

THE OLIGARCHIC-RATIONALIST FOREIGN POLICY MODEL OF SOUTH AFRICA'S DE KLERK GOVERNMENT, 1989-1994

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Abstract

It is almost 20 years since South Africa became a constitutional democracy, and it is a good time to reflect not only on the past two decades but on the transition period of 1989-1994. When Frederik Willem de Klerk became the National Party "hoofleier" or chief leader, and eventually executive President of South Africa on 20 September 1989, one could not have imagined the impact he and his party would have, not only on the country's domestic and international politics, but also on the decision-making processes and structures of the Republic. In this article the focus falls on foreign policy making and formulation under the De Klerk government during the period 1989 to 1994, as well as dissecting the agencies that were entrusted with operationalising foreign policy. Emphasis is on De Klerk's oligarchic-rationalist foreign policy model which stressed civilianisation and the restoration of the cabinet in decision making, and a move away from PW Botha's militaristic and securocratic methods of decision making. Indeed, when De Klerk addressed parliament in his epoch-making speech on 2 February 1990, and embarked on his de-isolation strategies for the pariah state, he appreciated the need for the democratisation of decision and policy formulation structures that would help to end decades of ostracism and global banishment.

Keywords: De Klerk's oligarchic-rationalist foreign policy; foreign policy executive; inner-circle; rational actor model; reformist actions; lack of international experience; a quick learner; internationalisation and de-isolation; normalisation; reform; open door approach; civilianisation; "new" diplomacy; constitutional negotiations; Transitional Executive Council.

Slutelwoorde: De Klerk se oligargisties-rasionalistiese buitelandse beleid; uitvoerende buitelandse beleid; binnekring; rasionele model van optrede; reformistiese aksies; gebrek aan internasionale ondervinding; 'n vinnige leerder; internasionalisasie en de-isolasie; normalisasie; hervorming; oop-deur-aanslag; beskaafdheid; "nuwe" diplomاسie; konstitusionele onderhandelinge; Uitvoerende Oorgangsrraad.

1. INTRODUCTION

Two decades into South Africa's democratic order, much attention is focussed on South Africa's international role as an aspiring emerging power and its relations in, and strategies towards, Africa and the pursuit of an Africa-centric foreign policy; its role in South-South co-operation; its North-South dialogue manoeuvres and

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its multilateral and global governance plans. One could therefore anticipate much debate about the nature and substance of South Africa's domestic and international politics. But we should not forget to also cast our eyes back on the transition from apartheid to democracy, for it helped to lay the basis for the foreign policies and diplomacy of the past two decades. Two of the most neglected aspects of South Africa's international relations and foreign policy are the inter-related issues of the period immediately preceding the democratic order, namely the transition from 1989 to 1994, and specifically foreign policy decision-making models and processes during that period and beyond. In the main the study of South Africa's foreign policy since the transition at the end of the 1980s has focused on broad and macro aspects of the various governments' foreign policy agendas and goals. The important micro and meta-policy dimensions of decision making and the institutional edifices of foreign policy are largely neglected.

Foreign policy theory teaches us that policy formulation, like agenda setting, deals with the input part of statecraft, while implementation is concerned with the output side of diplomacy and the foreign policy process. While formulation and agenda setting is concerned with aims and goals, as well as the key actors who make or formulate foreign policy, implementation is concerned with the means and mechanisms of executing foreign policy in practice.

In this article we apply the neglected methodology of interpretive, thick description, as it attempts to help answer the question on the character of South Africa's foreign policy, as opposed to what people "thought it was" based on speculation and hear-say. As such, the article borrows from decision-making theory, international relations theory, and foreign policy analysis and leadership theory. The focus falls on the political and decision-making styles of FW de Klerk, as well as foreign policy making and formulation under the De Klerk government, as well as dissecting the agencies that were entrusted with operationalising foreign policy. It sets out to locate foreign policy decision-making within a fresh and new theoretical perspective.

2. FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION AND THE "RATIONAL MODEL"

Marie Muller reminded us that, "the institutions involved in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy are, to some extent, a reflection of a country's objective role and position in the world, of its own perception of this, and of its domestic political and social structures" (Muller 1996:1). How did this institutional model portend during the FW de Klerk years of "transitional diplomacy" between 1989 and 1994? Whereas foreign policy making during the apartheid years resembled what Deon Geldenhuys called an "oligarchic-bureaucratic" process,

the making of diplomacy and foreign policy during the De Klerk transitional years was akin to an elite-rational actor or oligarchic-rational decision-making process, dominated by what Christopher Hill would call a “foreign policy executive” (Hill 2003:56). From 1948 to 1989, the foreign policy decision-making model deployed by successive apartheid governments was described by Geldenhuys as an “oligarchic-bureaucratic” model, meaning that foreign policy making was the “monopolisation of decision-making by whites and the growing involvement of experts from the public service alongside political office holders in decision-making” (Geldenhuys 1984:247). In this model, the illegitimate white ruling elite manipulated foreign policy, and the main aim of this elite was to try to secure the white-ruled state's perceived threats to its security and survival from the hostile world (Geldenhuys 1984:27).

