africa's intervention in Angola within the global context.<sup>22</sup>

The most important work is that of Jaster,<sup>23</sup> who has written a series of articles and books mainly focusing on the role of the military in South African politics, as well as a comprehensive study closely related to the title of this thesis. This study presents a critical analysis of the Angolan and Namibian conflicts and the 1988 peace accords. The discussion of the interaction of states outside the region influencing events in the region and between super powers and countries in the region, as well as the impact of the war in 1987 and 1988

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Grundy K.W. *The Militarization of South African Politics*, Touris, London, 1986; and Davis, R & O'Meara, D. 'Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South Africa's Regional Policy since 1978' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11: 2, 1985.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Campbell, K.M. 'Southern Africa in Soviet Foreign Policy' Adelphi Papers 227, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, Winter 1987/88; Chalmers, S. 'Russians Pulling out of Angola' *Inside South Africa*, July 1988; and Falk, P.S. 'Cuba in Africa', *Foreign Affairs*, 65: 5, 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Jaster, op. cit., and Herbst, J. The Cuban Escalation in Angola and Namibian Independence, Paper presented at the University College of Los Angeles, October 1988.

on negotiations, provides many possible answers to the questions stated. Other examples of such literature are the work of Davis and O'Meara, which states that the motive of the South African 'Total National Strategy' was to maintain regional states in a position of weakness in order to dominate them. Grundy explained the enhanced role of the security establishment under the leadership of P.W. Botha and the 'National party loyalists' in political decision-making.

Literature opposed to South African military involvement in Angola and Namibia is also readily available. The articles by Ronald Dreyer<sup>24</sup> and Steven Metz<sup>25</sup> are good examples in this regard. The authors suggested that the severe economic constraints on South Africa and its military setback in Angola tilted the balance in favour of the independence of Namibia. Other literature that could be classified within this school of thought are the works of Legum, <sup>26</sup>Tötemeier, <sup>27</sup>and Vale, <sup>28</sup>

#### 2.3.3 PRO-SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

Pro-South African literature is mostly the work of scholars and participants who belonged to the 'security establishment' in South Africa and includes both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are dominated by 'total onslaught' literature, are critical of communism as well as the West and can be highly persuasive. The South African involvement in Namibia was seen as a necessary response by a reasonable and responsible government to a primarily communistic-inspired onslaught against the system in South Africa

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Dreyer, R. Namibia and Angola. The Search for Independence and Regional Security, 1966-1988, Graduate Institute for International Studies, Geneva, 1988.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Metz, S. 'Pretoria's Total Strategy and Low Intensity Warfare in Southern Africa' Comparative Strategy, 6: 4, 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Legum, C. 'The Continuing Crisis in Southern Africa' Africa Contemporary Record, 1983-84: Annual Survey and Documents, Africana, London, 1984.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Tötemeyer, G. et al. *Namibia in Perspective*, Council of Churches in Namibia, Windhoek, 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Vale, P. 'Regional Policy: The Compulsion to Incorporate' in J. Blumenfeld (ed.) South Africa in Crisis, Croom Helm, London, 1987.

and the combatting of communism with all available means. The ends of the South African government regarding Namibia were seen as assistance to 'pro-democratic' forces like UNITA and the DTA. Official documents of the SADF and the now defunct State Security Council<sup>29</sup> are obviously also classified in this category. The category can, however, include more balanced work like those of Cleary,<sup>30</sup> the Africa Institute of South Africa,<sup>31</sup> and Nel.<sup>32</sup> It can also include views by authors outside South Africa which correlate with official South African views.<sup>33</sup>

This category of literature also includes a vast array of military orders and debriefs regarding specific operations. The most important theme is that South Africa 'won the war' and that the use of the SADF was essential in the achievement of political ends. Original signals, however, provided valuable historic facts. Some debriefs by the SADF were highly critical of its own performance, as well as the performance of politicians, and were subsequently classified as confidential or secret.<sup>34</sup> Several accounts of the South African military operations are available at military colleges in South Africa in the form of educational staff papers. However, most of the accounts are biased and restricted to the personal experience

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Various documents were made available to the student, including material from the archives of the South African National Defense Force in Pretoria. The documents from the State Security Council were of very high quality and professional standard as the contents did not represent the unbalanced perception of a threat or 'total onslaught' against South Africa that is sometimes found in official documents.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Cleary, S. op. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Leistner & Esterhuysen, (Ed.) op. cit.; and Cornwell, op. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>McFarlane, S.N. and Nel, P. 'The Changing Soviet Approach to Regional Conflicts' *The Journal for Communist Studies*, 5: 2, June 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>United States of America, United States Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center (USAITAC), Cuba and Angola, The View from 1987 (paper presented by J.W. Turner at a conference in Miami, 10-14 December 1987).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African Defence Force, Army Headquarters, Lessons Learned During Conventional Operations in the Western Sub-Theatre (an unpublished confidential document); and Mutatis Mutandis, South African Air Force Headquarters, Lord, R. (ed.) From Fledgling to Eagle: An Analysis of SAAF Air Operations in Southern Africa from 1966 to 1989(an unpublished confidential document).

of individuals. The official history of the war since 1987, comparable to the work by Collyer on the campaign in Namibia in World War I, has not yet been written.<sup>35</sup>

An example of such literature is the book by General Geldenhuys.<sup>36</sup> In this personal account of the political and military activities concerning the war in South-western Africa he stressed that it was the task of the SADF to create order, stability and security for constitutional development to democracy and independence in Namibia. Other examples are the books by Heitman<sup>37</sup> and an article by Ackerman,<sup>38</sup> describing the military campaign of 1987 and 1988. Official literature also includes published official speeches and public statements by South African political and military leaders.<sup>39</sup>

#### 2.3.4 COMPROMISE LITERATURE

Compromise literature consist of a wide spectrum of literature, with mixed theoretical approaches, which mostly avoids taking up a point of view against the actors involved. The political science community is the audience and the material differs regarding persuasiveness. The importance of interests and co-operation is emphasised by a sometimes strong liberal-democratic element. The result is a more balanced point of view by an element in South Africa, aimed at influencing the South African government.

Compromise literature by scholars on the military campaign in Angola proved to be limited, probably owing to the absence of reliable primary sources, the result of the secret nature of South African involvement in Angola.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Collyer, J.J. op. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Geldenhuys, J. Dié Wat Wen, Van Schaik, Pretoria, 1993.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Heitmann, H-R. op. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Ackerman, J.T. op. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>The speeches by P.W. Botha in *Hansard*; speeches by the former Administrator General of Namibia (Mr L. Pienaar) at the Opening Session of the National Assembly, Windhoek, 24 February 1987; as well as several press statements by the Minister Of Defense, M.A. Malan and General Geldenhuys are examples in this regard.

Du Pisani provided a broad spectrum of literature and to an important extent succeeded in moving away from official viewpoints. Apart from a clear position on what the real political ends of the South Africa government were and the environmental conditions influencing decisions on South-western Africa, his explanation of the use of the SADF as a response to the needs of the national interests as perceived by the government of South Africa, provided valuable propositions to be tested.<sup>40</sup>

The work by Deon Geldenhuys allows essential insight into the international and domestic variables influencing the use of military force for political ends. 41 The views of Frankel 42 are a further example of compromise literature. Geldenhuys and Kotze discussed the importance of environmental factors outside the decision-making machinery and the phenomenon of indecision on the part of South African authorities. 43 They emphasise the South African military-industrial complex as political force but questioned the division between 'doves' and 'hawks' in the South African government. The work of Baynham on the role of the military in African context establishes an equilibrium in the sometimes purely European view of war and politics, and provides a valuable insight into the conditions in which military strategy and politics in Africa are practised. 44 The work of Seegers on civil-military relations in South Africa can also be of value, as it is critical, for example, about

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Military formations and units of the SADF will be indicated in *italics* to ensure a clear distinction to those of its adversaries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Heitman, H-R. op. cit.,p.43. Despite occasional one-sidedness and selective reporting, on behalf of the SADF the direct access Heitman had to official sources, as well as his ability to analyze military events, warranted the inclusion of information supplied by him for the purpose of comparison.

the views of Grundy and Jaster.<sup>45</sup> Further examples of this school of thought are the works by Olivier,<sup>46</sup> and Barratt<sup>47</sup>.

Compromise literature can also include unbiased views by authors outside South Africa. The synopsis under the editorship of Bearman on the broad scenario of the Angolan-South African conflict,<sup>48</sup> an article by Washington on the negotiations coinciding with military intervention,<sup>49</sup> and the book by Nuri on Cuban involvement,<sup>50</sup> are good examples in this regard. Books and articles by Chester Crocker proved to be of great value for solving the research problem.<sup>51</sup>

Throughout the thesis compromise literature like that of Du Pisani and Crocker will be compared with literature representing other schools of thought. When compared with the other literature directly and completely relevant to the research problem, ie the work of Dreyer (anti-Western), Jaster (anti-'apartheid') and General Geldenhuys (official view), a good synthesis can be formed on the interaction between military operations and political ends, as well as the influence of environmental conditions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup>Seegers, A. 'The Military in South Africa: A Comparison and Critique' South Africa International, 16: 4, 1985.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Olivier, G.C. 'Recent Developments in South African Foreign Policy' *Optima*, 36: 4, 1988; and in Van Vuuren, D.J. et al. (eds.), *South Africa: The Challenge of Reform*, Owen Burgess, Pinetown, 1988.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>Barratt, J. South Africa and its Neighbours: Co-operation or Conflict?, The South African Institute for International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Bearman, S. Southern Africa - Solving Problems, Strategic Survey, 1988-89, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>Washington, S. 'The Southern African Negotiations Mix', *Transafrica Forum*, 2:4, 1985.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Nuri, M.U. Cuban Policy in Africa: The Limits of the Proxy Model, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, 1990.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Crocker, op. cit.; and 'South Africa: A Strategy for Change' Foreign Affairs, 59: 2, 1980. The literature by Dr. Chester Crocker, being an experienced academic and participant in political events, proved to be of great value to this study.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

Selected propositions provided indicators and a conceptual scheme that served as guide for scientific inquiry. Sufficient empirical literature is available to answer the questions stated in the scheme. By comparing the different schools of thought on what the political ends of South Africa were, as well as views on the actual military campaign and achievement of ends, an objective report could be presented. In Chapter 3 the contents of anti-Western/anti-'apartheid' literature, pro-South African literature and compromise literature will be taken into consideration to identify the ultimate ends and intermediate political goals of the South African government regarding South-western Africa. In Chapter 4 the official accounts of the South African military intervention in Angola and its relationship to the immediate political ends identified in Chapter 3 will be compared with other accounts.

# CHAPTER 3: THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL ENDS REGARDING SOUTH-WESTERN AFRICA

## 3.1 <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

In the previous chapter various schools of thought on South African military intervention in Angola and the political object or ends involved were outlined. The aim of this chapter is to elucidate the political ends of the South African government regarding South-western Africa.

Firstly the ultimate as well as intermediate ends of the South African government regarding military intervention in Angola will be described. The analyses of ultimate ends will be undertaken against the background of historic interests. Intermediate goals will be described within the context of international and domestic circumstances that prevailed during 1987, the year the final South African military intervention in Angola began.

The international and domestic environments have been well researched by a wide range of scholars with often conflicting viewpoints. An effort has been made to include a wide variety of views.

#### 3.2 NAMIBIA AS A FOCUS OF NATIONAL INTERESTS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

In order to understand the political ends that led to the South African military intervention in Angola of 1987, it is important to understand the values and interests that shaped the formulation of goals and means to achieve these. Accordingly, the following part of this chapter will deal with the basic national interests that formed the perception of a 'total onslaught', the promotion of 'apartheid' as an ultimate political end, as well as the creation of a protected 'frontier' to ensure the security of South Africa.

### 3.2.1 SECURING SOUTH AFRICA AGAINST THE 'TOTAL ONSLAUGHT'

The Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1983) purported to state the 'official values' of the Republic. Christian values, 'civilized norms', the protection of the freedom and integrity of the country, the maintenance of law and order, the self-determination of population groups and people, world peace in association with all peace-loving people, as well as the desire to give South Africa a constitution that provided for elected and responsible forms of government and which was best suited to the traditions, history and circumstances of the land, were the most important values mentioned.

The 'national aims' of South Africa as perceived by the government were stated in a policy document of June 1987. According to the document the aim of the South African government was to promote the welfare, development, freedom and security of all its people in accordance with common values. The aims regarding to the international community for the South African government was to seek world peace and good relations with all peaceloving nations and fulfil South Africa's commitments as a full member within the international system. The South African government regarded the country as a regional The policy to flow from this status determined that security, economic and diplomatic interests in the region should be protected. South Africa aimed for peace, good neighbourliness and regional stability but the cardinal strategic, economic and political interests would be protected with all the 'elements of the South African power base' including military measures. The maintenance of the stability of the state and the security of all people in the country were regarded as the 'vital interests' to be protected by the The 'primary mission' of the South African government was to win the government. revolutionary war and to secure the country against an external conventional military onslaught and terrorism from neighbouring countries. South Africa did not aim at any territorial expansion, but if any 'threat' against South Africa originated, South Africa should take pro-active self-defensive or preventative measures against such a threat. The policy of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Republic of South Africa, 'Nasionale Strewes en Beleidsgrondslae van die Republiek van Suid Afrika' (The 'National Aims and Policy Guidelines of the Republic of South Africa'), (unpublished confidential policy guidelines to state departments under the signature of President P.W. Botha), Cape Town, June 1987.

the South African government to fight communism, Marxism and Soviet expansionism in all their forms was also confirmed.

Although SWA/Namibia or Namibia was never mentioned in this policy document the use of terms such as 'revolutionary war', 'conventional onslaught', 'pro-active self-defence' and 'preventative measures' seem to correlate with the situation in Angola and Namibia in 1987.

More specific official statements on Namibia, however, indicate the South African interests involved. On 26 January 1984 PW Botha said that the people of Namibia had to decide themselves about the future of Namibia and that the population of Namibia should get the opportunity to determine their own future in a secure environment. However, he made it clear that the interests of South Africa were the highest priority. Furthermore, he declared that the South African government was no longer willing to carry the financial burden of Namibia. Mr Botha also said that the territory had at no stage been part of South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In 1987 the pursuit of a 'Total National Strategy' was once again confirmed by several officials.<sup>3</sup> In September 1987 General Malan reiterated the will to launch a co-ordinated, purposeful operation to oppose the 'onslaught' at national level.<sup>4</sup> Emphasis was placed on South Africa's security and the need for a 'total national strategy' to resist a 'total onslaught'. The onslaught was presented as having an external and internal dimension, ultimately under

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Republic of South Africa, Office of the State President, Speech by Prime Minister P.W. Botha in the nonconfidence debate in Parliament, 31 January 1984.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>According to the White Paper on Defence of 1977 the 'Total National Strategy' included co-ordinated military, psychological, economic, political, sociological, technological, diplomatic, ideological and cultural actions. In an address to the House of Assembly on 21 March 1980, Mr A.J. Vlok, who became Minister of Law and Order in 1987, explained the twelve-point plan for the implementation of a "Total National Strategy" which embraced all plans of action aimed at utilizing all means available to the state in a co-ordinated fashion to avert the 'multidimensional onslaught' against the RSA. The twelve-point plan included the pursuit of a peaceful constellation of Southern African states, as well as South Africa's will to defend itself against outside interference in every possible way.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Republic of South Africa, House of Assembly, *Debates (Hansard)*, Statements by General M.A. de M Malan, Minister of Defence of the South Africa, 14/7/1987-15/7/1987, cols. 5904-5911.

the direction of communist powers. The government argued that the security and survival of whites and blacks were threatened by a common enemy. This influenced the formulation of foreign policy goals and the execution of operations.<sup>5</sup>

More specific official information regarding the ends of military intervention is found in statements made by members of the South African government, as well as official government publications. According to President P.W.Botha there should have been no doubt that South Africa had the intention to 'strike back' if the territory of South Africa or any territory under its protection were to be violated. If governments of neighbouring states allowed themselves to be used as bases or sanctuaries by 'terrorists', they had to pay the price. The government would have no other option but to launch pre-emptive operations across the border to destroy enemy facilities in order to discourage enemy action from areas adjacent to the borders of South Africa. 'Offensive defence' was indispensable for the internal stability of South Africa. The tranquillity in SWA following cross-border operations into Angola was proof of that. It was South Africa's policy to 'defend and safeguard' itself offensively with its might against any form of foreign aggression or internal revolution, whatever the nature of the source. Destabilization of other countries was, however, denied.

According to General Geldenhuys the South African government decided in 1987 that it had to defend the country's national interests by using military force. The Soviet Union intervened intensively in Southern Africa with the aid of Marxist Cuba. These forces supported the MPLA government as never before to destroy UNITA. Had they been able to gain military control of Southern Angola, the campaign against the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) could have expanded from Kaokoland in the West to the Eastern Caprivi in the East. The camps of the African National Congress (ANC) would have been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Geldenhuys, D. The Diplomacy of Isolation ..., p.33-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Republic of South Africa, House of Assembly, *Debates (Hansard)*, *Address by the Prime Minister P.W. Botha*, 1/5/80, cols. 5296-5297.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Republic of South Africa, White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply, 1982, p.4-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Republic of South Africa, *House of Assembly, Debates (Hansard)*, Statements by General M.A. de M. Malan, Minister of Defence, 28/5/1985, cols. 6376-6381.

able to move to Southern Angola, bringing them closer to the infiltration routes to South Africa.<sup>9</sup>

Although official sources were characterised by strong persuasiveness and sometimes veiled in secrecy, information that became available after a new dispensation had been established in South Africa provides clear indications of what the official interests of the government had been in 1987. In order to get a clearer picture, it is necessary to compare it with other schools of thought.

#### 3.2.2 THE 'PROMOTION OF APARTHEID' SCHOOL

According to Du Pisani the ideological tenets of the National Party's programme of republicanism, racial separation, white self-preservation and white supremacy were extended to SWA from 1984 onwards. In ideological terms the NP, which had originally opposed the occupation of SWA, saw the territory as an extension of the domestic-political scene in South Africa.<sup>10</sup> The Afrikaners saw SWA as part of Afrikaner heritage and as an integral part of South Africa.<sup>11</sup>

The policy of consecutive South African governments was mostly determined by Afrikaner interests and the interests of classes within the Afrikaner grouping, Afrikaner state bureaucracy, industrialists and officials controlling the public sector, as well as the merging of English and Afrikaner capital. Government policy could be explained in terms of consolidation, entrenchment and development of Afrikaner power.<sup>12</sup>

South African foreign policy making was an exclusively white preserve and political ends had been influenced by the internal policy of 'apartheid'. During the tenure of office of Dr D.F.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit. p.167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Du Pisani, SWA/Namibia: The Politics of Continuity and Change..., p.121-124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p.46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Giliomee H. & Adam, H. Afrikanermag: Opkoms en Toekoms, Universiteituitgewers en Boekhandelaars, Stellenbosch, 1981, p.27-44.

Malan (1948-1954) the legislative foundations of 'apartheid' were laid. Dr H.F. Verwoerd succeeded Mr J.G. Strydom as Prime Minister in 1958 and introduced 'grand apartheid' or separate development. In 1966 Mr B.J. Vorster became Prime Minister and although he deviated slightly from Verwoerdian 'apartheid', he continued to reinforce 'apartheid' through various legislative measures.

According to Davies and O'Meara the 'apartheid' state was substantially reorganised and the 'Total Strategy' adopted as official state policy following the assumption of power by P.W. Botha in September 1987. This led to the restructuring and reformulation of regional policy. The vague notion of a constellation of states that was put forward by Vorster in 1974 was developed and now defined as the ultimate objective of regional policy. According to Frankel the 'total strategy' was the result of an emerging climate of social and political experimentation. The traditional dividing lines between the purer forms of segregation had become blurred and the English and Afrikaner segments of the elite moved towards agreement on the means as well as the common end of maintaining white supremacy. 14

The opinion of Barratt is that a destabilization strategy was followed in order to demonstrate to neighbouring states the determination of South Africa to resist external attack on its domestic order and to demonstrate with force the legitimacy of South Africa. The efforts of alternative constellations, such as the South Africa Development Community (SADC), had to be undermined and the tide of foreign or Marxist influence in the subcontinent had to be turned back. Metz perceived the 'total national strategy' as virtually wartime mobilization of resources to put pressure on neighbouring states. It was also clear that the South African government had the will and capabilities to destabilise neighbouring countries by using surrogates and by executing raids, while economic coercion was used. 16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Davies & O'Meara, op. cit., p.189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Frankel, P. op. cit. p.275.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Barratt J. op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Metz, S. op. cit., p.437.

The South African government sought to maintain a protective shield of white-ruled states on its periphery in order to sustain 'apartheid' and hamper externally based insurgency. The strategic significance of Angola lay in its shared border with Namibia, where the main support for SWAPO lay.<sup>17</sup>

Opponents of the South African government, including academics seeking to influence the foreign policy of the South African government, emphasised that the South African government destabilized the region to protect 'apartheid'. Most of the opponents of the South African government, however, had insufficient access to actual events and the viewpoints of these scholars cannot be regarded as reliable. The view of some scholars that destabilization was a political end can, for instance, be questioned. In the light of the lack of access to privileged information, evident from the absence of reliable sources quoted by the authors, as well as selective reporting which is evident if the information is compared with other accounts, the view that destabilization was an official political end of the South African government can be regarded as unlikely. The destabilizing effect of the South African policy of 'offensive defence' in neighbouring states probably created the impression that destabilization was an official security policy of the South African government. Guerrilla actions probably had a further destabilizing effect on an economy already disrupted by maladministration and droughts. Nevertheless, if seen against the background of the official views of national interests, the viewpoint that the preservation of white supremacy could be seen as a national interest of the South African government is valid. The concept of a 'protective shield' will probably shed more light on the real national interests of South Africa.

