

STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE.

OCTOBER 1992

1. Balance of forces

1.1 Strategic balance of forces:

By the end of the eighties, the strategic balance of forces were characterized by

- 1.1.1 The apartheid power bloc was no longer able to rule in the old way. The balance of forces internally and internationally were such that the regime would be forced, sooner or later, to sue for negotiations.
- 1.1.2 The crisis in Eastern Europe, and the resultant change in the relations between world powers brought the issue of a negotiated resolution of regional conflicts to the fore - in this context, South Africa was not going to be treated as an exception. This was reinforced by the all-round crisis in the South African region itself.
- 1.1.3 By the mid eighties, the liberation movement enjoyed many advantages over the regime, both internally and internationally. All the pillars of the struggle had grown from strength to strength. But by the late eighties, a number of key factors made it both desirable and imperative that the liberation movement pursues the path of a negotiated resolution of the South African conflict:
 - 1.1.3.1 The possibility of revolutionary seizure of power and of a sustained and generalized peoples war had become remote.
 - 1.1.3.2 The possibility existed that the international community would itself attempt to impose a settlement plan.
 - 1.1.3.3 The regime had no option but to itself seek negotiations with the liberation movement.

1.2 Shifts in the balance of forces:

- 1.2.1 The balance of forces are not completely static. However, for the foreseeable future, actions of the liberation movement can result only in "quantitative" or tactical shifts in the balance of

forces. Essentially changes would only take place within the context described in 1.1 and not outside it.

- 1.2.2 Nonetheless, "quantitative" shifts in the balance of forces can play a crucial role in influencing the final outcome of the negotiations. The most dramatic example of this is the impact of rolling mass action and mobilization of the international community over the past few months.

2. Negotiations the preferred option of the liberation movement.

- 2.1 Negotiations has always been the first option of the liberation movement - it is only when the prospect of any peaceful settlement vanished that we resorted to arms, while for the regime, it was the failure of arms that imposed the obligation to concede that need for negotiations.
- 2.2 Consequently, it must remain one of our strategic tasks to deny the regime the possibility of exercising its preferred option of resort to arms by defining the parameters of acceptable political activity as being confined within the field of free political activity, peaceful democratic action and genuine negotiations.
- 2.3 We must therefore contest the notion the negotiations represents a failure for the Democratic Movement and a victory for the forces of apartheid and therefore that the more difficult we make the process of negotiations, the revolutionary we are.
- 2.4 Delays in the process of peaceful transformation are not in the interests of the masses who seek liberation now, and do not enhance our possibilities to effect this transformation as effectively as we should.

3. Phases of the Democratic Revolution:

- 3.1 Our strategic perspective should take into account that the Democratic Revolution will proceed in various phases, our possibilities relevant to each specific phase should not be pursued in a manner that produces defeats later, because of a failure to recognize the dialectical inter-connection between various phases.
- 3.2 This strategic perspective could recognize the following phases, each one of which has its regularities and objective and subjective demands:
- 3.2.1 **PHASE 1:** The period leading up to the election of the

Constituent Assembly and the establishment of an elected Interim Government of National Unity;

3.2.2 **PHASE 2:** The period of the drafting and the adoption of the new constitution by the Constituent Assembly;

3.2.3 **PHASE 3:** The period of the phasing in of the new constitution, which will include the restructuring of the state machinery and the general dismantling of the system of apartheid;

3.2.4 **PHASE 4:** The period of the consolidation this process of democratic transformation and reconstruction.

3.3 At all stages, we should determine the goals we seek to achieve, consider carefully the balance of forces in these dynamic situations and therefore place ourselves in the position in which we can determine the correct path to follow to further the process of democratic change, including the compromises that are necessary and the alliances to be formed to protect and advance this process.

4. Goals of the National Liberation Struggle and our immediate objectives.

4.1 The long-term goals of the National Liberation Struggle should not be confused the immediate objectives we set for ourselves in each phase of the transition.

4.2 The objectives we set depend on the balance of forces at each stage.

4.3 By entering a new phase (e.g. the establishment of an Interim Government) the balance of forces themselves transform qualitatively in favour of the Democratic Movement. Negotiations therefore can result in the possibility of bringing about a radically transformed political framework in which the struggle for the achievement of the main goals of the National Democratic Revolution will be contested.

4.4 In setting objectives for the present round of negotiations we must bear in mind that in the main one would not achieve at the table that which one could not achieve on the ground. This simply means that neither the ANC nor the regime can enforce a complete surrender of either party at the negotiating table.

4.5 In setting objectives today, our strategy should not focus narrowly on only the initial establishment of democracy, but also, (and perhaps more

importantly) on how to nurture, develop and consolidate that democracy. Our strategy must at once also focus on ensuring that new democracy is not undermined.

4.6 Our broad objectives for the current phase (as distinct from longer-term goals) should therefore be:

4.6.1 The establishment of a democratic constitution-making process.

4.6.2 Ending the National Party's monopoly of political power.

4.6.3 Ensuring a continuing link between democracy and economic empowerment.

4.6.4 Minimising the threat to stability and democracy.

5. The need for government of National Unity:

5.1 The objective reality imposes a central role for the ANC and NP in the transition. Without cooperation between these two forces it will not be possible to move the peace process forward.

5.2 This must mean that the balance of forces has forced onto the South African political situation a relationship between these two leading players characterised by contradictory elements of cooperation in pursuit of common goals and competition in pursuit of divergent objectives.

5.3 How to manage this contradiction, which arises from the fact that neither side has been defeated is one of our challenges of leadership.

5.4 We have already accepted the desirability of an Interim Government of National Unity - in which, of course, the ANC and the NP would be the major components.

5.5 However, we also need to accept the fact that even after the adoption of the new constitution, the balance of forces may still be such that we would seek to establish a government of National Unity in which the ANC and NP are the main players.

6. Laying the basis to minimise the threat to stability and democracy:

- 6.1 The new democratic government would need to adopt a wide range of measures in order to minimise the threat to the new democracy. However, some of these measures may have to be part and parcel of a negotiated settlement.
- 6.2 Strategic forces we need to consider right now are the SADF, SAP and the Civil Service in general. If the transition to democracy affects the interests of the individual in these institutions wholly and purely negatively, then they would serve as fertile ground from which the destabilisers would recruit.
- 6.3 Not only do these forces have vast potential to destabilise a fledgling democracy in the future, but more importantly, they have the potential to delay the transition for a lengthy period of time or even make serious attempts to subvert the transition.
- 6.4 It may therefore become necessary to address the question of job security, pensions and a general amnesty at some stage as part of a negotiated settlement.

7. Reaching the negotiated settlement.

- 7.1 Some elements of the final negotiated settlement would take the form of a multi-lateral (CODESA type) agreements. Other elements of the settlement package would take the form of bilateral agreements between the ANC and the NP - such agreements would bind the two parties.
- 7.2 The thorny question of the powers, functions and boundaries of regions in a new South Africa may be an issue on which we would enter into a bilateral agreement with the NP.
- 7.3 The question of a government of National Unity after adoption of a new constitution, and the future of members of the security forces and the civil service could be dealt with either as part of a bilateral agreement or could be part of multi-lateral agreement.