#### 3.2.3 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 'PROTECTIVE SHIELD'

In contrast to the official view of a 'total onslaught' that should be countered with a 'total strategy' and the emphasis on the perpetuation of 'apartheid' and 'destabilization' offered by anti-'apartheid' literature, compromise literature places much more emphasis on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Grest, J. 'The South African Defence Force in Angola' in Cock & Nathan, (ed.) War and Society: The Militarization of South Africa, David Philip, Johannesburg, 1989, p.119.

establishment of a protective shield of dependent states by all means possible to safeguard the interests of the South African government. According to Cockram the initial aims of General Smuts and General Botha had been to secure SWA as part of an annexation policy in which control of territory south of the Cunene and Zambezi could be consolidated.<sup>18</sup>

This ultimate end was perpetuated by the NP and the concept of a 'constellation of politically completely independent states' was introduced in February 1974 when Prime Minister Vorster mentioned a 'power block' of sovereign independent states developing in Southern Africa. The South African government had to ensure that the neighbouring states of South Africa were not to be used as sanctuaries for guerrilla or terrorist attacks on South Africa and that the Soviet Union did not gain political and military footholds in Southern Africa. Furthermore, the economic ties with the region had to be improved, whilst demands were made that 'black states' should not support calls for mandatory sanctions against South Africa. Attempts by states to reduce their economic independence on South Africa had to be prevented.<sup>20</sup>

In 1978, when President P.W. Botha became Prime Minister, a new relationship between government and the private sector flowed from his emphasis on co-operation and development in Southern Africa. This new relationship was a key element of the concept of a 'constellation of Southern African states.' The need for such a constellation was seen against the background of a deteriorating security situation in South Africa, as well as worsening relations with the Western powers. A regional alliance, in which South Africa would play a leading role, was seen as protection against a 'Marxist onslaught'. Joint economic projects between South Africa and other regional states had to be promoted to demonstrate, with the involvement of the private sector, the superiority of 'South African

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Cockram, G-M. The South West African Mandate, Juta, Cape Town, 1976, p. 248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Davis & O'Meara, op. cit., p.189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Geldenhuys, D. 'Some Strategic Implications'..., p.20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Geldenhuys, D. *The Diplomacy of Isolation...*, p.33-40..

capitalism' over 'socialism'. Other states in the region had to be lured into non-aggression pacts as part of a mutual defence.<sup>22</sup>

The South African leadership shared the conviction, born of the NP's own deterministic interpretation of politics, that Namibia was the next objective of international communism. SWAPO and its leadership were classified as communists who would invite the Russians and the Cubans into the country. A future Namibia dominated by SWAPO was therefore seen as an unacceptable risk to the security of South Africa. South Africa, however, had a substantial economic interest in Namibia and it was believed that Namibia was dependant on South Africa for transport, investment capital and export markets. Any government in Windhoek no matter what its ideological orientation, could not terminate its economic links with South Africa.<sup>23</sup>

South African military involvement and the role of the SADF as 'frontier army' in Namibia and Angola began to constitute an important element in the regional policy of South Africa and were determined by the ultimate security of South Africa in relation to regional security and the domestic political considerations of South Africa, as well as the political situation in Namibia. Pressure from the international community and the escalating cost of the war were further major considerations.<sup>24</sup>

Against this background South Africa's regional policies in Angola and Namibia rested on the realization that economic dominance is both more effective and desirable than costly military hegemony. In the case of Namibia this premise was affected by South African loans, fiscal transfers and assistance with the development of infrastructure to ensure power over decision-making in the region. It was also expected that economic and security cooperation with surrounding states would re-establish the lost 'cordon sanitaire' provide by former colonial powers. A regional settlement in Angola and Namibia would reduce any

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Geldenhuys & Venter, op. cit. p. 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p. 26-37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Du Pisani, Beyond the Barracks..., p.18.

potential instability in the region that could harm South African interests. The desire also existed to expose the failure of socialist ideology as a development strategy in the region while limiting the role and potential political influence of outside powers, including the West.<sup>25</sup>

Compromise literature emphasises the control of territory by South Africa in the form of an economically interdependent constellation of states to form a protective shield against 'communism'. It was hoped that this control would prevent a physical and ideological threat to the interests of the South African government. The reliability of the exponents of this viewpoint can be regarded as high, as they normally refer to reliable sources in their work. In general, compromise literature on the subject of South African foreign policy is of a high scientific standard. It is the view of the student that the descriptive and relatively nonpersuasive nature of the information created a balanced view of South Africa's national interests. The view on the curbing of a threat against the interests of the South African government correlates with the official view of a 'total onslaught', as well as the view that the national interests of South Africa were those of the ruling elite. Furthermore it succeeded in putting the perception of destabilization, maintained in anti-government literature, into perspective by explaining it in terms of economic dominance. States under continued military pressure on their infrastructure would not have been able to reduce their economic dependence on South Africa, dissuading them from providing secure bases for insurgency activities in South Africa.

# 3.3 <u>DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE</u> OF INTERMEDIATE POLITICAL ENDS IN 1987

In 1987 several developments in the international arena and in South Africa influenced the choice of the political ends of the South African government. The availability of a relatively strong military force, economic constraints on the conduct of war, a deteriorating security situation in South Africa, continued resistance to South African occupation within Namibia, the political will of the Angolan government to conquer UNITA-occupied territory with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Du Pisani, 'Pax Praetoriana'..., p.72.

assistance from Cuba, as well as co-operation between the Soviet Union and the USA to solve regional issues, were the most important factors that will be discussed.

## 3.3.1 THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE IN 1987

In 1987 the SADF saw South Africa as an important role player in the delicate power balance that existed between the Soviet Union and the USA. Within this context the SADF was to play an important role in combating communism as part of a 'total onslaught'. The military was seen as a dimension of a total power base of South Africa and the application of military force as a component of a total national strategy.<sup>26</sup> The White Paper for Defence of 1986 emphasised the curbing of the 'revolutionary onslaught' and the combating of conventional forces, as well as the shrinking of the space between South Africa and its enemies.

The military capabilities of South Africa were vested in the defence community, consisting of the SADF and ARMSCOR. The SADF consisted of the SA Army, SA Air Force, the Surgeon General and Special Forces, as well as several staff departments and support services. By 1987 the SADF had developed good tactical and organisational flexibility to fight a low-intensity war. Counter-insurgency (COIN) units existed and conventional forces were maintained. Elite units like the 'reconnaissance commandos', 44 Parachute Brigade and 32 Battalion enjoyed special attention. The application of the SA Air Force played a decisive role during COIN operations. ARMSCOR ensured that the SADF had the technological and maintenance capabilities to fight a low- intensity war.<sup>27</sup>

In 1987 most scholars, military leaders and politicians agreed that South Africa had the military force to intervene in neighbouring countries. The employment of military force was however, hampered by economic constraints.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African Defence Force, Joint Warfare Manual GWU 105 Part 1: The Concept, Planning and Control of Operations, October 1983 (unpublished official document), p.1-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Metz, op. cit., p.453.

#### 3.3.2 ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS ON THE CONDUCT OF WAR

Allocations to defence in the South African budget increased from R4 274 million in the 1985/86 financial year to R6 683 million in the 1987/88 financial year, while allocations to defence in Namibia increased from R142 million to R204 million over the same period.<sup>28</sup>

A range of constraints on the South African economy, including declining foreign exchange reserves, denial of access to international loan finance and sharply increasing demands on state revenue for socio-economic development projects, essential to domestic stability, renewed the interest of the South African government in international negotiations about the future of Namibia and the withdrawal of the Cuban forces from Angola.<sup>29</sup> The precarious state of South Africa's economy was a source of pressure to quit Angola and Namibia. Between 1980 and 1989 the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) averaged around one percent, well below South Africa's non-white population growth rate of almost 3 percent a year and far below the 5 percent economic growth rate needed to provide jobs for the 200 000 to 300 000 blacks entering the job market annually. Large and growing military expenditure, the administration of Namibia, foreign debt to be repaid between 1989 and 1991, the fall in the price of gold and a continuing outflow of capital with the resulting dwindling of the value of currencies were immediate and serious economic constraints. These economic issues left the government with little budget flexibility and the critical need for foreign investments in softening of repayment terms, and put the South African leadership under pressure to restore a favourable investment climate by reducing tensions caused by military involvement in Angola and Namibia.30

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Archer, S. 'Defense Expenditure and Arms Procurement' in Cock, J. & Nathan, L. *The South Africa War and Society: The Militarization of South Africa*, David Philip, Johannesburg, p. 49. All figures are based on planned expenditure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Jaster, op. cit. p.30-31.

If the information of several sources is compared, it becomes evident that severe economic constraints, worsened by South Africa's occupation of Namibia, encouraged the South African government to find a peaceful solution to the Namibian question.

#### 3.3.3 DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES

In 1987 South Africa faced daunting internal challenges. Despite the demise of the paradigm of classical 'apartheid', the country still laboured under the burden of a political system based on the social characteristics of a pre-industrial society, while demographic and economic changes demanded the abandonment of race and ethnicity. A decline in the perceived utility and legitimacy of the application of South Africa's military instrument in Angola, in the view of the governments' own constituency, made negotiations an interesting option.<sup>31</sup>

In January 1987 the state of emergency in South Africa, based on political and security considerations, was renewed. The counter-insurgency strategy of the South African government failed however, because of the implicit belief that economic and social amelioration would be an effective substitute for political incorporation.<sup>32</sup> A political war between white domination and black liberation, political organization and the cultures of Europe and Africa, was in progress.<sup>33</sup>

The South African system suffered a severe loss of legitimacy which necessitated a change in the institutionalized value system. In South Africa the pace of social mobilization exceeded the level of institutionalization, resulting in a high level of social instability. The result was a society characterized by the politicization of social forces and institutions. Ultimately the struggle between the forces of revolution and the government was about the apportioning of political power. The expectation was that South African society would be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p.123-127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>Spence, J.E. 'A Deal for South Africa' The New World Order, May 1989, p. 251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Campbell, H. 'The Military Defeat of the South Africans in Angola' *Monthly Review*, April 1989, p.5.

characterized by varying degrees of political violence and that the role of the security forces would be important.<sup>34</sup>

In early May 1987, parliamentary elections had given President Botha a mandate to restore law and order, while the right-wing Conservative Party replaced the liberal Progressive Federal Party as the official opposition.<sup>35</sup> The largest source of resistance to structural change in South Africa came from the white political right wing who rejected the reform policy of the National Party and powersharing amongst race groups in South Africa.<sup>36</sup> In the elections a combination of right-wing support of 30 percent indicated an important swing to the right and the establishment of an important power base in rural and urban areas.<sup>37</sup> It is the view of the student that conservative pressure from mainly the Afrikaner population in rural areas, in the form of party-political and parliamentary action, ensured that the ultimate end of resisting the 'total onslaught' was not forgotten by the formulators of foreign policy. The loss of support to the Conservative Party had to be kept in mind in decision making in South-western Africa. The South African government had to ensure that there was no threat from Namibia that could strengthen the more conservative arguments for continued military presence in Namibia and against negotiations with the 'enemy'. However, the demand for political change in South Africa, from an overwhelming majority of the population, gave the South African government relative freedom of action to change its goals and to withdraw from an untenable position in South-western Africa, if it wished to do so. Decision-makers in South Africa probably perceived that the Namibian question had to be resolved, in order to redirect all available means to the internal sphere in South Africa. A secure environment, including Angola and Namibia, was important before domestic issues could be resolved.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Cilliers, J.K. 'Social Mobilisation, Revolutionary War and Change in South Africa' *ISSUP Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, X: 2, November 1988, p. 61-73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Crocker, C. High Noon in Southern Africa..., p.347.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Cilliers, op. cit., p.73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Du Bois, N.W. 'Staatkundige Ontwikkeling: Die Politiek van Bedinging' in Lubbe, P. (ed.), *Wêreldspektrum*, Promedia, Pretoria, 1988, p.141.

#### 3.3.4 CONTINUED NAMIBIAN RESISTANCE TO SOUTH AFRICAN OCCUPATION

In 1987 the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU), established in 1985 by South Africa and various political parties opposed to SWAPO, still lacked legitimacy and popular support. Those opposed to the South African government regarded it as inefficient and divided and as part of a pro-South African Namibia.<sup>38</sup> The TGNU failed because of internal differences. A non-ethnic constitution could not be implemented and therefore no credible alternative to SWAPO could be offered.<sup>39</sup> The 'traditionalist' approach also started to flourish with the appointment of a new Administrator General in 1987. He began to make political statements differing from those of the TGNU and expressed himself on constitutional questions regarding what the South African government would like or dislike.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile SWAPO and its allies still called for the unconditional and immediate implementation of Resolution 435 because they knew that they would probably win an election. The implementation of Resolution 435 depended mainly on the willingness of the South African government to co-operate, but the South African government and most of the internal parties in Namibia used the presence of the Cubans in Angola and UN partiality towards SWAPO to delay the process. In 1987 the South African government was not in favour of UN Resolution 435 but was bound by the commitments of former governments to accept it and realised that there were no alternatives to the resolution.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, in April 1987 South African security forces determined that the PLAN was in possession of new types of weapons and equipment like anti-vehicle mines, anti-personnel mines and rocket launchers of Russian and Czech origin, which gave the PLAN a better

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Dreyer, R. op. cit., p.43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Du Pisani, 'Beyond the Transgariep'..., p.35.

<sup>40</sup>Cleary, op. cit. p.122.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>Du Plessis H.D. Resolusie 435: Agtergrond, Bepalings en Toepassing, (paper presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Politics at the University of Potchefstroom), 1988, Abstract.

tactical capability.<sup>42</sup> In August 1987 the impression of the South African security establishment was that the PLAN would be concentrating on urban terror. This impression was based mainly on the detonation of a car bomb in Windhoek on 16 July 1987 by the PLAN and reconnaissance of intelligence elements of the PLAN in Walvis Bay and Tsumeb. Further low-intensity guerrilla actions were also expected. The PLAN units were also still operating from FAPLA facilities in Southern Angola.<sup>43</sup>

It is the opinion of the student that in 1987 the South African government increasingly realized that the implementation of UN Resolution 435 could not be avoided. The government was therefore willing to allow the implementation of the resolution to avoid further cost in terms of lives and funds. A secure Namibia with a government that was not hostile to South Africa, was, however, still a vital consideration.

#### 3.3.5 SUPER POWER CO-OPERATION ON REGIONAL ISSUES

The 'new thinking' of the Soviet Union formed the basis of super power co-operation. The most important elements of this new thinking that can be identified were drastic measures to curtail the arms race, the replacement of confrontation with international co-operation, and the resolution that decisions had to be taken with the interests of all actors involved in a conflict in mind. Soviet actions also gave evidence of a recognition of the importance of local factors as causes of such conflicts and an attempt to address these without endangering either the Soviet Union's own position or that of its clients. This had led to some encouraging concessions on the part of the Soviet Union and its allies, jointly or separately. The solution of conflicts, such as those in Angola, became possible because of Soviet flexibility. Support to national liberation movements, however, was still the official Soviet view. The Soviet Union preferred a political settlement in Angola to a protracted armed struggle which had the potential to develop into a confrontation with the USA. However,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Republic of South Africa, State Security Council, Special Situation Report (24/87 dd 30 April 1987), p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>Mutatis Mutandis, Special Situation Report (33/87 dd 25 August), p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>McFarlane & Nel, op. cit., p.1.

it still wished to consolidate Soviet influence in Angola and Southern Africa and needed to be seen as a reliable ally of the Third World.<sup>45</sup>

A settlement in Namibia depended to a vital degree on the new willingness of the Soviet Union to assess the political and economic cost of its regional involvement against its own economic needs. The monthly cost of support to the MPLA in Angola and the associated cost of supporting Cuba and its troops, as well as a desire to defuse East-West confrontation in the region, all appear to have influenced a change in Soviet policy to seek political rather than military solutions to Africa's widening conflicts. Although the original Soviet policy on Angola was morally justified, 'perestroika' led to a more realistic approach which made a solution in South-western Africa possible. The war was too expensive to continue and a military victory was not sought in any case. An important factor was that the Soviet Union was crumbling and could no longer sponsor a war. It was also realized that a military solution could not be obtained and the perception of decision-makers in the Soviet Union was that a war was not worth the effort. A

In 1987 the USA still had as ends the removal of Cuban troops from Angola, an unqualified diplomatic success by the Reagan administration in the Third World, vindication for the policy of 'constructive engagement' with South Africa and a setback for the Soviet Union in the region. A policy of constructive engagement was followed to persuade Pretoria to negotiate with Angola. In return the USA vetoed any UN resolutions that would impose sanctions on South Africa. The American-sponsored plan called for South African withdrawal from Angola, an Angolan announcement of a Cuban troop withdrawal plan, American recognition of the current Angolan government, the application of UN resolution 435 in Namibia and a Joint Angolan-South African Commission to oversee the disengagement

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup>Leistner, E. 'South Africa and the Soviet Union', *Africa Institute Bulletin*, 28: 4, 1988, p.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Bearman, op. cit., p.59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>Interview with Dr Vladimir Lebedev, Strategic Consultant to the Russian Embassy and former Political Advisor in Angola, Pretoria, 27 March 1993 (henceforth 'Lebedev interview'); as well as Minister Louis Pienaar, former Administrator General of Namibia in Cape Town on 16 March 1993 (henceforth 'Pienaar interview').

process. The crusaders for the 'Reagan Doctrine' also advocated the overthrow of the Marxist Angolan regime.<sup>48</sup>

Against this background Crocker was approached by the Soviet Union for the collective solving of regional conflict situations, but he remained suspicious of the intentions of the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup> The South African government shared these suspicions but realised that the Soviet economy could not afford expensive involvement in remote parts of the world like Southern Africa. The emergence of a high degree of common purpose between the USA and the Soviet Union regarding a political solution to the regional conflict situations, that involved clients of both super powers, renewed the interest of the South African government in an internationally negotiated solution to the Namibian question.<sup>50</sup>

Although a major military confrontation between the SADF and Soviet/Cuban/MPLA forces was imminent in 1987, the freedom of action in conducting conventional military operations enjoyed by smaller states, such as South Africa and Angola, became increasingly restricted because of super power co-operation in regional issues. Therefore South Africa had to concentrate on limiting both the ends to be achieved and the military forces to be employed.

## 3.3.6 SOUTH AFRICAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE SITUATION IN ANGOLA

On 7 April 1987 bilateral negotiations between the USA and Angola were resumed in the Congo (Brazzaville). The MPLA attempted to gain 'high ground', to probe the intentions of the USA and to gain time to prepare for another offensive against UNITA. Further talks in Luanda on 14 and 15 July 1987 indicated that the Angolans were facing external pressure to ignore diplomatic efforts and to concentrate on an offensive against UNITA during the dry season of 1987.<sup>51</sup> The MPLA government still maintained certain conditions before the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Washington, op. cit. p. 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.336.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.345-351.

Cubans could withdraw from Angola. According to the conditions, determined in 1984, the SADF had to withdraw from Angola, South African 'aggression' against Angola had to stop and UN Resolution 435 had to be implemented.<sup>52</sup>

In July 1987 the operational planning of FAPLA was aimed at securing its bases in South and South-eastern Angola, as well as the Benguella railway line. An offensive from the vicinity of Lucusse against Cago Couthino and Cangamba was also expected by South Africa. An offensive against Mavinga was not foreseen before the middle of August 1987. At that stage it was clear that the MPLA was not willing to negotiate a settlement with UNITA.<sup>53</sup>

In view of the above-mentioned official information, confirmed by Crocker, the South African government probably realized that the MPLA was in the short term not interested in a political solution and that military conflict in Angola between the MPLA and UNITA would escalate. This would have been detrimental to the security of Namibia and subsequently conducive to further military intervention in Angola.

## 3.3.7 THE PRESENCE OF THE CUBAN MILITARY CONTINGENT

Cuban policy in Africa had been independent and autonomous of Soviet influence. Cuba was acting strictly in accordance with its own national interests but developed a symbiotic relationship with the Soviet Union. <sup>54</sup> Cuban military assistance did not tip the African scales inevitably toward the Soviet bloc. Nevertheless, Cuba established a strategic link to several African nations and a foothold on the continent for itself and the Soviet Union. While Cuban and Soviet motives in Africa were compatible, the Cubans initiated the major military programs. <sup>55</sup> An analysis of Cuban involvement in Angola revealed two roles it played. The first role was that of Soviet surrogate, in which Cuban military endeavour was used to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup>Republic of South Africa, State Security Council, VN-Veiligheidsraad: Die Implikasies van Resolusie 601 (1987) mbt die SWA/Angola-Kwessie, 29 January 1988, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup>Mutatis Mutandis, Situation Report (25/87 dd 15 July 1987), p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup>Nuri M.U., op. cit., p.430.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup>Falk, P.S. 'Cuba in Africa', Foreign Affairs, 65: 5, 1987, p. 1079.

further Soviet interests. The second role was that of a Cuba which followed its own agenda. Castro gained international prestige, the troops gained valuable combat experience, and more leverage was gained over the Soviets.<sup>56</sup>

The Cubans were unlikely to leave without a diplomatic victory, including credit for the independence of Namibia and improved relations with the USA.<sup>57</sup> The key to a Cuban withdrawal was to be found in an ironic inversion of the original 'linkage' proposal. If Castro could claim to have been instrumental in securing the independence of Namibia and present it as a major defeat for South Africa and a penultimate step towards the 'final liberation' of the entire subcontinent, he would probably have regarded honour as having been well satisfied.<sup>58</sup>

Subsequently on 27 July 1987 Castro suggested to the USA that Cuba should join the USA-MPLA talks. Cuba was prepared to work with the USA and the Angolans to find a solution. If a negotiated settlement did not occur, Cuba was fully prepared to stay and fight another ten years if necessary. A settlement had to be an honourable one for Cuba and had to ensure the security of the Cubans as they departed from Angola.<sup>59</sup>

In August 1987 President dos Santos discussed the outcome of the talks with the USA with President Castro in Cuba. They decided to intensify their efforts for the implementation of UN Resolution 435 and to show more flexibility regarding the staged withdrawal of Cubans from Angola. Cuba supported negotiations between the USA and Angola but wanted increased participation in the negotiations.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>Cuba and Angola ..., p.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Falk, op. cit, p. 1095.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup>Cornwell, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p. 355.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup>Republic of South Africa, State Security Council, 'Oogmerke van die Vernaamste Politieke Partye Betrokke by die SWA/Angola-Onderhandelinge' (Special Situation Report 10/88 dd 13 July 1988), p.3.

Despite the Cuban will to enter negotiations, a large Cuban military contingent was still present in Angola and in 1987 Cuban military units began to replace the Angolan military units in Southern Angola. Their tasks were to master the increasingly sophisticated Soviet weaponry, of to guard key installations, and to provide last-resort defence to the MPLA government. As of mid-1987 the Cuban forces in Angola continued to be concentrated in Cabinda, Luanda and the southern part of the country. A second line of defence was provided backing up FAPLA units along the border with Namibia. Cuban troops were also present in 5 Military Region, 7 Military Region, 4 Military Region and 3 Military Region (See Appendix A for map). In July 1987 there were also indications that Cuban pilots would play an important role in a coming offensive and would operate as far as the Namibian border. Apparently the Cuban presence, and even the increase of force levels, did not have any bearing on the war in South-eastern Angola between FAPLA and UNITA.

If the information supplied by these independent sources is compared, the deduction can be made that in 1987 Cuba revealed a more flexible approach and developed the will to withdraw from Angola if the status of Cuba was not jeopardized. Against the background of available official information it is the opinion of the student that in the first half of 1987 the South African government did not foresee Cuban escalation of the military conflict in Angola without the consent of the Soviet Union, in case of intervention by the SADF, and that the decision-makers did not consider the Cuban presence to be a serious constraint on military intervention in South-eastern Angola. The presence of the Cubans was, however, still a matter to be solved through negotiations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup>Falk, op. cit., p.1092

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>Cuba and Angola..., p.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup>Republic of South Africa, State Security Council, Special Situation Report (25/87 dd 15 July 1987), p.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit., p.189.

# 3.4 <u>THE INTERMEDIATE POLITICAL ENDS TO BE PROMOTED BY MILITARY</u> INTERVENTION IN 1987

In 1987 the political ends regarding involvement in South-western Africa were unclear to most scholars and participants. The difference in understanding among scholars and participants of what the political goals were, will be discussed.

#### 3.4.1 THE OFFICIAL GOALS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

On 17 June 1985 Mr Botha committed himself to the internationally accepted independence of Namibia in a spirit of freedom, fairness and security. On 3 March 1986 he declared South Africa to be willing to implement Resolution 435 by 1 August 1986 if a 'firm and satisfactory agreement' could be reached on Cuban troop withdrawal.<sup>65</sup> This goal was never achieved but in his speech addressed to the Joint Assembly of Parliament on 24 August 1988, a year after the first conventional units of the SADF entered Angola, President Botha confirmed that the goals of the South African government were the establishment of a democratic multiparty government in Windhoek that was acceptable to the international community, while the security forces had to ensure an election without external military intervention. President Botha confirmed that the goals sought by the South African government in South-western Africa were the independence of Namibia under a legitimate government in a secure environment. The independence of Namibia and the complete withdrawal of the Cuban military contingent and the linking of the two issues were the ideal circumstances aspired to.66 The goals regarding South African involvement in Angola and Namibia were also presented by the government to the public as the stabilization of the subcontinent and the protection of own interests against 'terrorist organizations' such as the ANC and SWAPO supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union.<sup>67</sup> The then Chief of the SADF,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup>Republic of South Africa, Office of the State President, Speech by President P.W. Botha at the implementation of the legislative and executive authority for Namibia on 17 July 1985.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup>Debates (Hansard), Address by President P.W.Botha..., cols. 15963-15974.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup>Republic of South Africa, Press Statement by Minister of Defence, General M.A. de M Malan on 5 March 1988.

General Geldenhuys, said in a speech in 1989 to members of the South West African Territory Force (SWATF) that the most important point was that the Cubans should withdraw according to plan and that the second most important 'point' was that 'we' (the pro-South African opposition groups in Namibia) should win the elections.<sup>68</sup> According to Mr Louis Pienaar the prevention of SWAPO from obtaining a two-thirds majority, however, became the most important intermediate political end.<sup>69</sup>

Cleary indicated that by 1987 there was no co-ordinated execution of policy regarding SWA/Namibia. Because of the absence of an academically founded decision-making process, several institutions like the SADF, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the AG in Windhoek, the State Security Council and others formulated different policies from time to time. The policy of the moment depended on the enthusiasm of the specific institution. There was never a structured process at national level that co-ordinated the strategic and tactical level and the application of different elements. The inability to muster the total capabilities of the state behind a policy was responsible for the fact that international prescriptions were followed by the South African government. People had different agendas and 'little kingdoms' existed within the policy mechanisms. Decision-makers operated from a premise of mutual distrust. Departments and institutions distrusted one another. An achievable and substantial strategy became impossible.<sup>70</sup>

The result was that before August 1988 the political ends and strategy to be followed regarding South-western Africa were not clear. The primary justification within government circles for the continuing presence of South Africa in Namibia was to allow the people of Namibia to determine their own constitutional future, free from intimidation. A second view

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African Defence Force, Address by Chief of the SADF General J. Geldenhuys to Members of the South West African Territory Force in Windhoek on 19 January 1988 (unpublished document in possession of the author.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup>Pienaar interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup>Interview with Mr Sean Cleary in Midrand on 29 May 1993 (henceforth 'Cleary interview'). His role as consultant to the South African security establishment regarding the South-west African question and his subsequent direct access to several actors involved, as well as his experience and academic background, make the views of Mr Cleary unique and of great value to this study.

of the situation within the government was that Namibia could never be independent from South Africa and could therefore pose no threat to the security of South Africa. Namibia could therefore become politically independent, ridding South Africa of international pressure, reducing its financial commitments and enhancing its status in the region and in the international community. A third view saw the future of Namibia in the adoption of social and constitutional models applied and developed in South Africa. In the interview Cleary further stated that the view was that a majority of less than two thirds would have forced SWAPO to make compromises of substance in securing the approval of a constitution. A multiparty system would be guaranteed and a high degree of compliance with democratic principles would be achieved. No external intervention would have been necessary after independence and Western development assistance would have been assured.

In an interview with the then Director General of Foreign Affairs, Mr Neil van Heerden, it became evident that the Department of Foreign Affairs interpreted the goals regarding Namibia as achieving peace at all costs and reaching a settlement which would enhance the international acceptability of South Africa. To achieve peace the diplomatic and military component had to act together. The signing of the New York Agreement in December 1988 was the result of negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the problems of Southwestern Africa, which would be acceptable to all parties concerned. The signing of the New York Agreement in December 1988 was the result of negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the problems of Southwestern Africa, which would be acceptable to all parties concerned.

Cleary commented that the bona fides of South Africa had to be accepted in international relationships and a peaceful solution to the problems of South-western Africa, acceptable to all parties, had to be found. The solving of the Namibian problem had to coincide with Cuban troop withdrawal in such a way that international demands and the maintenance of the power balance in Angola would become the cardinal question.<sup>74</sup> International negotiations were aimed at reducing the level of conflict in Southern Africa, securing the withdrawal of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p.120.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup>Murray, H. 'The Quiet South African' Interview with Foreign Affairs Director General, Mr Neil van Heerden, *Leadership*, 8:1, March 1989, p.9-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup>The Independence of Namibia and Cuban Troop Withdrawal..., p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup>Cleary interview.

foreign combat forces from Angola, allowing Namibia to pass to internationally recognised independence and diminishing the reliance of South Africa on its military instrument in conducting relations between states in the region. South Africa and the USA also had to coerce the MPLA into national reconciliation with UNITA in Angola.<sup>75</sup>

Senior military officers saw the political ends of the military intervention as putting UNITA and anti-SWAPO elements in Namibia in a strong political position without military interference from Cuba or the PLAN. The situation in South-western Africa had to be defused and this could not be achieved if the Cubans were present. The Cubans had to withdraw and the bottom line was a settlement between the MPLA and UNITA. Furthermore Namibia had to become independent in a democratic way with a government that was well-disposed towards South Africa. President P.W. Botha's personal preference was that a SWAPO government should not come into power in Namibia and he became frustrated that other political parties in Namibia would not amalgamate into one anti-SWAPO party. Some officers in the SADF had the impression that UNITA had to come into power before the implementation of the settlement in order to restrict action by PLAN.

The views of senior officers within the SADF were influenced by a joint strategy adopted by the SADF and UNITA in 1986. The joint strategy was based on three principal aims:<sup>79</sup>

To keep the Angolan government under pressure from UNITA by optimal concentration on conducting guerrilla warfare in Angola from March 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup>Interview with Vice Admiral A.P. Putter, former Chief of Staff Intelligence of and Chief of the Navy of the SADF in Pretoria on 15 February 1993 (henceforth 'Putter interview').

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup>Interview with Major General C. Thirion, former Deputy Chief of Military Intelligence of the SADF in Pretoria, 16 March 1993 (henceforth 'Thirion interview').

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup>These impressions were obtained through personal discussions with senior officers involved.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Republic of South Africa, South African National Defence Force Archives, War Diary 1986, box 40, 'A Concise History of Operation Modular', p.1.

- To prevent a conventional threat by FAPLA to UNITA's key points in the liberated territory during 1987.
- To neutralize FAPLA's conventional offensive capabilities by March 1988.

The SA Army was ready to support the above mentioned aims and stated its own aim to support UNITA in such a way that UNITA could coerce the MPLA government into negotiations on UNITA's conditions. Specific aims included leadership and unit training for UNITA, more effective logistical support and enhancing UNITA's offensive capabilities. <sup>80</sup> However, the mission of the SADF in 1987 was not only to support UNITA in order to enable it to stop the Marxist offensive against Jamba (the UNITA headquarters). The SADF also had the task of creating the opportunity for Namibia to become independent as a democratic state in a stable environment. <sup>81</sup>

It is the evaluation of the student that three different, but not completely mutually exclusive, official views existed in 1987 on the intermediate political ends regarding South-western Africa. The most favoured goal in 1987 was probably that SWAPO should be prevented from obtaining a two-thirds majority in an election in order to ensure the adoption of a constitutional model that would favour pro-South African interest groups in Namibia. This would have served the security interests of South Africa as the dependence of Namibia on South Africa could be ensured through normal democratic practices in Namibia. Elections in Namibia had to take place free from armed intervention. The neutralization of the PLAN, the prevention of FAPLA from supporting the PLAN, as well as an irreversible agreement on the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola were prerequisites for the independence of Namibia. The major supporters of this view were probably the 'securocrats' in South Africa who, at that stage, enjoyed the support of President P.W. Botha. A contending view placed the emphasis of ends to be achieved on the establishment of a multi party government in Namibia which would enjoy international and domestic legitimacy in order to alleviate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup>Mutatis Mutandis, Chief of the Army, Ops Instruction 36/86. Implementation of Operational Strategy 1986/87, Appendix A and B.

<sup>81</sup> Geldenhuys interview.

international pressure, including sanctions, as well as on the financial burden on South African military involvement in Namibia. An internationally negotiated deal on Cuban troop withdrawal and a cease-fire in Angola were probably supported. The exponent of this view was probably the Department of Foreign Affairs under the leadership of its minister, Mr R.F (Pik) Botha.

# 3.4.2 ANTI-'APARTHEID' VIEWS ON SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERMEDIATE POLITICAL ENDS

Jaster claimed that, in spite of astute diplomacy and dramatic military initiatives, South Africa's policy had been unsubstantial and irresolute: the South African government failed to stem the growing disarray in the internal politics of Namibia and could not establish an objective or coherent plan for a post-independence political structure. South Africa's policy on Namibia was driven by the national security of South Africa, domestic politics and the political situation in Namibia. Since 1977 the 'overarching end' regarding Namibia had been to build a strong cohesive political structure which could govern Namibia effectively should South Africa opt for an internal settlement. By 1985 South Africa had failed to fulfil this end. President Botha had been concerned that developments in Namibia might threaten the domestic political goals in South Africa. He sought to avoid actions in Namibia that might contribute to the erosion of Afrikaner support for the ruling NP or threaten the chances of his program of limited race reform at home.<sup>82</sup>

Du Pisani attempted to show that South African policy on South-western Africa, including the diplomatic and military instrument, was designed to ensure control over the process of political change in Namibia. Destabilization was intended to influence SWAPO and the MPLA in a negative way.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup>Jaster, R.S. South Africa in Namibia: The Botha Strategy, Lanham, M.D.: University Press of America, 1985, p.32.

<sup>83</sup>Du Pisani, A. 'Pax Praetoriana'..., p. 70.

The destabilization theme was emphasised by among others Campbell,<sup>84</sup> and Dreyer,<sup>85</sup> who agreed that a major South African goal had been to destabilize Angola so that the reconstruction of its economy would be postponed.

The perceived threat to South African interests from the MPLA government, which came to power with Soviet and Cuban assistance, and which was committed to provide material support to the ANC as well as SWAPO, also had to be neutralized.<sup>86</sup>

The intermediate political end of control over political change in Namibia in order to perpetuate the national interests of the South African government, together with the neutralization of a threat from Angola, as proposed by Du Pisani, correlates with official views. Furthermore, Jaster confirms the view of Cleary that, in 1987, the policy on Namibia had not been clear to independent observers.

# 3.4.3 COMPROMISE VIEWS ON THE INTERMEDIATE POLITICAL ENDS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

There was a belief among Western negotiators that the South African government was not sure of its own position. South Africa seemed to keep the options open: an international settlement, an internal solution and other alternatives such as a bilateral deal with Angola. In 1987 the South African government was isolated and inward looking. Its strategists were preoccupied with restoring internal order and coping with the changing military picture in Angola. They had no consensus or game plan for either. 88

<sup>84</sup>Campbell, op. cit., p.10.

<sup>85</sup>Dreyer, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>86</sup>Grest, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>88</sup>Crocker, op. cit. p.347.

Jaster presented a balanced view on what the goals of the government could have been by stating that, in the absence of an articulated and consistent vision, the South African government had followed an 'interim strategy' with the following goals:<sup>89</sup>

- To destroy SWAPO as a credible guerrilla force so as to diminish its political appeal inside Namibia and weaken its claims to international support as an effective insurgent movement.
- To stretch out the UN sponsored talks on Namibia, while simultaneously pressing for better terms or a settlement that would bypass the UN settlement plan.
- To continue its efforts to strengthen and unify Namibia's numerous and fractious political parties into a credible anti-SWAPO coalition.
- To demonstrate the government's toughness in the face of armed insurgency.
- To put pressure on and discourage the MPLA from playing a more direct role in support of SWAPO.
- To prevent the reinforcement of Angolan/Cuban offensive capabilities.

A useful view of the intermediate political ends was presented by Deon Geldenhuys within the context of an analysis of the strategic implications of regional economic relationships for South Africa:<sup>90</sup>

- To prevent neighbouring states from being used as 'springboards' for guerrilla war on South Africa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup>Jaster, 'South Africa in Namibia'..., p.46.

<sup>90</sup> Geldenhuys, D. Some Strategic Implications..., p.20.

- To ensure that the Soviet Union did not establish a political or military 'foothold' in Southern African states.
- To neutralize attempts by independent states to reduce their independence from South Africa.

As far as the student could establish, none of the above mentioned scholars had access to privileged information on what the official goals of the government were. The unclear nature of the intermediate ends in 1987 was, however, emphasised and correlates with certain pro-South African as well as anti-'apartheid' views.

Nevertheless, from the above-mentioned compromise views, three distinct intermediate ends regarding South-western Africa can be identified. The first goal could have been to neutralize the military risk, posed by the Cubans and the PLAN in Angola to South African national interests in Namibia. The second goal could have been to prevent a Marxist/socialist government in Namibia, and finally, to ensure the economic dependence of Angola and Namibia on South Africa. To an important extent, these compromise views correlate with some official views described above.

#### 3.5 **SUMMARY AND EVALUATION**

In 1987 the ultimate political end of the government was the protection of South Africa, and especially the interests of the ruling elite in South Africa, mostly white South Africans who were in control of the public sector and private industry, against harmful external influences. In order to achieve this end, economic control had to be maintained over the states in Southern Africa, including Namibia, in order to minimize the impact of international trends like the spreading of Western influence, Marxism/communism, decolonization and cross-border terrorism. A protective front of economically dependent states had to be established in order to ensure the perpetuation of white economic advancement in a secure environment. Control over Namibia was crucial for the achievement of this ultimate end.

An increasing economic burden posed by the occupation of Namibia, a deteriorating security situation in South Africa that required the attention of the military, as well as super power co-operation to end regional disputes, probably prompted the South African government to allow for the implementation of UN Resolution 435. The vital interest of maintaining political and economic control over Namibia was, however, threatened by the presence of the Cuban military contingent, an imminent military offensive against UNITA occupied territory and the threat of urban terror in Namibia by guerrillas of the PLAN. This was an unacceptable security risk for the South African government, a risk emphasised by conservatives in South Africa, that had to be minimized as quickly as possible. Secure conditions had to be ensured before Resolution 435 could be implemented, without compromising the interests of South Africa.

By 1987 the Government had already decided that UN Resolution 435 should be implemented. The most favoured political goal was to ensure that a degree of political and economic control over Namibia was maintained. The Government probably sought to prevent SWAPO from winning the elections in Namibia, or at least from getting a two-thirds majority. A further intermediate goal was probably the neutralization of a military threat from Angolan territory that could influence political processes in Namibia in favour of SWAPO. This formed the basis of diplomatic and military foreign policy operations. The achievement of goals was, however, decisively influenced by domestic and international conditions, narrowing down the freedom of action of the South African government in the choice of ends and the means to achieve them.

These goals were also challenged by an interest group within the South African government, the 'internationalists', who promoted the implementation of UN Resolution 435, followed by an internationally accepted multi party government in Namibia, irrespective of the outcome of the elections. This interest group, of which the Department of Foreign Affairs of the RSA formed a major part, pursued the enhancement of South Africa's international status as well as the alleviation of international isolation of South Africa as of vital interest and more important than political control over Namibia.

This dichotomy within the South Africa government probably resulted in uncoordinated and unclear political ends on South-western Africa.

The military intervention of 1987 in support of UNITA was probably a response to a perceived military threat against Namibia, which was regarded by the South African government as a threat to the security of South Africa and the survival of the South African government.

# <u>CHAPTER 4: THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA:</u> 1987-1988

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters it was averred that the SADF was employed in Angola and Namibia to create secure conditions for the installation of an independent government in Namibia that would not be hostile to the South African government after independence. The aim of this chapter is to describe the course and conduct of the intervention by the SADF in Angola in 1987 and 1988.

The military threat against territory occupied by UNITA that gave rise to the initial intervention by the SADF in 1987 will be analyzed. Thereafter the course of the campaign from the establishment of a command and control system until the final battles at Cuito Cuanavale will be described. Conflicting views will be compared and evaluated. Although specific battles will be mentioned the analyses will be not be on a tactical level but will rather attempt to elucidate the operational/strategic situation. Sketch maps of the areas in which fighting took place has been included as Appendix A.

Publications on the military operations had been restricted to those published by the SADF public relations staff section and to personal accounts by observers closely involved in developments. It would be natural to expect such accounts to be biased. Reference has accordingly been made to classified documents from the SANDF archives and Defence Headquarters in South Africa, as well as to some Soviet and Cuban viewpoints. Because of disparate versions of events, sources will be evaluated continuously.

#### 4.2 EVENTS THAT GAVE RISE TO THE INTERVENTION

An imminent military threat against UNITA-occupied territory in South-eastern Angola, requests by UNITA, as well as specific operational aims of the SADF, caused the South African government to intervene.

## 4.2.1 THE THREAT

At the beginning of 1987 there were clear indications that FAPLA and the Cubans were preparing to recapture UNITA-controlled areas in south-eastern Angola. By July, 1987, FAPLA and Cuba had begun operations east of the Cuito river to secure a bridgehead from where an offensive could be launched to capture Mavinga. A second phase would have involved the establishment of a firm base at Mavinga from where an operation could be launched to capture the UNITA headquarters at Jamba. Cubans were in control of the planning and execution of the operation, and were involved even at the lowest levels. Cubans manned anti-aircraft weapons and were part of a tank force. Cuban aircraft operated under their own ground control radar which was deployed with forward formations. On 14 August 1987 eight combined FAPLA and Cuban brigades, supported by artillery, tanks and anti-aircraft artillery, launched the offensive from the bridgehead at Cuito Cuanavale along two advance routes.<sup>2</sup>

Although international observers did not have access to all the available information, international perceptions of the FAPLA offensive confirmed the South African perception of the threat. According to Jaster,<sup>3</sup> Soviet transport aircraft began to deliver arms to forward FAPLA bases in April and May 1987. The main offensive, under the direction of General Shaganovitch, began on 14 August 1987. Five Angolan brigades, totalling 10 000 troops and an estimated 300 to 400 tanks, as well as other armed forces, advanced from Cuito Cuanavale towards Mavinga. The capture of Mavinga, an important resupply base for UNITA, was necessary to enable it to be used as a firm base for a final assault on Jamba. According to Bridgland the Cuban leadership was opposed to the 1987 offensive. General del Pino, however, assisted with the planning of the offensive. Castro declined to commit troops

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>A FAPLA brigade numbered some 1500 men and was, therefore, much weaker than more conventional brigades.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Lessons Learned..., p.1-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Jaster, The 1988 Peace Accords..., p.17.

to the offensive but agreed to attach up to 35 Cuban specialists to each FAPLA battalion as military advisers as well as artillery and armour commanders.<sup>4</sup>

In a speech on Radio Havana Castro denied Cuban participation in the initial FAPLA offensive and said that the FAPLA offensive of 1987 had created a crisis for Cuba. Southeastern Angola was very far from the Cuban frontline and Cubans were not participating in the offensive. 'Those who wanted the operation and those in favour of the operation's were advised by Cuba that the offensive could not be carried out if appropriate conditions to stop South Africa from intervening could not be created. The Cuban point of view was, however, ignored. Crocker confirmed the Cuban attitude to the offensive. Castro and his military officers were disdainful of Soviet strategic planning which was tactically complex and took FAPLA hundreds of kilometres from their home support bases. The Cubans argued against the 1987 Soviet-Angolan battle plan and played only a minimal role in it.

Independent scholars have put the international involvement in the offensive in perspective. Although UNITA claimed that a brigade-sized unit of Cubans aided FAPLA in the offensive and that Cubans commanded two of the Angolan brigades, this claim could not be substantiated. Cuban military personnel, singly or in units, may have provided some support to FAPLA forces engaged in combat.<sup>8</sup> An estimated US\$ 1 billion in Soviet equipment arrived in the Angolan capital, Luanda, by Soviet AN-24 flights, as many as 12 per day over a six-month period. Four IL-76 planes ferried supplies to the front. The 18000 strong

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Bridgland, F. The War for Africa: Twelve Months That Transformed a Continent, Ashanti, Gibraltar, 1990, p. 19. Although Bridgland did not participate in the events, his access to a wide range of participants, together with his personal background of reporting and able interpretation of African events, encouraged the writer to compare his version of events with other accounts. This account, for example, is based on a personal interview with General Raphael Del Pino, commander of the Cuban forces in Angola for a period of ten years, who defected to the USA by the end of 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Castro is probably referring to the advisors from the Soviet-Union and FAPLA.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Castro, op. cit., p.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.356.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Cuba and Angola..., p.7.

Soviet force in Angola included large numbers of Soviet advisers attached to each brigade to assure adherence to Soviet strategy. Taking part in the offensive were as many as 150 Soviet tanks supported by Mig-23s and SU-22s operating from airfields protected by an elaborate Soviet radar and missile network. For the first time the Soviet Union deployed M-46 guns and the new Mi-35 derivative of the Mi-24 Hind helicopter. The military campaign of July 1987 was planned and launched under the personal supervision of Soviet General Konstantin Shaganovitsch, assisted by General Michail Petrov, both officers experienced in counter-insurgency operations. To

#### 4.2.2 CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS AND THE REQUEST BY UNITA

In February 1987 relations between UNITA and the SADF deteriorated sharply for various reasons. UNITA refused to acknowledge that direct military intervention by the SADF would be necessary to execute military operations in Angola in 1987. Initially UNITA was of the opinion that it could cope with the offensive and that it would only need logistic aid. However, relations improved through the intervention of senior officers and on 1 May 1987 it was decided at Mavinga to deploy two liaison teams from Military Intelligence Division east of Cuito Cuanavale to make an assessment of the situation together with UNITA. 11

Subsequently liaison teams were established by the SADF to maintain a permanent presence in UNITA occupied territory as UNITA was an important source of intelligence to be exploited by the liaison teams. The mission of the liaison teams was to liaise with Savimbi and other UNITA commanders, as well as to train UNITA in conventional warfare. The teams also participated with UNITA in combat.<sup>12</sup> The most important role was, however,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Vanneman, P. Soviet Strategy in Southern Africa. Gorbachev's Pragmatic Approach, Hoover Press Publication, Stanford, 1990, p.54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Campbell, op. cit., p.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>A Concise History ..., p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Based on personal discussions with liaison team commanders involved, during and after several deployments.

to build confidence between the SADF and UNITA. Two teams were initially deployed in the third and sixth military regions to ensure that Military Intelligence would constantly be up to date with the situation and to assess the real logistic and military needs of UNITA. A team was eventually also deployed in the Cunene province.<sup>13</sup>

On 15 June 1987 it was decided that the SADF involvement would remain clandestine with the main responsibility for stopping the offensive still resting with UNITA. The SADF prepared though for air and ground attacks on FAPLA while the latter was on the march.<sup>14</sup>

On 22 June 1987 the SWATF was ordered to support UNITA in halting the offensive. Operation Modular was to be conducted in escalating phases. Firstly FAPLA had to be monitored as it deployed and advanced. At an unspecified time the FAPLA advance had to be stopped and destroyed. Air strikes would be authorised for the last phase. The authorized force levels were four companies of infantry from 32 battalion, supported by 127 mm multiple rocket launchers and 120 mm mortars. Casualties had to be avoided. Successes would be credited to UNITA. By mid-August 1987 it had become clear that the force levels were inadequate if the stated aims were to be achieved. The force levels of the SADF were therefore developed in stages and in August a Ratel 90 anti-tank squadron and a battery of G5s were sent to Mavinga. In August 1987 South Africa decided to increase its military support to Savimbi, especially air support, armour and artillery.

South African involvement was increased during the night of 25/26 August 1987 when a six-man team from Special Forces, protected by UNITA and co-ordinated by an MID liaison team, demolished the bridge at Cuito Cuanavale with explosives. The supply route from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Lessons Learned..., p.12-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African Defence Force, Chief of Staff Operations, *Planning Directive 2/87: WALENE*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Mutatis Mutandis, Operational Instruction 11/87 dd 17 June 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>A Concise History ..., p.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit., p.167.

Cuito Cuanavale to the forward combat brigades of FAPLA had been cut off, forcing them to ferry or to fly supplies to formations east of the Cuito river.<sup>18</sup>

The FAPLA offensive on the different fronts continued, however, and it seemed unlikely that the offensive could be stopped by UNITA alone. Requests by UNITA for more physical military aid increased despite reservations about the image of UNITA if the SADF should become involved.<sup>19</sup> On 28 August, at Mavinga, Savimbi admitted that UNITA alone had no prospect of stopping the offensive alone and requested South Africa to increase its aid.<sup>20</sup> He also agreed that UNITA would deploy the Stinger anti-aircraft missiles obtained from the USA to protect the South African artillery. According to Heitman the decision was taken on 28 or 29 Aug 1987 to reinforce South African forces with 61 Mechanised Brigade and two companies from 101 Battalion.<sup>21</sup> Restrictions on air support were also lifted.<sup>22</sup>

According to Bridgland,<sup>23</sup> on 1 Sep 1987, when 47 Brigade of FAPLA was approaching the source of the Lomba, permission was given to a battery of G-5 guns to move into Angola to support 32 Battalion, clandestinely deployed in Angola since the beginning of August 1987. The battle-hardened 61 Mechanized Battalion was placed on alert at Oshivello in Namibia and at the beginning of September 1987, 61 Mechanized Battalion entered the fray.<sup>24</sup> By the end of the first week in September 1987, a brigade-size force (later called 20 Brigade) was assembled to achieve the aims by the end of September 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>A Concise History..., p.31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Military formations and units of the SADF will be indicated in *italics* to ensure a clear distinction to those of its adversaries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Heitman, H-R. op. cit.,p.43. Despite occasional one-sidedness and selective reporting, on behalf of the SADF the direct access Heitman had to official sources, as well as his ability to analyze military events, warranted the inclusion of information supplied by him for the purpose of comparison.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Bridgland, op. cit. p.48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>A Concise History..., p.1.

#### 4.2.3 SOUTH AFRICA'S IMMEDIATE AIMS IN INTERVENING

General Geldenhuys described the immediate aims of the intervention as the prevention of control by Marxist forces over Southern Angola and any subsequent attempts to escalate the insurgency by PLAN and Umkontho we Sizwe.<sup>25</sup> According to Major-General Thirion,<sup>26</sup> former Deputy Chief of Military Intelligence, the intervention of the SADF in Angola was meant to prevent the military destruction of UNITA and the posture was defensive, although some commanders nurtured other more offensive sentiments.

Independent observers such as Bridgland agreed that the immediate military aim had been to stop the FAPLA offensive and to strengthen the abilities of UNITA to prevent military forces like Cuba to threaten Namibia unhindered.<sup>27</sup> Only direct South African involvement could have prevented the fall of Mavinga and a final assault on Jamba.<sup>28</sup>

## 4.3 THE COURSE OF THE INTERVENTION

The course of the South African military intervention will be described chronologically. The initial neutralization of the FAPLA offensive, the geographical escalation of the conflict by the SADF, the counter-intervention by Cuba to assist FAPLA, as well as the strategic impasse at Cuito Cuanavale, will be analyzed.

#### 4.3.1 COMMAND AND CONTROL

The Chief of the SADF assigned the role of undertaking the operation to Chief of the Army who assigned the task of playing the primary role in the actual conduct of the operations in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit., p.167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Geldenhuys interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Bridgland, op. cit., p.33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Dreyer, op. cit., p.49; Jaster, op. cit., p.17.

the field. General Officer Commanding SWATF to oversee the intervention.<sup>29</sup> The Chief of the Air Force was responsible for the air campaign, rendering support requested by the Chief of the Army and the deployment of Mobile Air Operation Teams (MAOTs) with combat groups and Stinger teams. The Surgeon-General was responsible for medical aid as required. The Military Intelligence Division was responsible for liaison with UNITA and the provision of intelligence to all executives. Special Forces were responsible for any special operations that might be identified.

Headquarters for the campaign were established at Rundu. Initially the counter-insurgency headquarters of Sector 20 at Rundu functioned as campaign headquarters, but as the campaign escalated tactical headquarters were established at Rundu to conduct external operations. A combat group headquarters was established in the vicinity of Mavinga. This was eventually upgraded and designated 20 Brigade headquarters. By mid-October 1987 the headquarters of 7 Division were deployed at the Lomba river, resulting in the tactical headquarters at Rundu exercising command over 7 Division Headquarters. The latter exercised command over a single brigade. This proved to be a problem when it came to cooperation among arms of the service. Eventually 7 Division Headquarters was removed from the chain of command. Sector 10 at Oshakati did not establish extra structures and the counter-insurgency headquarters functioned as headquarters for operations in the Cunene province.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.3.2 NEUTRALIZING THE FAPLA OFFENSIVE

On 4 September 1987, 20 Brigade of the SA Army received the mission to make sure that the FAPLA/Cuban advance was stopped.<sup>31</sup> The advance of 47 Brigade, attempting to reach Mavinga by moving around the source of the Lomba, was stopped by SADF artillery

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Chief of Staff Operations Operational Instruction 11/87..., p.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Lessons Learned..., p.1-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Bridgland, op. cit., p.56.

barrages.<sup>32</sup> On the night of 9/10 September, Special Forces teams pinpointed the static position of 47 Brigade for an air strike on 11 September. The strike was called off for political reasons, apparently because of the release of Captain Wynand du Toit.<sup>33</sup>

Although the persistent artillery bombardments and other actions during the first week of September 1987 succeeded in delaying the advance of the FAPLA brigades on the Lomba, SADF actions on 10 and 11 September 1987 succeeded in thwarting the first attempt of 21 Brigade to cross the Lomba river. The offensive capability of FAPLA had been dealt a heavy blow in terms of men and material in the engagements.<sup>34</sup> On 12 and 13 September elements of 59 Brigade crossed the Lomba river to join 47 Brigade. They withdrew after being driven off by 20 Brigade. From 14 to 23 September 21 Brigade tried every day to cross the Lomba, but failed, with heavy casualties as a result.<sup>35</sup> On the morning of 16 September 1987, 47 Brigade of FAPLA was attacked with mechanised infantry but the attack failed because of the unsuitability of the terrain for mechanized warfare.<sup>36</sup>

At first light on 26 September, Mirage aircraft of the South African Air Force (SAAF) attacked the positions of 21 Brigade, followed by an artillery barrage, forcing 21 Brigade to retreat on 27 September with only one third of its strength intact.<sup>37</sup>

On 28 and 29 September 1987 the State President, the Minister of Defence and Deputy Minister of Defence visited 20 Brigade headquarters on the Lomba front where President P.W. Botha gave his personal approval for the planning of a more offensive intervention. The aim was to destroy the FAPLA brigades deployed east of the Cuito river, before the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit. p.169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p.169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>A Concise History..., p.51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Geldenhuys J. op. cit., p.170.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>A Concise History..., p.57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Bridgland, op. cit., p.101.

beginning of the rainy season.<sup>38</sup> The State President made it clear that the aim of the new offensive had to be to inflict such a crushing blow on the enemy that no offensive on their part in 1988 would be possible. For this purpose, additional funds were made available for the operation. Political authorization was then obtained for two additional offensive phases of the intervention involving 4 SA Infantry battalion, a mechanised force and a squadron of Olifant tanks.<sup>39</sup>

In the first week of October 1987 heavy fighting took place in the vicinity of the Lomba river. The FAPLA-offensive was finally stopped on 3 October 1987 when 47 Brigade was destroyed by mechanised forces of the SADF and UNITA, supported by artillery. The remainder of the Angolan forces were then forced back to Cuito Cuanavale. On 5 October the FAPLA forces received orders from Cuito Cuanavale to withdraw.<sup>40</sup>

The Angolans retreated to defensive positions east of Cuito Cuanavale. The SADF had inflicted substantial losses on FAPLA, which lost most of its equipment during the retreat to Cuito Cuanavale. Huge quantities of Soviet equipment were destroyed or fell into the hands of UNITA and the SADF when FAPLA broke into a disorganised retreat. The 1987 military campaign represented a stunning humiliation for the Soviet Union, its arms and its strategy. 42

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>The rainy season in the Cuando-Cubango province normally starts around October every year, but the regular thunderstorms and sometimes continuous drizzles only had a decisive effect on military operations from December to June every year, especially on the movement of ground forces and air attacks.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>A Concise History..., p.57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p.76-77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>Herbst, J. op. cit. p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>Crocker, *op. cit.* p.360.

#### 4.2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN ESCALATION

The SADF had completed its mission. FAPLA's offensive capabilities had been neutralized. The SADF could, however, not withdraw and had to ensure that FAPLA did not regroup and resume its offensive. The expected international pressure was not imposed and the SADF had to use the freedom of action to make the best of the situation while in Angola.<sup>43</sup> The SADF had to leave the battlefield in such a way that UNITA's enemy could not regroup and launch a renewed offensive. It was jointly decided by the leadership of the SADF and UNITA that the latter had to base its future defence on Cuito Cuanavale and therefore the SADF decided to exploit and strengthen the Cuito river as an obstacle.<sup>44</sup> All FAPLA forces on the eastern side of the Cuito river had to be cleared up and maximum casualties inflicted before 15 December 1987, when the national service term of South African troops involved in the campaign ended and they had to be withdrawn. In addition it was essential to ensure that no new FAPLA offensive could be launched in 1987 or 1988. The change from a defensive posture by the SADF to an offensive posture created new logistic problems, especially regarding the delivery of artillery ammunition over increasing distances. 45 Pressure had to be exerted on 59 and 21 Brigades and 16 Brigade had to be attacked (all three brigades were at that stage in defensive positions east of the Cuito river). Cuito Cuanavale had to be seized if it should prove 'necessary or convenient'. To achieve this targets in an around Cuito Cuanavale was to be constantly shelled to keep the airbase closed and to harass logistic movement through the town or across the bridge. Actions against the town could be planned, but no execution was allowed without prior approval from Chief of the SADF. Consideration was also to be given to harassing operations against Menongue or to any operations that might tie up FAPLA in the 5th Military Region.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit., p.172.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>Geldenhuys interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup>Bridgland, op. cit., p.172.

<sup>46</sup>Heitman, op. cit., p.109.

On 8 October it was decided to move the G-5 artillery, under strong protection, to within bombardment range of the airfield at Cuito Cuanavale, as well as to infiltrate units behind FAPLA lines.<sup>47</sup> On 20 October a new offensive force, including *4 South African Infantry Battalion*, 13 Olifant tanks, a battery of G-5 guns and three G-6 guns, crossed the Kavango river at Rundu to reach Mavinga on 30 October.<sup>48</sup> By 28 October the Cuito Cuanavale airbase had been completely neutralized and could not be used by FAPLA fighter or transport aircraft.<sup>49</sup>

On 31 October a strong SADF force crossed the border into Ovamboland, several hundred kilometres to the west of the South-east Angolan war theatre, to strike a SWAPO base near Cuvelai. The aim of the attack was to create a threat from the west against Menongue and Cuito Cuanavale. The attack was successful but 12 South African soldiers died. UNITA claimed success while South Africa continued to deny involvement.<sup>50</sup>

FAPLA's 16 Brigade was attacked on 9 November with mechanized forces supported by Mirage-F-1 AZs and artillery. Most of the brigade escaped but they lost all their tanks.<sup>51</sup> In fighting from 9 to 17 November the last of FAPLA's offensive capabilities were destroyed. The SADF, however, could not destroy the FAPLA brigades before they were able to create an adequate defensive position. Neither could the SADF drive them from the area east of the Cuito river. FAPLA had only been pushed to the north of the Chambinga river. The morale of some SADF troops were low and equipment was failing because of inadequate logistics. FAPLA was deployed over a wide area and dug in over a limited area of good defensive ground and could not be driven out by artillery alone. A political decision was taken to execute a deliberate attack on the FAPLA positions east of the Cuito. Since the South African forces consisted of mainly the national servicemen, whose term of duty was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>Bridgland, op. cit, p.173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>*Ibid*., p.183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p.180.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Heitman, op. cit., p.121.

to expire on 15 December, the decision was taken to replace them with new troops from South Africa.<sup>52</sup>

Chief of the Army decided that FAPLA forces east of the Cuito river should be attacked via the Chambinga high ground to present a threat, in the hope that this would cause FAPLA to withdraw to west of the Cuito river. The minimum requirement was that the Chambinga bridge should be dominated. By achieving this aim the SADF could have contained FAPLA west of the river to prevent them from launching a renewed offensive in 1988.<sup>53</sup> Against the advice of commanders in the field who favoured an attack on Cuito Cuanavale from the west, it was decided to launch one more attack on 25 and 26 November against FAPLA positions in order to exert pressure on Cuba and FAPLA to transform pre-negotiations into substantive talks. The SADF, however, failed to achieve its aim of capturing or securing the Chambinga bridge. Operation Modular was terminated and the national servicemen were demobilized.<sup>54</sup>

After the destruction of 47 Brigade at the Lomba and fighting in the vicinity of the Chambinga river, the SA Army could not pursue the enemy immediately because enough forces were not available. Maintenance of momentum was forfeited. No reserves were available to exploit a favourable situation.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4.2.4 THE CUBAN COUNTER-INTERVENTION

The military events of 1987 had a decisive impact on Cuban response. The situation offered Castro an unique opportunity to shape his own destiny in Africa and claim leadership of the communist camp.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p.224.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, p.160-161.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup>Bridgland., op. cit., p.232.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup>A Concise History..., p.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.365.

The outcome of the military conflict in South-eastern Angola in 1987 had the potential to alter the military strategic situation in Eastern and South-eastern Angola. FAPLA had not only been unable to defeat UNITA, but FAPLA positions in South-eastern Angola were in danger. The capture of Cuito Cuanavale by the SADF could force the FAPLA line of defence back to Menongue, with the Angolan government losing territory it had taken years to gain. It would have linked SADF operations in the Cuando-Cubango province and Cunene province and SWAPO targets would have been outflanked from the east and north-east. The loss of Cuito Cuanavale air facilities and radar would severely limit FAPLA air defence capabilities.<sup>57</sup> Subsequently, about 7 November, President Castro and President dos Santos worked out a plan for the dispatch of 15 000 additional troops to Angola and the deployment of the 50th Division and top-rated air force pilots.<sup>58</sup>

According to Castro, on 15 November 1987, Cuba landed the first 15000 reinforcements and their best pilots. <sup>59</sup> The best combat units were selected to respond to the situation. In addition a group of advisors, officials and cadres were flown to Cuito Cuanavale. Artillerymen, tank forces and technicians joined them. This group of about 200 was later joined by artillery, tank and infantry units to secure Cuito Cuanavale. The Cuban-Angolan strategy was not merely to stop the SADF at Cuito Cuanavale, but to lure the SADF in concentrating enough forces so that Cuba could advance and attack in the south-west. Enough forces were gathered to seriously threaten places of strategic importance to South Africa in territory chosen by Cuban and MPLA commanders. The principle was that decisive battles should take place in territory selected by Cuba and that the SADF had to be struck at its weak points, in areas of strategic importance. Cuba preferred a political solution but if it had no alternative it would strike the South Africans with all its power.

Castro's plan was to block the SADF in the south-east and then to move a major combat force into the south-west (Cunene province). The aim was to fill this province, mostly depopulated no mans land, with a major deployment of modern, conventional combat power.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Cuba and Angola..., p.12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.365.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup>Castro, op. cit., p.8.

With the support of FAPLA and SWAPO the Cubans would occupy the Cunene province right up to the Namibian border. This would have permitted SWAPO to regain access to its best sanctuaries and infiltration routes into Namibia.<sup>60</sup>

#### 4.2.5 THE STRATEGIC IMPASSE

On 25 November the UN Security Council voted unanimously to condemn the South African intervention and demand that South Africa unconditionally withdrew its forces by 20 December. On 5 December General Geldenhuys announced the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola to be completed by Christmas 1987.<sup>61</sup> Although the USA voted for the resolution, it was stated that the US government was seeking a settlement removing all foreign forces from the region.<sup>62</sup>

A new operation, Operation Hooper, was launched on 13 December 1987. According to the operational instruction for Operation Hooper the General Officer Commanding SA Army Forces in SWA had to destroy the FAPLA forces east of the Cuito river by 31 December 1987 to create a situation in which FAPLA would not be able to launch an offensive from Cuito Cuanavale in 1988, UNITA would be placed in a favourable position and it would be ensured that gains were not lost. Guidelines included the destruction of the bridge at Cuito Cuanavale, the restriction of Angolan air operations and logistical supplies from Menongue, and losses to be kept to a minimum until 21 December 1987. On 13 December General Geldenhuys and other generals visited the *Tactical Headquarters* and stressed that the international situation demanded that the South Africans should maintain a low profile and that maximum use should be made of psychological measures.<sup>63</sup> Consequently from 14 December onwards the SADF concentrated on air attacks and artillery bombardments. By 24 December the bridge over the Cuito had been so weakened by shelling and air attacks that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup>Crocker, op. cit. p.367.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>A Chronology of Events..., p. 21.

<sup>63</sup> Heitman, op. cit., p.189.

it had to be closed to vehicles. However, the bridge was functioning again by 27 December 1987.<sup>64</sup> On 3 January it was damaged by an air delivered 'smart bomb'.<sup>65</sup>

At that stage perceptions were formed in the international community about events, mostly perceptions formed from selective reports in the media, as the intervention was still shrouded in secrecy. According to Campbell, after the siege of the SADF in November 1987 the South African forces in Angola experienced stiff resistance from the forces in Angola and President Botha had to boost the morale of the troops in person. 66 This visit prompted the fortification of the Angolan position by Cuba in order to prevent a direct threat to Cuban forces in Angola. The first three hundred Cuban reinforcements began arriving in Cuito Cuanavale in early December 1987 followed by a Cuban infantry regiment and a tank company from Menongue.<sup>67</sup> On 10 December the Angolan government announced that it had authorized Cuba to engage the SADF.<sup>68</sup> From 29 December 1987 to 3 January 1988 the SADF constantly fired its artillery at Cuito Cuanavale. The Cuban High Command subsequently decided to redeploy its forces in Menongue to Cuito Cuanavale. The result was a change in the balance of forces, particularly in terms of air superiority, as well as in terms of the anti-aircraft defence of Angola.<sup>69</sup> In January 1988 Cuba increased its troops to 40 000 men. The Soviet Union sent new fighter aircraft and installed what was considered to be the most sophisticated air defence network outside the Warsaw Pact countries, covering the whole of Southern Angola and Northern Namibia.70

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, p.185.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p.198.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup>Campbell, op. cit., p.12. Campbell is probably referring to the visit by President Botha and his cabinet to the Tactical HQ of the SADF north of Mavinga in late November 1987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.366.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup>Carrasco & Gonzales, J. 'Defeating a Myth. The Message of Cuito Cuanavale' *Prisma*, no 9/88, p.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup>Dreyer, *op. cit.*, p.50.

On 4 January it became known that the Cuban 50 Brigade was deploying to the Cunene province in South-western Angola.<sup>71</sup> At that stage SADF units operated east of the Cunene river as far as 10 km from Cuvelai against SWAPO (PLAN). Towns like Mupa and Mongua were avoided to prevent contact between the SADF and FAPLA. Counter-insurgency operations continued in Ovamboland.<sup>72</sup>

On 2 January 1988, at the Cuito front, an attempt was made to drive 21 Brigade from its position by delivering maximum firepower. This effort failed and the position was attacked by UNITA infantry with South African fire support. This second effort failed as well and it became clear that a third deliberate attack would be needed to destroy 21 Brigade. This third attack was launched on 13 January 1988. After a successful attack 4 South African Infantry Battalion and 61 Mechanised Brigade withdrew to their leaguers to the east of the Chambinga high ground. They failed, however, to annihilate 21 Brigade and most of the brigade personnel escaped to the Tumpo triangle to reorganize. The SADF did not follow up because its forces were limited as a result of 32 Battalion having been transferred for the operation between Menongue and the Cuito and because of inadequate logistical support. A

The result of the battle prompted the Cuban generals to take direct command and control of the situation. The forces at Cuito Cuanavale were subsequently reinforced with a tank battalion from Menongue. The forces east of the Cuito river were ordered back into a small bridgehead to be supported by artillery fire. The FAPLA reaction was, however, very slow. According to Castro the Cuban troops in Angola were not enough to defend a line that was 700 km long and in addition advance through 200 km of woods from Menongue to Cuito Cuanavale. It was difficult to get supplies to Cuito Cuanavale from Menongue.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup>Heitman, op. cit. p.199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African National Defence Force Archives, War Diary 1988 (henceforth War Diary 1988), box 39 'Sektor 10 Jaarverslag 1988', Appendix A: Operational Objectives.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup>Heitman, op. cit., p.197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup>Bridgland, op. cit. p.266.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p.213.

Therefore it was imperative to reinforce the troops and apply an adequate concept of operations. The Cuban government therefore decided on reinforcements to prevent the annihilation of Angolan troops and the development of the 'complicated situation' that could result for Cuba. Cuba was in no way responsible for the previous errors made by the Soviet Union and FAPLA that led to the situation but could not allow 'a military and political disaster to take place'. It was decided to send the most experienced pilots of the Cuban air force to Angola to conduct air strikes from the Menongue air base against South African troops at Cuito Cuanavale. Cuban commanders took charge and ordered the defensive line, comprising 59 Brigade, 25 Brigade and 21 Brigade, to shorten so that it could be covered by artillery positioned west of the Cuito river. The Angolans were slow in complying.<sup>76</sup>

At the beginning of January 1988 a clandestine operation, executed mainly by 32 Battalion was launched in the area between Cuito Cuanavale and Menongue, with the aim of disrupting FAPLA and Cuban logistics, while the main forces of the SADF attacked from the east of the Cuito river. By mid-January SAAF raids were inflicting severe casualties on convoys on their way to Cuito Cuanavale. 8

On 28 January General Geldenhuys visited the *Tactical Headquarters* where he stated that the South African casualties created some pressure on the SADF in South Africa but that a degree of understanding of the situation was forthcoming from 'Western countries'. He also reiterated that FAPLA had to be driven to east of the Cuito river.<sup>79</sup>

Negotiations on 28 and 29 January 1988 in Luanda, between Dr Crocker and Angolan representatives, resulted in an agreement by Angola and Cuba about the total withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola as part of a Southern African peace settlement.<sup>80</sup> In late January

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup>Barber, op. cit. p.40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup>Bridgland, op. cit. p.244.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup>*Ibid*., p.250.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup>Heitman, op. cit. p.220.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup>A Chronology of Events..., p.40.

1988 Minister R.F. Botha received a visit from the Bavarian premier, Franz Josef Strauss, immediately after the latter had met the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr Eduard Shevardnadze. Mr Strauss told Mr Botha that the Soviet Union wanted to find a political solution to the Angolan problem because a military solution did not seem to be possible.<sup>81</sup>

On 13 February, 32 Battalion attacked Menongue airbase with artillery only. However, by midday on 14 February the base was functioning again and aircraft were taking off to attack South African forces at Cuito Cuanavale. Commanders involved in the battle expressed their disappointment that they had not been allowed to attack Cuito Cuanavale from the west with a stronger force, or to go west or north of Menongue to hit convoys before these could reach the town.<sup>82</sup>

On 14 February 1988 the SADF achieved a decisive victory by destroying 59 Brigade and driving 21 Brigade and 25 Brigade back into the Tumpo Triangle. The SADF now had most of the FAPLA forces pinned down just east of the Cuito river. The next objective was to drive FAPLA and the Cubans from the Tumpo Triangle.<sup>83</sup>

According to Castro the SADF crashed through the 5 km gap between 21 Brigade and 59 Brigade encircling 59 Brigade. The SADF could have gone as far as Cuito and eliminated three entire brigades and 3500 Angolan soldiers. In a counter-attack Cuba lost seven tanks. The Angolan brigades retreated to the river and were trapped because the SADF had destroyed the bridge at Cuito Cuanavale. The defenders (FAPLA), after a long delay, finally dug in along the river, protected by minefields in front and artillery as well as anti-aircraft cover from west of the bridge. General Cinta Frias then took over the responsibility for the defence of Cuito Cuanavale. Cuban sappers organised and helped to create impassable minefields in Cuito Cuanavale, where three South African tanks were disabled on 23 March.

<sup>81</sup>Bridgland, op. cit., p.319.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, p.289.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 281-282.

Although most of the forces in Cuito Cuanavale were Angolans, they were no longer a factor in the war and it was left to the Cubans to secure Cuito Cuanavale.<sup>84</sup>

On 25 February 1988 South African forces attacked FAPLA positions south of the Tumpo river and at Dala to pin FAPLA in the area. According to SADF commanders involved, the attack on Tumpo failed because of the ability of the Cubans to keep their fighter aircraft in the air, clever manoeuvring, accurate artillery fire and the lack of a South African mine-breeching capability. On 29 February a second attack on Tumpo failed, again because of clever defence by Cuba, especially the use of its anti-tank reserve. The commanders also maintained the view that the first attack failed because no follow-up was ordered by Brigade Headquarters when FAPLA was in disarray. The second attack failed because of an overestimation of the enemy's armour capability and serious logistical problems.

On 23 March a third attack was launched on Tumpo which failed because of effective minefields and artillery fire. <sup>89</sup> Especially this final battle at Tumpo, where the SADF lost three tanks in a minefield, proved to be detrimental to the morale of South African forces. The South African troops had had too many fights and there was no indication of relief. With Operation Packer the SADF did not succeed in driving the enemy out of their bunkers on the eastern bank of the Cuito river. The SADF lacked the offensive means and the killer instinct. The SADF suffered more losses of equipment and personnel than usual and had no substantial reserves available to continue the fight. Aircrew, both in helicopters and fighters, were exhausted by the numerous operations. FAPLA dug in on the east bank of the Cuito river and there was no way the SADF could get them out, not even with a tank onslaught. The morale of FAPLA, albeit low, held, and the SADF had problems with the morale of its

<sup>84</sup>Barber, op. cit., p.40-41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup>A Concise History..., p.8.

<sup>86</sup> Heitman, op. cit., p.253.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p.261.

<sup>88</sup>Bridgland, op. cit., p.315.

<sup>89</sup>Heitman, op. cit. p.280.

forces. <sup>90</sup> FAPLA was given time to recover between attacks. The SADF task force had to be strengthened, additional fuel and ammunition had to be brought up and an infrastructure had to be established to support the escalating operation. The logistic preparations never quite caught up with the demands of the front. <sup>91</sup> The offensive was then stopped owing to considerations such as the cost-effectiveness of the operation. <sup>92</sup>

On 30 April 1988 Operation Displace was launched to prevent a FAPLA offensive in 1988. The aim of the operation was to enclose the bridgehead with a mine field to prevent FAPLA from advancing from the east bank of the Cuito river. <sup>93</sup> It appeared to be impossible to destroy the bridgehead at Cuito Cuanavale without unacceptable losses. Furthermore, the emphasis shifted to the negotiating table. The first round of talks was imminent and General Geldenhuys formed part of the South African negotiating team. <sup>94</sup> The SADF was also under pressure from President P.W. Botha to terminate the intervention because he did not want another Vietnam. The perception existed that the mission had been accomplished. <sup>95</sup>

### 4.3 **SUMMARY AND EVALUATION**

The SADF intervened in South-eastern Angola in response to an unacceptable threat against UNITA and subsequently Namibia. The main body of the offensive against UNITA consisted of Angolan troops, advised by Cubans and Soviets even on tactical level. The immediate aim of the offensive was the UNITA base area, including a strategic airfield at Mavinga. The capture of Mavinga would enable the Angolan forces to threaten the UNITA headquarters at Jamba, as well as Northern Namibia.

<sup>90</sup>From Fledgling to Eagle..., p.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup>Heitman, op. cit., p.340.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup>Lessons learned..., p. 1-1.

<sup>93</sup>Heitman, op. cit., p.281.

<sup>94</sup>Bridgland, op. cit., p.331.

<sup>95</sup>Geldenhuys J., op. cit., p.177.

Initially the South African government wanted the SADF to be only temporarily involved in a limited and clandestine way. UNITA still had to play a vital role and the image of UNITA was an important consideration, as UNITA had to be in a strong political position in Angola. The agreement between General Geldenhuys and Doctor Savimbi on 28/29 August 1987 probably served as the final 'trigger' for the intervention with conventional military forces by South Africa.

The South African military intervention took place in the form of a combined operation with the SWATF and UNITA. In a joint effort by mechanised and other ground forces as well as air power the SADF intervened to prevent the destruction of UNITA. The military targets consisted of mainly FAPLA formations. Infrastructure of military importance in Cuito Cuanavale was also engaged with artillery and air strikes. The Cuban/FAPLA logistic route between Menongue and Cuito Cuanavale was also a major target for guerrilla operations and air strikes. Because of the unsuitability of artillery barrages or air strikes to secure targets, as well as the inability of UNITA foot soldiers to take FAPLA defences, the main method used was deliberate attacks by mechanised forces supported by artillery and close air support.

The unsuitable terrain for mechanised operations and the logistically intensive nature of the methods used were serious limitations on the execution of operations. Together with restrictions, like the time limitations on the availability of part-time soldiers, this had a negative effect on military proficiency. These limitations resulted in the loss of momentum which allowed FAPLA to recover from attacks and for the reinforcement of defences by Cuba, which made the attacking of targets by the SADF more difficult. In view of restricted logistic capabilities for operations in dense terrain far from home bases, the escalation of the operation with conventional mechanised forces by South Africa can be regarded as a mistake. The question can be asked whether FAPLA have been prevented from a further offensive in 1988 by more indirect and less expensive means like the use of guerrilla warfare by UNITA, reinforced and supported by SADF and SWATF forces capable of executing or supporting such operations. Such guerrilla operations between Menongue and Cuito Cuanavale, supported by limited SAAF and artillery support, could have prevented FAPLA from reestablishing its conventional capabilities, while Cuba could have refrained from escalating the conflict to such an intensity.

Indications are that Cuban escalation was in reaction to a perception that the South African government was escalating the conflict to capture Southern Angola and that it had become vital to Cuban interests to reinstate a balance of power in the Cuando Cubango province. The deduction can be made that the SADF leadership did not expect the strong Cuban defence, including efficient anti-tank defence under an umbrella of air superiority and artillery support. The SADF eventually lost the initiative because these defences could not be overcome and had to settle for defensive measures to prevent FAPLA from posing a future threat to South African interests.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONSEQUENCES OF THE INTERVENTION**

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In determining the relationship between the use of military force by the South African government and its political ends, the consequences as well as the prior intentions are equally relevant. An examination of the consequences should throw light on the success or otherwise of the South African government in achieving political ends through the use of military force.

Various views on the consequences of the intervention will be analyzed. This analysis will include a determination of the degree of achievement of the immediate military aims, escalation of the military conflict by Cuba and the South African response to it, the compromise on political goals in 1988, the security conditions surrounding the implementation of UN Resolution 435, as well the impact of Namibian independence on the national security of South Africa.

There is disagreement amongst scholars and participants regarding some aspects of the consequences exists. Therefore contradictions will be pointed out and comments will be made regarding the reliability of sources.

## 5.2 THE ACHIEVEMENT OF IMMEDIATE MILITARY AIMS

There is no agreement on whether or not the operational goals of the SADF were achieved. The question on 'who won the war' is still asked. Some scholars and participants view the outcome of the intervention as in favour of the SADF, while others argue that the SADF was unsuccessful. The conflicting views will be described and an assessment will be offered.

#### 5.2.1 THE PRO-SOUTH AFRICAN VIEW

According to General Geldenhuys, once the FAPLA advance had been stopped the limited aims initially decided upon were achieved. FAPLA could not get further than the Lomba

river. Political actions had to conclude the war. The SADF mission was regarded as accomplished on 3 October 1987. The subjection of Angola had never been the intention. The object set for the SADF to reinforce UNITA's position had been achieved because in May 1989 FAPLA tried to take Mavinga but failed to do so. UNITA had been able to stop this offensive without help from the SADF. In South-eastern Angola the Cubans concealed defeat with propaganda. Their manoeuvres were presented for public consumption as brilliant strategy which could end the war and force negotiations. The point of view of the South African government was that it was an Angolan war and that the South Africans were only 'silent partners'. The initiative for media liaison was left in the hands of UNITA. The SADF restricted itself to announcing its own casualties. Care had to be taken not to put either UNITA or Cuba in a bad light. If Castro's image was tainted he would not withdraw from Angola. That created the opportunity for Cuba to claim glorious victories.

The capture of three Olifant tanks at Tumpo was regarded as a major propaganda coup for the MPLA and Cuba. It enabled them to offer solid evidence for the claim to have 'won the war'. They were aided by the South African government who failed to justify South African involvement in Angola to the public and international community.<sup>4</sup> The outcome of the intervention is well summarized by Crocker:<sup>5</sup> South Africa did not draw excessive attention to its intervention in Angola and wanted it to be seen as UNITA's war. That suited Castro as it enabled him to portray himself as negotiating from a position of strength. The war of perceptions was won by Cuba. The SADF was allegedly defeated. The fact is that the forces checked one another for nine months.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Geldenhuys interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Geldenhuys, J. op. cit., p.200.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>*Ibid*., p.184.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Bridgland, op. cit. p.331.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.371.

# 5.2.2 THE ALTERNATIVE VIEW

A conflicting view is that of Castro, echoed by various authors opposed to the South African view. He said that the change in correlation of forces opened the road to negotiations. The interpretation was that South Africa intervened and attempted to solve the Angolan situation militarily. This might have been achieved, had it not been for Cuba who changed the correlation dramatically. In this the South African forces suffered an overwhelming defeat at Cuito Cuanavale. Thus, in this interpretation the SADF failure to take Cuito Cuanavale and the subsequent losses at Calueque helped convince South Africa, perhaps for the first time, that it could no longer operate militarily with impunity inside Angola. The South African government was finally compelled to make political choices. According to these views the South African government was forced to sit down at the negotiating table because it had come up against a 'military barrier' consisting of Angolan, Cuban and SWAPO forces. South Africa no longer had the military upper hand.

#### 5.2.3 EVALUATION

The writer is of the opinion that evidence shows that the SADF had achieved its immediate aim, to prevent the destruction of UNITA, by 3 October 1987. During this initial phase the military proficiency of the SADF was proved beyond doubt. However, in the quest for more long-term secure conditions for political ends to be achieved, the SADF then over-extended its logistic, technological and personnel capabilities, as discussed in Chapter 4. The decisiveness of the outcome of conventional campaigns as a method to achieve political ends was experienced. The successful defence of an objective, regarded by political actors as vital, as in the case of Cuito Cuanavale, or the failure to take such an objective, proved to have a serious impact on political events. The relatively low importance that the SADF placed on the occupation Cuito Cuanavale was not shared by its adversaries and other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Castro, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Bender, G.J. 'Peacemaking in Southern Africa: the Luanda-Pretoria Tug-of-War' *Third* World Quarterly, 11: 2, 1988, p.30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Carrasco & Gonzales, op. cit., p.5.

political actors. Most actors, including senior SADF commanders considered Cuito Cuanavale as an important military objective. These perceptions made the occupation of Cuito Cuanavale an important psychological factor that influenced the attainment of political ends.

Defects in the logistic and technological capabilities of the SADF contributed to the failure to capture further military objectives. This created the opportunity for adversaries to question the military proficiency of the SADF and to exploit military muddles for political purposes. It also provided a motive for increased intervention by Cuba. By the end of 1987 the inability to take military objectives together with South African secrecy created the impression in the news media that the intervention of the SADF had failed. These perceptions were probably stimulated by the uninformed opinions of national servicemen on the situation regarding the intervention in Angola, some of them with low morale, after their return to South Africa in December 1987.

When the intervention was terminated the SADF certainly had not achieved all it had desired. Despite an increase in the intensity of the conflict and considerable increase in the number of Angolan casualties (among both FAPLA and UNITA), the conventional threat against UNITA could not be neutralized. Although the intervention achieved immediate military aims, in that the immediate political and military survival of UNITA was ensured, the intermediate political end of creating secure conditions for the independence process in Namibia was compromised. The South African negotiating team had to consider the direct threat by Cuba to Namibia as well as to UNITA during negotiations, a threat that was not projected in such intensity and directness as before the South African intervention in 1987.

If measured against the limited successes achieved by the SADF, the question can justifiably be asked whether the diversion of resources into increased military spending, which South Africa could probably not afford at that stage, was justified.

## 5.3 THE COMPROMISE ON POLITICAL GOALS

In 1988 internal conditions and international trends still had a decisive influence on the attainment of political ends. In this regard the role of public opinion in South Africa and that of the super powers need to be described.

#### 5.3.1 PUBLIC OPINION IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to international observers, whose views were mostly based on perceptions rather than facts, at the beginning of 1988 the military still had the upper hand in South Africa and could prevent the politicians from 'selling them out' in a political deal. The public opinion in South Africa, however, was asking awkward questions about what was happening in Angola. In 1988 the SADF and General Malan had to decide whether to attack before the dry season began in June. The success of the offensive could not be guaranteed and might have cost many lives. The decision had to be made either to deploy conscripts far from their homes or to admit inability to defeat FAPLA with available forces. For the first time, because of the perceived public opinion, South Africa had lost the military initiative. After the 1987 offensive in Angola the SADF feared unacceptable losses of men and aircraft. The SADF could not neutralize the strategic base at Cuito Cuanavale. In the previous 18 months there had been more than 50 white South African casualties. Pretoria's reluctance to risk its air force and soldiers in an indecisive campaign, fought for no clear political goal, did more than shift the military balance in Southern Angola. Support for the campaign in South Africa began to wane and this undermined the influential role of the SADF 'securocrats' in determining the regional policy of South Africa. 11 According to Jaster, who repeated the international perceptions in this regard, the impression was created that the growing opposition to the war amongst white South Africans impelled the leadership to bargain seriously for peace. The End Conscription Campaign was attracting 'growing support' among white middle-class youths and their families. On 3 August 1988 public meetings were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Louw, R. (ed.) 'Angola: Peace has not Broken out', Africa Confidential, 29:7, p.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>See 3.4.1. for detail discussion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Bearman, op. cit., p.197.

held in four cities at which 143 young South Africans announced their refusal to serve in the SADF. Because of existing sharp divisions within the white community over domestic race policy, together with the imminent retirement of President Botha and national elections in 1989, the National Party (NP) had little inclination to pursue an increasingly unpopular war in Angola. Dislodging the Cuban presence in Angola would have required a politically unpopular large scale mobilization of the SADF. A negotiated Cuban withdrawal became a more important end than before. 13

Cleary provided some valuable insight into the official view of public opinion of the campaign. He stated that in May 1988 the balance within the South African government shifted to the proponents of the 'international option'.14 The relative influence of the dominant policy-making group in regional policy changed. The SADF lost the advantage of P.W. Botha being sympathetic toward the military view of South African regional policy.<sup>15</sup> Political tensions deriving from constitutional disagreements between the South African and Namibian governments had already led to the reduction of the subvention in favour of the Namibian budget by the South African Treasury. The view gained acceptance in South African government circles that the cost of maintaining direct influence in Windhoek was outstripping the benefit if it was measured against the limited funds of South Africa. Intellectual and political 'rationalisation' or reduction in costs began to outweigh other considerations. Estimates of the cost of South African budgetary support to Namibia exceeded reality. This was one reason for the sudden surge to ascendancy in May and June 1988 of the 'international option' approach over the 'traditionalist approach'. A decline in the perceived utility and legitimacy of the application of South Africa's military instrument in Angola, in the view of the governments' own constituency, made negotiations an interesting option. 16 Those whose instinct was for a military response found themselves at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Freeman, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p.123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Cleary interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p.123.

this time unable to propose a palatable policy.<sup>17</sup> The large scale of security force involvement in South Africa, the announcement of a state of emergency in South Africa and cost in terms of economic and psychological impact, were portrayed by the government in South Africa as detrimental to the legitimacy of military involvement in Angola. The perception of a defeat at Cuito Cuanavale, the loss of lives in the Cunene province and an article in *Die Kerkbode* which questioned the justification of South Africans fighting in Angola, influenced public opinion. The perception existed that a key interest group, the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK), had withdrawn its support and that South Africa could no longer project military power from a diminishing base of legitimacy.<sup>18</sup> *Die Kerkbode* of July 1988 questioned the morality of South Africa's involvement in Angola, asking whether it would not be morally and ethically correct for South Africa to withdraw the troops completely from Angola because it was not South African soil. The almost permanent presence of South African troops in Angola was also questioned on Christian ethical foundations.<sup>19</sup>

Although an article in *Die Kerkbode* and actions by an insignificant number of youths can hardly be seen as a swing in public opinion against military action, these perceptions tended to strengthen the argument of those who were already opposed to military involvement in Angola.

More reliable indications of public opinion can, however, be derived from the scientifically based findings of an opinion poll undertaken by Du Pisani. The manipulation of the 'communist threat' by the South African government had lent this matter a symbolic status out of all proportion to the realities of Soviet involvement. Most of the whites were still the victims of the simplistic anti-communistic interpretation of world politics by the government. This made it difficult for the security establishment to deal with the Soviet Union more realistically, especially on regional issues such as Angola, as supporters of the NP and CP

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p.124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Cleary Interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Gaum, F. (Ed.) 'Editorial', *Die Kerkbode*, July 1988, 142: 1, p.4.

customarily supported transborder military operations against guerrilla bases. Government spokesmen and the official media had portrayed the SADF in heroic terms and had interpreted its activities selectively. Data from the survey suggested that the government's articulation of the security threat in the state-controlled media, as well as the militarisation of South African society, had a direct bearing on the opinion of White South Africans who had been persuaded that the war in South-western Africa could ultimately be won.<sup>20</sup>

It is the opinion of the writer that no significant change in white public opinion on the war in Angola and Namibia was experienced in 1988. A compromise on the contents of intermediate political ends, especially regarding the orientation of the desired independent government in Windhoek, resulted in the need to obtain public support for such a compromise. The government, now increasingly under control of exponents for the implementation of UN Resolution 435 on international terms, needed to influence public opinion in such a way that direct negotiations with the Soviet Union and Cuba would be acceptable to a large section of the white community in South Africa. To achieve this the involvement of South African troops in Angola had to be portrayed by the state controlled media as being unpopular. The supporters of the implementation of UN Resolution 435 probably wanted to believe that the war was unpopular and possibly even promoted the idea among decision-makers. The opinion poll of du Pisani indicates that the more conservative white community in the South Africa was not prepared for the implementation of UN Resolution 435 and the possible ceding of Namibia to SWAPO. The consequence was that the opinion of the conservatives in South Africa, at that stage an influential interest group, had to be influenced by the South African government to prepare them for political change in Namibia and the termination of military involvement in South-western Africa.

#### 5.3.2 SUBMISSION TO INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

Several scholars have described the circumstances under which the South African government came under increased international pressure. According to Vanneman, in 1988 diplomatic and political efforts were launched to establish a Soviet role at a very high level in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Du Pisani, 'What do We Think?'..., passim.

settlement process, as a joint guarantor of world peace with the United States.<sup>21</sup> On 20 April 1988, in a meeting between the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Andrei Gromyko, and the Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Central Committee, Anatoly Dobronin, on the one side and a SWAPO delegation, headed by Chairman Sam Nujoma, on the other side, the Soviet Union reaffirmed its support for the implementation of UN Resolution 435 and a general election in Namibia under control of the UN.<sup>22</sup> During the Moscow summit on 1 June, the USA and the Soviet Union announced their support for a target date of 29 September for reaching an agreement on the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Angola and the independence of Namibia.<sup>23</sup> According to Chalmers, during the summit it became evident that the Soviet Union was getting ready to disengage militarily and financially from the Angolan conflict and that it would use its influence with the Cubans and Angolans to end the war. This would make it harder for President Botha to justify continuing South African control of Namibia.<sup>24</sup>

Crocker put the view of other independent scholars in perspective by stating that the consensus between major powers on a variety of issues resulted in the negotiations proceeding more smoothly. The Soviets demolished the stereotypes maintained by the South Africans of the Soviet Union being a threat to South African security in order to make a settlement more credible in Pretoria.<sup>25</sup>

By the middle of 1988 international pressure did indeed begin to compel the South African government to compromise on political goals. According to General Geldenhuys the campaign in Angola should be seen within the context of international restrictions. With every cross-border military operation the SADF planned to achieve its aims as rapidly as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Vanneman, op. cit., p.43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Devitt, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>A Chronology of Events..., p.21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Chalmers S. 'Russians Pulling out of Angola', *Inside South Africa*, July 1988, p.25. Also see 3.3.5 for a discussion of 'Super Power Co-operation on Regional Issues'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.424.

possible. The danger always existed that international political pressure, including UN Resolutions and diplomatic actions could force the end of an operation before its aims could be achieved. Sometimes it happened that political pressure did not manifest itself as quickly as expected. As the SADF did not have permanent conventional forces in Angola, it had to use the time available to create the best possible situations. During the campaign of 1987 the SADF did not know how much time it had for operations because the political situation was unpredictable. Demands by the USA for a negotiated settlement, which enjoyed the support and co-operation of the former Soviet Union and Cuba, eventually put pressure on decision-makers in South Africa to pursue a diplomatic solution in a more urgent..<sup>26</sup> After the process had started in London it became clear that the parameters of the settlement had already been determined by the USA and Soviet Union. Those on whom the actors in Southwestern Africa depended had already decided that the long war should be terminated. Within this framework the outcome of the war had to be negotiated.<sup>27</sup> Crocker moved effectively to capitalize on the Soviet offer to work with the USA to find a political solution to the conflict. In a series of meetings with Soviet officials in 1987 and 1988, culminating in his visit to Moscow as part of a US delegation in April 1988, Dr Crocker hammered out an understanding which limited the room for manoeuvring previously enjoyed by South Africa, the MPLA and Cuba, thus making an agreement possible.<sup>28</sup> On 5 March 1988, in a press statement, General Malan made it clear that South Africa was 'prepared to live with a Luanda government which was based on a settlement between the MPLA and UNITA and maintained a non-aligned neutral stance'. Such a posture by the MPLA would not have been possible with a victorious combination of South African and UNITA forces supported by Western countries. The South African government had to seek a political solution jointly with the Soviet Union as the other major sponsor of the Angolan war.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Geldenhuys, J., op. cit., p.173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Cleary Interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p.124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Leistner, E. 'South Africa and the Soviet Union' *Africa Institute Bulletin*, 28: 4, 1988, p.3.

#### 5.3.3 EVALUATION

It is concluded that most scholars and participants agree that in 1988 the super powers sought a peaceful settlement for the war in Angola more urgently than before. The South African intervention in Angola and the resulting escalation in the military conflict probably contributed to this new urgency. The Soviet Union could probably not afford either financially and politically to continue its large-scale military support to Angola. The United States probably needed to find a solution before the next presidential elections. Eventually the escalating hostilities, the result of the military intervention, brought the South African government under such increased international pressure that it had to compromise on less favourable intermediate political ends regarding South-western Africa. Although the ultimate end of perpetuating political and economic control over Namibia was probably never forfeited, the emphasis on the instruments to be used to achieve secure conditions for the implementation of UN Resolution 435, appeared to have shifted to the use of diplomatic means rather than relying purely on military capabilities. The possibility of a government in Windhoek that could be hostile to the South African government was probably risked in the hope that Namibia would continue to be economically dependent on South Africa. This compromise on goals and the means to achieve them, can be regarded as a major consequence of the military intervention in Angola.

## 5.4 ESCALATION OF THE CUBAN COUNTER-INTERVENTION

Extra-regional escalation of the military conflict in Angola was a direct response to the South African military intervention.

## 5.4.1 GEOGRAPHICAL ESCALATION BY CUBA

In November 1987 the deployment of additional Cuban forces took place without attracting much attention as it apparently did not bear any relation to the war between FAPLA and the MPLA and the campaign in South-eastern Angola. Cuba moved its forces without any indications of aggressive intentions to the vicinity of the Mocamedes railway line and gradually deployed them to the Namibian border. The appointment of General Sanchez to

take over command in Angola and the positioning of 3 500 Cuban troops close to the Namibian border in January 1988 did attract some attention. But it was only on 18 April 1988 that elements of the SA Army made contact with Cuban forces south of Xangongo.<sup>30</sup> The advance force of 3500 Cubans that had moved into the Cunene province in January 1988 formed a new southern front running some 250 miles, roughly parallel with the Namibian border, coming within 72 miles of it in some places. The front was manned by some of Cuba's best units, organized in three task forces along the lines of communication in the Cunene province.<sup>31</sup> On 4 May 1988 a unit of SWATF, 101 Battalion, was attacked by Cuban forces south-west of Xangongo. Six soldiers were killed and four vehicles destroyed. One wounded soldier was captured and evacuated to Havana. On 16 May a combat group of 32 Batallion was deployed to protect the Calueque water scheme.<sup>32</sup>

By June 1988 the addition of up to 10 000 Cuban troops had increased the overall Cuban presence to about 50 000. New strategic headquarters were established at Lubango, with General Ochoa Sanchez in overall command. The Cuban contingent was supported by joint Cuban and SWAPO battalions. The Cuban forces included some of Cuba's best pilots and the armoured divisions had up to 400 T-55 and T-62 tanks, as well as an artillery and an air defence regiment. The airfield at Xangongo was enlarged to provide additional support capabilities and was well protected by Soviet air defence systems. The Cuban-SWAPO 'Tiger' battalion was at Xangongo and two other joint battalions, 'Zebra' and 'Lion', were stationed at Mupa and Cahama.<sup>33</sup> According to Castro, Cuba had constructed a fortified air base at Cahama and a vanguard had been sent to Techipa, 50 km north of Calueque. Cuba prepared to destroy the Ruacana water reservoirs and transformers, as well as to hit Oshakati and Ondangwa in case of South African aggression to impede the peace process. An air attack would be launched against the camp, military installations and South African personnel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Geldenhuys, J., op. cit., p.189-190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.367.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>Geldenhuys, J., op. cit., p.190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Vanneman, *op. cit.*, p.39.

in Calueque and environment. If the artillery of the SADF was located this would be attacked.<sup>34</sup>

By June the PLAN succeeded in improving its position, with the aid of FAPLA and Cuba, by deploying three combined Cuban-FAPLA-SWAPO battalions up to 50 km from the Namibian border in the 5th Military region. The command post and regional headquarters were also deployed in a position from where these could control guerrilla actions in Namibia.<sup>35</sup>

#### 5.4.2 INTENSIFICATION OF THE CONFLICT

On 8 June, General Geldenhuys announced that elements of the South African Citizen Force would be called up to prevent an attack on Namibia.<sup>36</sup> The Calueque water scheme had to be protected and mobile forces of the SADF deployed east and west of the Cunene river. After several small skirmishes with Cubans, 61 Mechanized Brigade was deployed to enhance the conventional capabilities of the SADF.<sup>37</sup>

On 26 June South African forces (Task Force Zulu), consisting of 32 Battalion Combat Group, 61 Mechanized Battalion Group, a battery of 127 mm multiple rocket launchers, 155 mm G-5 and other artillery launched an artillery attack on the Cuban air defence system at Techipa. Despite heavy losses the Cubans started to advance towards Calueque when contact was made with a combat team of the SADF. The Cubans then withdrew towards Techipa.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Castro, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Republic of South Africa, State Security Council, Situation Report (8/88 dd 23 June 1988), p.13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Geldenhuys, J., op. cit., p.193-194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>War Diary, 1988..., p.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Geldenhuys, J., op. cit., p.195.

On 27 June 1988, seven MiG-23s attacked the dam wall at Calueque. One MiG attacked either the water pipeline leading to Ovamboland, or the bridge at Calueque.<sup>39</sup> One bomb exploded between two SADF vehicles, killing ten troops. According to Castro the air attack was a response to the SADF artillery attack on Techipa. On 28 June all South African forces were ordered to withdraw to south of the Namibian border.<sup>40</sup>

On 7 July Operation Hilti was launched with the aim of maintaining the integrity and stability of Namibia by defending Namibian soil against an attack by 50 Cuban Division.<sup>41</sup> It was decided to mobilize 10 Division, consisting of inter alia three additional mechanized battalions, a tank regiment, three armoured car squadrons and an artillery brigade.<sup>42</sup>

On 20 July, as a result of the quadripartite talks in London, talks in Cairo (24 and 25 June) and New York (11 and 13 July), South Africa, Angola, and Cuba announced the ratification of an agreement on principles, which called for the withdrawal of the SADF from Angola as well as for the staged and total withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The parties stated that UN Resolution 435 was indispensable to a comprehensive settlement.<sup>43</sup>

On 23 to 25 July 1988, despite the negotiations, the mobilisation of troops for 10 Division took place. From 2 August 1988, while a new round of Namibian-Angolan peace talks were taking place in Geneva, force preparation and training continued at Oshivello to train the Division, a formation now consisting of three balanced task forces mainly formed from Civilian Force units. The mission of 10 Division was to conquer the area in dispute by 31

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Official accounts of the motives and targets of the attack vary considerably. It can, however, be assumed that it was a planned attack on the infrastructure at Calueque.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>War Diary 1988..., p.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Republic of South Africa, South African National Defence Force Archives, 10 Division, File DIV 10/309/4, Warning Order 1/88 dd 15 June 1988 executing order C ARMY/D OPS/309/4/OP HILTI and Ops Instruction 21/88, 30 May 1988, p.1.

<sup>42</sup>Heitman, op. cit., p.308.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>A Chronology of Events..., p.21.

December 1988. Rehearsals for an attack were scheduled at Oshivello from 16 to 17 August 1988 and from 22 to 24 August, 10 Division had to move to final assembly areas. <sup>44</sup> Task Force Yankee, a strong mechanized brigade, was formed and deployed to carry out counterinsurgency operations and engaged in conventional training exercises in Northern Namibia. No further clashes occurred. <sup>45</sup>

At one stage there was panic among some decision-makers involved in national security issues in South Africa when it was feared that the Cubans would attack targets in Namibia. It was, however, soon realized that Cuba would overextend its logistical capabilities and that the distance from Cuba was too long to project credible military power.<sup>46</sup> According to Lebedev the Cubans had no intention of going beyond the Namibian border and, indeed, never crossed it. It was a principle they adhered to very strictly. They had been invited to Angola but never to Namibia and the Cuban military never had the intention of going to Namibia. A confrontation in Angola was another case. The Cubans were worried that South Africa would capture Southern Angola. The Cubans were, however, demoralized by losses. They wanted a political solution because they had fulfilled their obligations.<sup>47</sup> Cuba had a technological edge in air power and air defence technology. Soviet logistic backing and unity of purpose. The SADF had world class artillery, superior knowledge of the terrain, 'home turf' advantage, a large cadre of seasoned and high-spirited military leaders and substantial manpower reserves that could have been mobilised if necessary. It was beyond Cuban capacity to dominate the Southern Africa military balance. An understanding had been reached with the Soviet Union that Cuba would not enter Namibia, nor did Castro have this military option. The strategic balance would have shifted sharply in favour of the South African government had Cuba attacked Namibia. Cuba took a risk that was dependent on American diplomacy and steadiness of nerves of the South Africans. The SADF focused on converting Northern Namibia into a killing ground for any Cuban offensive that might

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup>Republic of South Africa, National Defence Force Archives, 71 Brigade, *File 309/1/OP HILTI/FACTION, Annexure 130*.

<sup>45</sup>Heitman, op. cit., p.309.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup>Thirion interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup>Lebedev interview.

ensue. This allowed negotiations to proceed because a major engagement was avoided. Two forces of moderate size tested and checked each other for nine months. The Cubans forestalled the further destruction of FAPLA. The SADF pulled back when the government realized that the price might be too high.<sup>48</sup>

If the above mentioned information is analyzed it becomes evident that the escalation of the military confrontation in Angola was a direct consequence of the consequences of the South African military intervention. In South-eastern Angola the geographical expansion of the conflict was prevented from spreading south of Mavinga, but in South-western Angola the expansion of direct confrontation between the conventional forces of South Africa and Cuba to the Namibian border was a direct result of the South African military intervention. The intensification of the military conflict, that had previously been characterised by low-intensity guerrilla warfare with only occasional conventional skirmishes, intensified to such an extent that the security risk for Namibia increased. The South African intervention and Cuban interventions created precedents for further use of military force and outlay of armament in the region which contained the risk of a high and dangerous level of destabilization.

Nevertheless, the South African government demonstrated its will and capability to increase military force in a crisis situation, in geographical terms and in intensity despite the risks involved and limited freedom of action. The South African government probably realised that international political and logistic restrictions would prevent Cuba from escalating the conflict over a wider geographical area (south of the Namibian and Angolan border), but Cuba would probably have taken the risk of intensifying the conflict to capture Calueque, despite the risk of further escalation and reaction by the SADF. The South African government then probably decided to maintain a defensive posture and neither enter into the competition of risk taking nor to test an unstable situation. Neither Cuba nor South Africa, however, had the will or capabilities for the unlimited escalation of the military conflict, because of the possible unacceptable political and military consequences involved. The SADF had superior ground forces to escalate the conflict further into Angola, but Cuban air superiority restricted the offensive capabilities of the SADF and ensured that Cuba still had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.371.

the initiative. Cuban air power may have prevented the SADF from defending Calueque effectively, but SADF ground forces and air bases in Namibia deterred Cuba from entering Namibia. This brief exchange of armed hostilities resulted in an impasse in which the belligerents confronted each other in a classic display of brinkmanship. International and domestic restrictions on the freedom of action of both sides further restricted the test of wills and the risk of escalation. This contributed to a negotiated settlement on the withdrawal of the forces from South-western Africa. In this regard a further important consequence of the intervention was that the linkage of the presence of Cubans in Angola and the independence of Namibia were accepted by all the major actors involved.

## 5.5 THE CREATION OF SECURE CONDITIONS

An important goal of the South African government was to create secure conditions for the independence of Namibia. In the ensuing passages the resolution of the conflict, the resulting end of the Cuban threat against Namibia, the continuation of military hostilities in Angola and a persistent guerrilla presence in Namibia that could jeopardise secure conditions will be discussed.

#### 5.5.1 TERMINATION OF THE WAR

During 1988, as negotiations progressed, the Cubans achieved air superiority over South Africa. A large-scale South African mobilization and heavy casualties would have been necessary to dislodge them. Contemplating a choice between a negotiated settlement and battles that would not alter the basic military balance between them, the South African government and Cuba were compelled to reach an agreement.<sup>49</sup> South Africa went into the negotiations on the basis of a strong military position to the benefit of the South African negotiating team. During the meeting in Geneva in March 1988 Botha and Crocker agreed that the only alternative for a peaceful settlement would have been the escalation of military conflict.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>Freeman, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Murray, op. cit., p.7.

On 11 July 1988 in New York the Cuban representative, Aldana, formally recognized the link between the independence of Namibia and Cuban troop withdrawal in the presence of the South African and US delegations. A document containing 14 principles for a peaceful settlement in South-western Africa was compiled. 'The New York Principles' stipulated Cuban troop withdrawal and SADF withdrawal from Angola and the implementation of Resolution 435. Furthermore, it was decided that the sovereignty of countries would be maintained and that these countries would not be used as base areas for attacks on other countries.<sup>51</sup>

On 8 August 1988 the Protocol of Geneva was signed, stipulating inter alia the complete withdrawal of South African forces from Angola, to begin not later than 10 Aug 1988 and to be completed not later than 1 September 1988. Angola and Cuba agreed on the staged and total withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola to be negotiated by 1 September 1988. The Cubans undertook not to take part in offensive operations east of meridian 17 and south of parallel 15 degrees, 30 minutes, provided that they were not subject to harassment. On 22 August 1988, at Ruacana, a formal treaty was signed between the SADF and Cuba to end hostilities.

On 22 December 1988, at the UN Headquarters in New York, a tripartite agreement between South Africa, Cuba and Angola and a bilateral agreement between Angola and Cuba were signed. The agreement provided for a peace process that would start on 1 April 1989 and would end on 1 July 1991. On 1 April 1989 South African forces had to be confined to base in Namibia, gradually reduced, and then totally withdrawn one week after the certification of the election in Namibia, scheduled for 1 November 1989. A step-by-step withdrawal of the 50 000 Cubans in Angola would also start on 1 April 1989, while members of the PLAN would be confined to base in Angola and Zambia. By 1 August 1989 all remaining Cuban troops had to be north of the 15th parallel. On 1 November 1989 (election time in Namibia)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.400.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup>The Independence of Namibia and Cuban Troop Withdrawal..., p.30.

50 per cent had to be withdrawn from Angola. The last of the Cubans had to be out of Angola by 1 July 1991.<sup>53</sup>

From the South African government's point of view the staged repatriation of Cubans was a calculated risk. As is evident from the time schedule, there would be some 17 000 Cubans left in Angola by 1 April 1990, a date when Namibia would already have achieved independence. With all South African troops withdrawn from Angola, South Africa's scope for military and political pressure would be severely limited. However, the South Africans bargained on their conviction that despite Castro's posturing, Cuba genuinely wanted to withdraw.<sup>54</sup>

By 1 November 1989, 23 000 Cubans were deployed north of the adjusted 13th parallel, while 5350 Cubans were deployed between the 15th and 13th parallels. An estimated 5000 Cubans were in the process of redeploying northwards.<sup>55</sup> Cuban troop withdrawal was delayed in January 1990 when Cuba suspended its withdrawal because of UNITA action, but it was resumed a month later.<sup>56</sup>

When the last of the Cubans left in May 1991 the balance of conventional military power in Africa shifted and the SADF no longer faced any credible threat. South African rulers could look at their strategic and political position as strengthened, despite the 'loss' of Namibia. Conventional military power became less relevant and it was proved that South African interests could be advanced through negotiations.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup>*Ibid*. p.68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup>Esterhuysen, P. in Cornwell, Leistner, E. & Esterhuyzen, P. (Ed.), *Namibia 1990*. *An Africa Institute Survey*, Colorpress, Pretoria, 1990, p.61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African Defence Force, Military Intelligence Division, The Angolan Security Situation (unpublished intelligence briefing in safekeeping with the author), p.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.490.

#### 5.5.2 CONTINUED MILITARY CONFLICT IN ANGOLA

By August 1989 FAPLA did not have the necessary logistic stockpiles at centres like Menongue, Cuito Cuanavale, Ionde and Munhango to support military offensives.<sup>58</sup> However, Soviet military assistance to Angola continued and the material losses suffered by FAPLA between 1987 and 1988 were replaced.<sup>59</sup>

Both the USA and the South African recognised that an accord on Namibia would cut UNITA off from South African logistical support and put an end to SADF intervention on its behalf. The survival of UNITA was of real concern. Savimbi could not be abandoned without considerable political costs. By December 1989 there were grounds for the MPLA to feel optimistic about its chances of dealing a military blow to UNITA, and thus be in a better position to dictate the terms for any future negotiations. The closure of South Africa's Namibian bases and the departure of the last SADF troops from Namibia in late November 1989 removed the threat of SADF military intervention in support of UNITA. Meanwhile the remaining 23 000 Cuban combat forces in Angola continued to defend mayor towns and cities in central and northern Angola against UNITA, thus freeing FAPLA troops for offensive operations. By late December 1989, the Angolan government was intensifying the war against UNITA in South-eastern Angola, where some 30 000 to 40 000 Angolan and UNITA troops were engaged in mechanized combat across a broad and fluctuating front. By late January 1990, Angolan forces claimed to be in control of Mavinga. acknowledged in March 1990 that government forces had held Mavinga for a short while. By April 1990 the fighting around Mavinga had subsided and after FAPLA had destroyed the airfield to deny UNITA its use for receiving arms deliveries, FAPLA announced its withdrawal.60

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup>The Angolan Security Situation..., p.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup>Turner, J.W. 'UNITA's Strategic Advantage', Southern Africa Freedom Review, 3:3, p.34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup>Jaster, op. cit., p.46-51.

After the battle of Mavinga in May 1990, UNITA's guerrillas went from strength to strength. FAPLA was forced to retreat to Cuito Cuanavale. Supplies by the USA allowed UNITA to expand guerrilla activities. The USA approved an aid package of US\$100 million for UNITA and an agreement was reached with the Namibian government to allow UN food aid to be conveyed through Namibia. By the end of 1990 UNITA had won the military strategic advantage in Angola. Its base area in the south-eastern part of Angola remained secure and large areas of the north-western and central parts of Angola were under UNITA control. 62

#### 5.5.3 THE GUERRILLA THREAT TO PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

The picture regarding the security conditions inside Namibia was less promising. PLAN members were monitored in three camps where they were confined by FAPLA. PLAN members could, however, return as ordinary civilians without weapons. 63

Prior to 1 April 1989, SWAPO enjoyed the freedom of action to mobilize the population in order to win the elections. Political parties and leaders opposed to SWAPO consolidated themselves into a viable and united front against SWAPO. Until October 1988 the PLAN continued with an offensive in the rural and urban areas. There was an increase in abductions between June and October 1988 and more recruits voluntarily joined SWAPO. A marked decrease in acts of terror was observed after October 1988 and the situation remained calm until the night of 31 March/1 April 1989 when large groups of PLAN crossed into Namibia in violation of the negotiated settlement. Several contacts between PLAN guerrillas and elements of SWAPOL took place. Heavy fighting ensued in Ovamboland and the UN Special Representative in Namibia gave permission for the redeployment of SADF elements, at that stage confined to base, in order to stabilise the situation. Heavy fighting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup>Sommerville, K. 'Angola: Savimbi Bounces Back', *New African*, November 1990, p.9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>Turner, *op. cit.*, p.34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup>Yacoumopoulo, L. Interview with General Prem Chand 'UNTAG Military Component' *UNTAG Journal*, vol. 1, September, 1989, p.17.

continued until 7 April 1989. The PLAN lost 274 soldiers in action, while 23 members of the SADF and SWAPOL were killed. On 9 April 1989 the Joint Military Commission (JMC) held a meeting in an attempt to reconstruct the negotiated settlement. The Mount Etjo Declaration was released after the meeting in terms of which nine assembly points were established along the Namibian/Angolan border and in Ovamboland for the safe passage of PLAN members back to Angola from where they would be transported to areas north of the 16th latitude, as stipulated in the Geneva Protocol. SWAPO did not make use of the assembly points.<sup>64</sup>

In a press statement on 5 April 1989 in London, SWAPO requested that 'the UN plan should be fully implemented'. South Africa was labelled as a stumbling block with regard to the establishment and maintenance of a cease-fire. SWAPO claimed that it had been willing to sign a cease-fire but that South Africa had never agreed to this demand. SWAPO requested the UN to ensure the complete demobilization of all forces in Namibia and the deployment of the full UNTAG force.<sup>65</sup>

SWAPO timed its invasion to take advantage of the brief period in which the SADF had been confined to base and UN forces had not yet been fully deployed. Even if UNTAG had been fully deployed, it had no counter-insurgency capabilities and could not have dealt with heavily armed SWAPO infiltrators. None of the parties to the accords was prepared to see these derailed by SWAPO. Consequently South African forces were temporarily released from their bases to deal with the infiltrators. The ferocity of South African military reaction to SWAPO's incursion, combined with Angolan and Cuban pressure on the SWAPO leadership, forced SWAPO back into compliance with Resolution 435.66

A careful review of the circumstances of the 'invasion' of 1 April 1989 confirms the accounts of the captured cadres of the PLAN that they had no intentions to attack targets in Namibia, but discredits the claim by some SWAPO leaders that the detachments were already inside

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>The Angolan Security Situation..., passim

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup>South West Africa Peoples Organisation, Press Statement in London, dd 5 April 1989.

<sup>66</sup>Freeman, op. cit. p.139.

Namibia before nightfall on March 31. The aim was to take advantage of the confinement of South African and Namibian military forces and the deployment of UNTAG to secure a troop presence within Namibia.<sup>67</sup>

There was broad consensus that the incursion by PLAN was an indirect violation of the peace accord. The incursion may have lost SWAPO some votes among whites and other ethnic groups, but it may actually have enhanced its status among its chief constituency, the Ovambo majority. Local residents blamed the security forces, rather than SWAPO's incursion, for the ensuing bloodshed and devastation. The battles in which SWAPO were seen to be fighting and killing substantial numbers of security force members were a reminder to local people of the crucial role SWAPO had played in making independence possible.<sup>68</sup>

After 1 April 1989, 38 weapons caches, established by PLAN members, were found in Northern Namibia by UNTAG and SWAPOL. PLAN played an important role in the support of SWAPO's election campaign. PLAN used the repatriation of refugees and the favourable situation in the border area to infiltrate more PLAN members to Namibia. By the end of 1989 the number of members of the PLAN in Southern Angola was estimated to be about 5 000. After 15 September 1989 about 400 PLAN members had been repatriated by vehicle to Namibia. A further 4 200, including conventional troops, were still deployed in Angola. <sup>69</sup> By the end of June 1989 it was expected that clandestine infiltration of members of the PLAN would take place to support SWAPO through intimidation during its election campaign. <sup>70</sup> FAPLA was not able to monitor the activities of the PLAN in Angola. Small groups continued to infiltrate into Ovamboland and succeeded in projecting a 'strong man

<sup>67</sup>Cleary, op. cit., p.8.

<sup>68</sup> Jaster, op. cit., p.90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup>Republic of South Africa, South African Defence Force, Military Intelligence Division, Security Situation in South West Africa (unpublished intelligence briefing in safekeeping with author), p.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup>Republic of South Africa, State Security Council, Situation Report (45/89 dd 21 June 1989), p.15.

image' and their mere presence had an intimidating influence on voters.<sup>71</sup> Many reports were received that indicated that SWAPO planned to resume the guerrilla war in case of losing the election. As the SADF elements in Namibia were still confined to base and the SWATF had already been disbanded, no viable counter-insurgency force was available in Namibia to resist the PLAN.<sup>72</sup>

Mansfield was of the opinion that the threat by the PLAN should not have been taken too seriously as the PLAN had the reputation of being one of the least successful liberation armies in history. Most of the fighting between the SADF and the PLAN took place in Angola and cross-border operations were never very successful.<sup>73</sup>

However, an analysis of the above-mentioned information indicates that the conditions in South-western Africa were far from secure. During the election period in November 1989 in Namibia and after the independence of Namibia, a strong contingent of Cuban forces was still present in Angola. Although honouring the stipulations of the settlement, the presence of the troops enabled FAPLA units, that would otherwise have been involved in the protection of key points, to become available for a renewed offensive against UNITA during the election period in Namibia. In 1989 FAPLA almost captured Mavinga, which could be used for military operations against Namibia if the situation should require it.

Furthermore, the confinement to base of the SADF shifted the military balance in favour of SWAPO and created leeway for the PLAN to establish a military presence in Namibia. Although insignificant in conventional military terms, this presence created the possibility for the PLAN to intervene in the election campaign or to continue with an insurgency war if SWAPO should lose the election. This presence would have been more favourable to SWAPO if it has not been for the brief military intervention of South African security forces

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup>Mutatis Mutandis, Situation Report 57/89 dd., 24 July 1989, p.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup>Mutatis Mutandis, Situation Report (86/89 dd 24 October 1989), p.7. Note that this was the situation soon before the elections in Namibia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup>Mansfield, P. Lessons from Namibia (unpublished article in possession of author), 22 August 1989.

in the first week of April 1989. Although the outcome of the elections was mostly determined by historical, political and demographic factors, it is believed that the SWAPO party was favoured by the presence of its guerrillas among the population, as well as the fact that conventional forces could still intervene from Angolan territory, if circumstances should require it.

In the case of the SADF in Angola, military intervention proved to be insufficient to guarantee stability beyond the short term without the sustained commitment of military forces. The limitations of military intervention, in view of remaining challenges to South African interests regarding Namibia, was demonstrated. It became clear that other instruments had to be employed to achieve the political ends of the South African government. Military intervention proved to be a temporary and short-term means to achieve political ends. The roots of political questions could not be addressed by the intervention alone. This rendered the situation even less stable than before, a situation that had to be solved by diplomatic means.

# 5.6 THE IMPACT OF A NEW GOVERNMENT IN NAMIBIA ON SOUTH AFRICAN INTERESTS

The impact of a new government on the security interests of the South African government, as well as the contribution of the military intervention to the achievement of the political end of establishing a government in Namibia that would not be hostile to the interests of the South African government, will now be discussed.

## 5.6.1 STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Between 7 and 11 November 1989, 670 000 Namibians cast their ballots for the election of a Constituent Assembly. SWAPO won more than 57 per cent of the vote: enough to win 41 of the 72 seats in the assembly, but well below the critical two-thirds majority. SWAPO was deprived of a two-thirds majority but other political parties did not get significant Ovambo support. Almost a quarter of a century of war in Ovambo had done nothing but kindle support for SWAPO. Ovambo ethnic and nationalist sentiments won the day for SWAPO.

The four northern districts of Ovambo, Kavango, Kaokoland and the Caprivi accounted for about 95 per cent of the vote for SWAPO.<sup>74</sup>

Namibian independence meant the loss of a buffer zone almost 1 000 km deep, which separated South Africa from Angola. Some military officers in South Africa expressed concern that an independent Namibia might be tempted to host guerrilla operations against South Africa, or even call in outside military forces.<sup>75</sup>

However, analysing the possible strategic implications for the South African government of the independence of Namibia, the State Security Council of South Africa came to the conclusion that the economic dependence of Namibia from South Africa would be the basis of future relations with South Africa. A hostile attitude to the South African government was expected. It was, however, not foreseen that Namibia would pose a military threat to South Africa, or that the Namibian government would allow its territory to be used for aggression against South Africa.<sup>76</sup>

The independence of Namibia did not change the realities of the region. The infrastructure of South Africa was of great importance to Namibia. Good relations between South Africa and Namibia after independence were therefore maintained.<sup>77</sup>

## 5.6.2 THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

According to General Geldenhuys the SADF created the opportunity for politicians to make Namibia independent as a democratic state. Namibia could have become independent as a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup>Esterhuysen, op. cit., p.72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup>Jaster, *op. cit.*, p.56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup>Republic of South Africa, State Security Council, *Situation Report* (106/89 dd 15 December), 1989, p.7-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup>Van Heerden, N. *Developments in Southern Africa*, South African Institute for International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1990, p.2.

Marxist one-party state.<sup>78</sup> The SADF could not weaken SWAPO militarily or politically, but prevented SWAPO from coming into power a decade earlier in an undemocratic way. SADF involvement ensured that Namibia could become independent in a new and peaceful international environment.<sup>79</sup>

Anti-South African government literature views the outcome of the intervention from a different angle. The result of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale gave SWAPO, and others struggling for independence, renewed confidence. The military balance in Southern Africa was changed in favour of liberation and the self-determination of non-whites. 80 The severe economic constraints on South Africa, coupled with its military setback in Angola and the realization that it could not win the war, tilted the balance in favour of Namibian independence. The Cuban presence on the Namibian border in 1988 meant that for the first time South Africa had a military disadvantage with the much feared threat of a conventional war in Namibia becoming a possibility. This was to have a decisive influence on negotiations for peace in Angola and independence for Namibia. 81

Nevertheless, more objective scholars put the political implications of Namibian independence in perspective. An opportunity was created for major peace dividends for South Africa, who was spending billions on defence, nuclear development, arms self-sufficiency and strategic industries. Constructive diplomacy could now open doors in Africa and beyond. The 1988 peace negotiations enabled South Africa to consult with African leaders on regional issues of mutual concern. South Africa's leaders initiated a diplomatic and economic outreach that gained them greater participation in African affairs, as well as wider de facto recognition than at any time before. South Africa could end its diplomatic isolation and exploit the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup>Geldenhuys interview.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup>Thirion interview.

<sup>80</sup>Campbell, op.cit., p.14.

<sup>81</sup>Dreyer, op. cit., p.51.

<sup>82</sup>Crocker, op. cit., p.491.

<sup>83</sup> Jaster, op. cit., p.64.

perception of its neighbours in the region as well as Western and Soviet perceptions that South Africa is a key regional actor whose co-operation is required to achieve stability and economic development in Africa.<sup>84</sup>

According to Jaster the South African government could point to the departure of the Cuban combat forces from Angola and the closure of ANC camps there as a major achievement in terms of future national security, and well worth the price of quitting Namibia.<sup>85</sup>

It is clear to most scholars that the outcome of the elections in Namibia saw a democratically elected multiparty government in Namibia that was hostile to the National Party government in South Africa. The outcome of the elections also stimulated democratic forces in South Africa which meant the beginning of the end of white political domination in South Africa.

Nevertheless, the loss of a previously important 'buffer zone' became an insignificant consideration in view of changes in international conditions. The economic dependence of Namibia on South Africa prevented other serious adverse consequences for South Africa, like the massing of hostile conventional forces in Namibia. Moreover, the ceding of Namibia to an internationally acceptable democratic government proved to be a calculated risk that held advantageous consequences for the long term security interests of South Africa as a country, like the withdrawal of extra-regional conventional forces and improved regional relations. The opportunity was created for the emphasis of foreign policy to be shifted to the gaining of international support for peaceful political change in South-Africa.

## 5.7 SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

The consequences of the South African military intervention in Angola can be divided in short term and long term results. The success of the intervention will be judged in terms of the achievement of immediate military aims and intermediate political ends, as well as the long-term durability of the political solution resulted from the intervention.

<sup>84</sup> Spence, op. cit., p.82.

<sup>85</sup> Jaster, op. cit., p.32.

#### 5.7.1 SHORT TERM RESULTS

Looking at the short term results it can be argued that the intervention was partly successful. The immediate aim was to save UNITA from defeat by FAPLA and to provide it with the capability to survive in the face of short term military challenges. The immediate aims of the intervention were achieved in that the political and military position of UNITA was, at least in the short term, secured. This ensured that the insurgency of the PLAN, supported by Cuba and FAPLA, could not be expanded to the Kavango and Caprivi in Namibia. With the initial military successes the SADF succeeded in gaining a substantial degree of influence for the South African government in the affairs of South-western Africa, despite the international isolation of South Africa.

However, the over-extension of military capabilities had serious negative consequences for the achievement of political ends, in that Cuito Cuanavale, an important psychological target in political terms, was not captured by the SADF. The secret nature of the intervention and poor communication by the South African government contributed to wrong perceptions created by adversaries of the South African government, in and outside South Africa, about the outcome of the intervention. Consequently these perceptions led to doubt, especially among opponents of the SADF, about the military proficiency of the SADF and the use of military force in general.

However, military and political control over Southern Angola could not be consolidated before the election campaign started in Namibia. A direct military threat to South African interests, in the form of Cubans in Angola and the PLAN in Namibia, prevailed until the election in Namibia in November 1989. The subsequent insecure and unstable conditions that prevailed put the South African government in an unfavourable position for creating ideal circumstances like the installation of a friendly government in Windhoek and retaining a measure of political control over Namibia. The South African government had to accept an internationally accepted solution.

Although ideal security conditions could not be created, the South African government demonstrated its will and capabilities to escalate military intervention in a crisis situation.

This ensured a new urgency to find a political settlement in which the presence of Cuban forces in Angola and the independence of Namibia were linked. The South African government could negotiate with its adversaries from a position of strength in the belief that the SADF, despite military setbacks and the exploitation of these for propaganda purposes, could still be used as an instrument by the South African government if the need existed. In the words of Chas Freeman:<sup>86</sup>

Military force remains a persuasive tool of foreign and national security policy. Without South African intervention in Angola there would have been no recognition in Luanda of an Angolan security interest in Namibia's independence and no Cuban consideration of withdrawal to realize it.

After obtaining the support of interest groups in South Africa, like the Dutch Reform Church, the South African government could succumb to international pressure and compromise on intermediate political ends, making it easier to achieve such political ends without the increasingly unpopular use of military force. The maintenance of political control over Namibia ceased to be an ultimate political end. The South African government was satisfied with indirect economic control over a relatively hostile Namibian government and the good faith of actors participating in a diplomatic settlement.

## 5.7.2 LONG TERM RESULTS

Despite the doubt about the achievement of the ideal political ends, the long-term political solution that resulted from the military intervention and external circumstances surrounding it proved to be durable, not necessarily for the South African government but for South Africa as a country. A diplomatic solution meant that South Africa could perpetuate good relations with neighbouring countries, including Angola and Namibia, through the establishment of healthy economic relations and less emphasis on military force. This new regional atmosphere ensured secure conditions for South Africa to address internal political demands, stimulated by the outcome of the elections in Angola and Namibia, without the risk

<sup>86</sup> Freeman, op. cit., p.141.

of external military interference at a very vulnerable stage. The contribution of the military intervention to finding a political solution to the conflict can be regarded as the most important long- term consequence of the military intervention.

Nevertheless, the forces against which the intervention was aimed remained active. Armed hostilities between the MPLA and FAPLA never ceased, and although UNITA was always in a strong military position, it was defeated decisively in general elections in 1992. Although South African military intervention could do nothing to prevent the political demise of UNITA it can be argued that the serious losses suffered by FAPLA, and the eventual demobilization of the forces before the elections in September 1992, as well as the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola, left UNITA in a strong military position, maintained to the date of writing of this thesis. This left UNITA as a strong destabilizing factor in the region.

Certain long term strategic advantages were achieved by South Africa through the military intervention. The outcome of the negotiations had as an important consequence the departure of Cuban forces from Angola in 1990 and 1991, the disbanding of the PLAN and the establishment of UNITA in a strong military position in Angola. This once again put South Africa in a favourable strategic position vis à vis its adversaries in the region. Together with economic realities, this military strategic situation prevented Namibia from posing a significant risk to the interests of the South African government. The most important strategic consequence was that Cuban forces withdrew from the region, thus removing the only credible conventional military threat to South African interests. The PLAN was disbanded as a direct consequence of the implementation of UN Resolution 435, leaving only a token force in the form of the Namibian Defence Force (NDF) after 1990.

This new strategic situation relieved the SADF from long-term and costly external commitments outside the borders of South Africa, enabling future South African governments to allocate available resources more realistically and according to new national priorities. However, it is believed that this long-term advantage had not been achieved if military force was not employed by the South African government, in conjunction with other means, in the pursuit of political ends. If judged against the long-term political consequences of the

intervention, the allocation of resources to the use of military force for political ends in the circumstances that prevailed in 1987 and 1988, can be regarded as justified.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

# 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the research was to consider the relationship of political ends and the use of military force and, using empirical data regarding South Africa's experience from 1987 to 1988, to consider whether there might be any implications for existing theory. The question that was formulated for research was:

What relationship could be distinguished between the South African government's use of military force in Angola and the government's political ends?

The identification of the research problem brought the following sub-problems to light:

What was the relationship between the ultimate political ends, the intermediate political ends of the South African government and changes in the international and domestic environments?

What was the relationship between South Africa's intervention in Angola and the political ends regarding Namibia? and

Were any implications for theoretical consideration revealed by the empirical study?

A study of the literature followed by a pilot study led to the following hypothesis:

The employment of military force in Angola in 1987 and 1988 can be explained as a response to requirements of national interests as perceived by the South African government who wished to create secure conditions for the installation of a government in Namibia that would not be hostile to the South African government.

A variety of schools of thought on what the political ends of the South African government had been, as well as views on the actual course and outcome of the military campaign were to be found in the literature. Research was focused on collecting and comparing as much material by scholars as well as participants as possible, representing the various schools of thought.

The hypothesis, as stated, appeared to be valid. Moreover, the conclusion was reached that the relationship of the application of military force by the South African government to the attainment of political ends was one of *inhibition*. By this is meant that the political ends of the South African government served as a constraint to the effective application of military force.

The first sub-problem was dealt with in Chapter 3. It was inferred that the relationship of the ultimate political ends to changing conditions in the international environment can best be explained in terms of the influence of the conditions on the political ends of the government. Analysis of the focus of national interests as perceived by the South African government led to the conclusion that in 1987 the ultimate political end was to protect the ruling elite (i.e. the White community) in South Africa against influences that would harm its security. At that time control over Namibia was perceived as being vital to achievement this end. An analysis both of international and domestic conditions in 1987 revealed that international pressures and Super Power co-operation in the termination of regional disputes stimulated the South African government to agree to the implementation of UN Resolution 435. Intermediate ends, flowing from the implementation of the resolution, included the creation of secure conditions in South-western Africa to prevent a military risk for the South African government as well as for its supporters in Namibia. A second political goal was that UN Resolution 435 should be implemented after SWAPO had been placed in a weak position. As the South African government enjoyed increasingly restricted international support, an interest group among the ruling elite in South Africa came to believe that the improvement of foreign relations had become of vital interest to South Africa. One implication of this view was that South Africa should rid herself of the burden of Namibia. Perhaps as a consequence of there being various interest groups the political ends and the means selected to achieve them appeared to have begun to diverge increasingly even when the intervention was initiated in 1987.

The analyses in Chapter 3 led to the conclusion that the ultimate political end of South African military intervention in Angola was perceived by the international community and the majority of the population in South Africa as in the interest only of the ruling elite in South Africa, mostly whites. This situation inhibited the effective use of the military instrument. Changing international circumstances did not allow for the use of military force for ideological purposes by any Third World country or smaller regional power, such as South Africa. This was even more true regarding unacceptable political motives such as the perpetuation of racism. Moreover, the diminishing internal legitimacy of the South African government served to inhibit the use of the military instrument externally. The compromise that was made regarding intermediate ends, especially relinquishing the end of political control over Namibia, contributed to restrictions on the effective use of military force. The existence of these inhibiting conditions led to the view in the SADF that it was being compelled to forfeit freedom of action to achieve its aims effectively.

The second sub-problem was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4 South Africa's intervention in Angola and the political ends were described. This comprised the events that gave rise to the intervention and the course of the intervention. The threat against UNITA in 1987 held the risk of compromising the South African political goals since the neutralization of UNITA would leave a part of Namibia bordering on Angola vulnerable to insurgency and even conventional intervention on behalf of SWAPO. The identification of this threat together with a request for help from UNITA precipitated the South African intervention of 1987. Thus the immediate aim of the intervention was to prevent until the end of 1988 the conquest of territory occupied by UNITA in South-eastern Angola. Intervention had, however, to be limited and secret in order not to taint UNITA's image as an independent force that could be part of a future government in Angola. This initial, limited involvement of guerrilla forces, operating jointly with UNITA, was believed by decision-makers to be inadequate to stop the FAPLA offensive. Subsequently, therefore, it was decided to deploy 61 Mechanized Battalion, supported by the SAAF and some artillery, to achieve the aim. The SADF's use of a combination of these more powerful military means, was meant to concentrate on destroying Angolan military capabilities. The initial limited aim was achieved by October 1987. After the FAPLA/Cuban offensive had been neutralised, however, the newly found freedom of action began to be exploited by the SADF,

unwisely perhaps, to advance on Cuito Cuanavale in order to destroy FAPLA's conventional capabilities. A political decision was also made to pursue the retreating FAPLA forces since it was believed that they could still pose a short- term threat to UNITA and the achievement of political ends regarding Namibia.

However, the dense bush of South-eastern Angola, which allowed for limited visibility with subsequent difficulties to control the forces in combat, was found to be unsuitable for the effective employment of mechanised forces. Political restrictions on casualties and the absence of adequate air cover served as further limitation on the use of mechanised forces to its full potential. The SADF also appeared not to have been prepared adequately for offensive operations in that logistical and personnel limitations were eventually experienced. These served as restraints on the exploitation of military successes. These constraints cost the South African forces the loss of momentum, allowing time for Cuba to intervene before FAPLA formations east of the Cuito could be neutralized. Ultimately the SADF had to resort to 'psychological action' as well as to indirect fire in an attempt to achieve the military aim.

To restore the military balance of power in Southern Angola, a reinforced Cuban military contingent was sent to establish a strongly defended bridgehead east of the Cuito river. Consequently vital military objectives east of the Cuito river could not be overcome by the SADF without increased forces in numbers greater than considered desirable. The consequent psychological upper hand for Cuba had far reaching political consequences. Cuba succeeded in creating the impression that South Africa had been coerced into making concessions in negotiations on the implementation of UN Resolution 435 that were already in progress. In addition, Cuba supplemented the actions in the east by threatening Namibia with ground forces from a new direction in South-western Angola while she also took an opportunity demonstrate her capabilities in the air.

In Chapter 5 an analysis of the consequences of the intervention revealed a clear relationship between the results of the employment of military force and the achievement of political ends. The changed fortunes of the SADF probably encouraged elements both within the South African government and among international observers, to believe that the military

instrument had served its political purposes. It was also likely that the capacity to fight an escalating campaign of the SADF had begun to be questioned, placing limitations on the further use of effective military force.

In May 1988 the South African government was compelled to concentrate on the diplomatic instrument for the achievement of political ends. The government eventually compromised on substantial intermediate political ends regarding South-western Africa and the emphasis shifted to enhancing South Africa's international status to alleviate the effects of international isolation.

A direct result of the military intervention had been that military conflict had begun to escalate to a degree that produced unstable conditions in Southern Angola. It was probably decided that these conditions could have harmed South African interests regarding Namibia and certainly restricted the freedom of action of South African negotiators during the diplomatic process on the implementation of UN Resolution 435 and Cuban troop withdrawal. The risk of conventional Cuban military intervention in the political processes of Namibia continued to haunt the South African government in the period before and during the elections in Namibia in 1989. This jeopardised the attainment of the political goal of creating secure conditions before the implementation of UN Resolution 435 began. The situation could also have enhanced PLAN's capability to support SWAPO in mobilizing support for its election campaign. These conditions, together with international and domestic pressures, probably prompted the South African government to accept an internationally negotiated solution to the Namibia question. International acceptance become an end in itself. It was to be achieved by diplomatic means and economic co-operation.

However, the SADF succeeded in influencing political events in South-western Africa in a significant way. The will and capability to escalate military force when required, were effectively demonstrated by South Africa in response to the Cuban escalation in South-western Angola. By mobilizing sufficient forces, in the form of 10 Division, the SADF deterred the possibility of any Cuban intervention in Namibia. Although an unstable military situation persisted, the South African negotiating team was enabled to terminate hostilities and to pursue political ends from a position of military strength. Furthermore, the

withdrawal of Cuban troops as an important prerequisite for the independence of Namibia was established as an important factor in diplomatic negotiations. This proved to be beneficial to the long-term political and strategic interests of South Africa. With the Cubans gone, and the military threat from Namibia virtually eradicated after the independence of Namibia, the emphasis of government policy could now shift to more urgent internal requirements, without the fear of external military influences. The SADF was also relieved of the burden of operations in Namibia so that it could play a vital role in stabilizing South Africa during the period of political transition. Furthermore, the SADF was also partly relieved of its political image, gained through prolonged involvement in counter-insurgency operations in Namibia and Angola.

The outcome of the negotiations was that the stipulations of UN Resolution 435 was adapted favourably for South Africa, putting South Africa in a stronger military strategic position than before. The emphasis, that had previously placed on the use of military power in the region, shifted to the dynamic nature and interaction of various power instruments, especially the interaction between the military and diplomatic instrument.

Based on the findings of Chapter 4 and 5 the conclusion can be drawn that the achievement of the military aim was inhibited by restrictive political ends. By the end of 1987 the executers of foreign policy, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the SADF, appeared to be unsure of what the goals regarding Namibia should be. This served as a severe political hindrance to the attainment of the military aim. Military commanders were limited in their choice of military objectives and means to achieve these, not only in a deliberate way by means of political restrictions on the conduct of operations, but also by environmental conditions beyond the control of the South African government. Nevertheless, when a compromise was accepted regarding political goals in 1988 and when the adjusted political ends became more clear to those executing policy, the military instrument could again be applied under conditions of generally accepted norms of limited warfare. From May 1988 it was demonstrated that the application of military force can serve an important political purpose if not inhibited to such an extent that military proficiency is detrimentally influenced.

In the discussion of the theory of military intervention for political ends in Chapter 2 and a conceptual framework was offered to guide empirical research. It showed that most propositions by the scholars discussed in Chapter 2 had been confirmed by the experience of 1987 and 1988. Nevertheless, conclusions indicate a useful concept to contribute to the already vast body of available theory. The concept is that of 'inhibitive war', describing particular relationship between the use of military force and political ends. A distinction should be drawn between the concepts of limited war (see Chapter 1 for definition) and 'inhibitive war', the latter referring to such a severe restraint on the use of military force, caused by the influences of environmental conditions on political ends, that the political ends themselves become restrictive to the achievement of military aims, whereas limited war refers to deliberate political restrictions on the conduct of military operations. In this regard the following propositions are advanced:

<u>Proposition 1</u>. Military intervention can be a risky adventure if employed by a politically unpopular government, which does not enjoy the support of the majority of the population or broad international support. Empirical research indicated that the international and domestic political limitations on military freedom of action proved to be too burdensome to allow for the effective use of military force. The opportunity to play off super powers against one another also disappeared, restricting even further leeway for the use of military force by Third-World countries and regional powers, such as South Africa. Political freedom of action proved to be vital for the successful use of military force.

<u>Proposition 2</u>. Secrecy may frustrate the achievement of political ends. The use of military force should coincide with maximum practicable communication about the intervener's political and military intentions, without forfeiting operational security. Attempting to keep the presence of large scale conventional forces in Angola secret, while most international actors and observers suspected the truth, resulted in a loss of the South African government's credibility. The consequence was that the propaganda of South Africa's adversaries formed the international perceptions regarding events in Angola.

<u>Proposition 3</u>. Execution of foreign policy operations based on clear political ends coordinated with military ends is vital to ensure an effective interaction between the political

and military instruments. It appears that the diplomatic instrument and military instrument only became mutually supportive in 1988 when it was realised by the South African government that a negotiated settlement, acceptable to the international community, was the best option to achieve political ends. The use of military force had been perceived to be a risky option, but still contributed to the achievement of political ends by maintaining a strong military presence in Namibia.

Proposition 4. The choice of the ally on whose behalf intervention is to take place and the role such an ally should play in the attainment of own political ends are of critical importance to ensure that the ally does not become an inhibiting factor in the attainment of these political ends. Although UNITA played a vital role as an instrument in counterinsurgency operations, it proved to be a burdensome instrument to maintain in terms of military resources. The attempt to protect the image of UNITA proved to be stifling to the government's own communications and propaganda and detrimental to South Africa's own interests. The clear definition of capabilities and the role an ally should play in the attainment of political ends, were found to be of critical importance.

<u>Proposition 5.</u> It is important to make an accurate assessment of an enemy's capacity to escalate a military conflict, otherwise these might contribute to further political restraints on the use of military force. An important negative consequence of military intervention proved to be the destabilizing effect of such a venture as well as the subsequent effect on political freedom of action. It is evident that Cuba achieved a degree of strategic surprise by escalating the military conflict in Angola beyond South African expectations, introducing a new factor to be considered in diplomatic negotiations.

<u>Proposition 6</u>. The correct choice of military objectives and the selection of means to achieve these, including the timely mobilization of resources to support military operations, are of vital importance for the achievement of political ends. The logistic implications of technologically advanced equipment can be regarded as an important consideration in the decision to use military force. Logistic support is vital to ensure the maintenance of momentum and to achieve a fait accompli while a degree of freedom of action exists. The

use of guerrilla operations, avoiding direct and decisive battles, appeared to be more effective both in terms of cost in conditions of limited military and political freedom of action.

<u>Proposition 7.</u> If an objective of apparently little military importance becomes such a vital objective in political terms, such as Cuito Cuanavale, serious consideration should be given to the occupation of the objective. Failure to take an objective can easily be exploited by an adversary for political purposes as was the case with the Cubans at Cuito Cuanavale.

Proposition 8. Once it has been decided to use military force, it should be left to the military commanders to achieve that aim with all available resources. If that appears to be too risky, consideration should be given to the use of force only if all other methods have been exhausted. Timely and effective communication of the intention to intervene militarily might persuade an adversary to refrain from aggression. Military force does not have to be applied to be useful. The South African intervention in Angola strengthened the realization among strategists that military force and politics are connected, but that military force alone cannot ensure survival. To be a successful instrument in the attainment of political ends, military force should be employed effectively. If not a credible military posture can be forfeited, as was the case with the SADF in Angola in 1987 and 1988. In this regard it is evident that the political limitations on military action contributed to the inefficient conduct of operations in general. It is the opinion of the writer that it was unnecessary for the South African government to exploit the situation after October 1987, and that diplomatic and other means were not exploited to the full to prevent further offensive action by FAPLA in 1987, especially in view of the strong military position of South Africa after victories at the Lomba river.

Finally, empirical data confirmed the existing theory that military force alone cannot achieve political ends but that it can be vital to ensure favourable conditions for other instruments to be applied in order to achieve political ends. For example, without South African military intervention the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola would probably not have been a prerequisite for Namibian independence. In the end the employment by the South African government of military force in Angola in 1987 and 1988, as a response to the requirements of the national interest as perceived by the South African government, created favourable

conditions for the installation of a government in Namibia that proved not to be a threat to the security interests of South Africa.

These conclusions can possibly be of some value to government departments involved in national security, not only South Africa's but also elsewhere. In this regard military decision-makers can take heed of the occupational difficulties that involve military intervention, as well as the political limitations for the use of military force in the Third World. The propositions can be of value to strategists and decision-makers currently involved in the reassessment of national security policy in South Africa, especially regarding the avoidance of factors inhibiting military proficiency. The findings of this research can especially be of value in a new environment where effective civilian control is being established over the military.

As an academic study it sheds more light on the interaction between instruments of power. Although not an unexplored subject, very few academic studies exist on military intervention by South Africa, especially in view of the secrecy that has always shrouded such events. The academic community can now share in this experience. It is believed that this study will fill a theoretical gap and contribute to the understanding of the use of military force by a regional power, especially in African conditions.

The subject has however not been exploited to its full extent. There is need for further research on military intervention after the Cold War era. This study deals with the first indications of increasing international consensus on the resolution of regional conflicts. Since 1988 there have been more indications and it has became clear that humanitarian considerations have become a major motive for collective military intervention. Although studies have been done on the subject, there is a need for a study on military intervention in Southern Africa, focusing on the involvement of military forces that intervened under the auspices of the UN in Namibia, Mozambique and Angola. Such a study can be of great value, especially in view of the possible future role of South Africa in regional conflict resolution. Furthermore, there is a need for research on the use of military force in the rest

of Africa, with special emphasis on conditions inhibiting the effective use of military force. The abovementioned propositions can be of value to such studies.

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### PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

- Mr Sean Cleary, former senior member of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as consultant to the South African security establishment regarding the Southwest African question during the period under discussion. Midrand, 29 May 1993.
- General Geldenhuys (retd.), former Commanding Officer SWA Territory Force, Chief of the Army and Chief of the South African Defence Force during the intervention. Pretoria 23 February 1993
- Vice Admiral A.P. Putter (retd.), Chief of Staff Intelligence during the intervention and former Chief of the SA Navy. Pretoria 15 February 1993.
- Dr Vladimir Lebedev, Strategic Consultant to the Russian Embassy and former Political Advisor in Angola. Pretoria 27 March 1993.
- Minister Louis Pienaar (retd.), Administrator General of Namibia during the intervention.

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- Major General Thirion (retd.) Chief Director Military Intelligence during the intervention.

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