In the case of the FW de Klerk government, the process continued to be oligarchic and dominated by an “inner core” of trusted allies drawn mainly from the white minority elite, but unlike the bureaucratic-political nature of the preceding years, the De Klerk administration subscribed to a rational-organisational model of foreign policy making, albeit that the process itself was often rushed and frantic, even a haphazard affair (Olivier 2008). The De Klerk government's diplomacy was driven by symbolic goals, and was a process through which diplomats had to go out and frantically try to end formal isolation by opening up new missions at all costs and “to show the flag” (Olivier 2008). But this was a calculated decision, giving the impression and façade of rationality. Foreign policy was something of a poker game and was driven by the desire to outsmart the ANC by opening missions in states in which the ANC enjoyed formal representation at the expense of the NP government (Olivier 2008).

Petrus Brynard and Fanie Cloete (2011:123) is of the view that “the decision is the crux of administrative action”. They go further to argue that “the rational decision-making model commences with the identification of a particular problem. Problem identification”, they opine, “is undertaken by the public manager. Any anomaly is usually considered a problem and the correct action is required to eliminate the anomaly” (Brynard and Cloete 2011:123). Let us apply this to foreign policy. In the rational actor model, foreign policy elites or executives believe that foreign policy is really an action-reaction, or stimulus-response exchange between two states, or some states and the external community. According to Karen A Mingst, the rational model is supported by most policy-makers and is conceived of as actions chosen by the national government that maximise its strategic goals and objectives (Mingst 2008:125). For her, “the rational model of decision-making... suggests that the individual possesses all the relevant information, stipulates a goal, examines the relevant choices, and makes a decision that best achieves a goal” (Mingst 2008:125). The rational model thus conveys the message of a high degree

of control of factors and developments. Mingst reminds us that, “in actuality, however, individuals are not perfectly rational decision-makers. Confronted by information that is neither perfect nor complete, and often overwhelmed by a plethora of information and conditioned by personal experience”, continues Mingst, “the decision-maker selects, organises, and evaluates incoming information about the surrounding world” (Mingst 2008:147). In Vusi Gumede’s words, the rational model “involves a series of sequential and orderly steps. It has been argued that in the design of policies it is important to factor in the (continuous) phase/stage of monitoring and evaluation” (Gumede 2011:169). Gumede goes further to assert that “the rational model...suggests that there are inter-connected and sequential stages in policy making” (Gumede 2011:169). Foreign policy making is thus viewed as a process of decision inputs and outputs that can be steered with a predetermined set of outcomes (borrowed from Gumede 2011:169).

3. DE KLERK’S OLIGARCHIC-RATIONAL MODEL OF FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION

There was an element of rationalist decision-making as De Klerk and his government subscribed to the idea that their reformist actions on the home front would trigger supportive reactions from the international community.

In this foreign policy executive, De Klerk relied heavily on the advice and council of an inner core made up of trusted individuals like the Minister of Constitutional Development, Gerrit Viljoen, and his deputy, Roelf Meyer; Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee; and his erstwhile friend, Dawie de Villiers. These individuals, together with cabinet colleagues Barend du Plessis, Pik Botha, Hernus Kriel, and Stoffel van der Merwe comprised the rejuvenated Ministerial Committee for Negotiation. Minister of Foreign Affairs, “Pik” Botha, played a key role in directing foreign policy and diplomacy. Willem de Klerk, the respected journalist and seasoned observer of Afrikaner politics, confirmed the idea of the inner circle around FW de Klerk, and the profound impact these individuals had on the new leader’s thinking. According to him, these colleagues “undoubtedly” had “direct and indirect influence on the President” (W de Klerk 1990:30). According to Willem de Klerk, men such as Gerrit Viljoen, the political philosopher and experienced communicator, who was completely informed about black aspirations and frustrations; Pik Botha, for many years a fighter for enlightened politics and a qualified interpreter of foreign opinion; Barend du Plessis, with his paranoid finger on the pulse of South Africa’s pressurised economy as it lay in the stranglehold of apartheid; Dawie de Villiers, champion of justice, and many others, formed a circle around FW. Iron sharpens iron: they too contributed to his “conversion” (W de Klerk 1990:30). During this transition period, foreign affairs minister,

Pik Botha, acted like a salesman and public relations agent tasked with selling to the international community the message that “South Africa was sincere in its commitment to change” (Papenfus 2010:651).

The De Klerk inner circle is also revealed by the members he chose to form part of the government team to negotiate with the ANC during the all-important “talks-about-talks” in March 1990. The nine members of the team were FW de Klerk, Pik Botha, Dr Gerrit Viljoen (Minister of Constitutional Development), Dr Dawie de Villiers (Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs), Mr Kobie Coetsee (Minister of Justice), Mr Barend du Plessis (Minister of Finance), Mr Adriaan Vlok (Minister of Law and Order), Dr Stoffel van der Merwe (Minister of Education and Development Aid), and Mr Roelf Meyer, Deputy Minister of Constitutional Development (Papenfus 2010:647).

To be sure, when FW de Klerk became hoofleier (commander-in-chief) of the NP in January 1989, and eventually President in September of that year, he cut a highly conservative figure, and did not boast much experience in foreign affairs; most of his experience was in domestic affairs in portfolios like education. In this regard, Krista Johnson and Sean Jacobs argued that “throughout much of his political career, De Klerk advocated for apartheid and racial segregation. As Minister of National Education, De Klerk was a proponent of segregated education, and until his election as State President in September 1989, he was not known as an advocate of reforming apartheid or South Africa’s political system” (Johnson and Jacobs 2012:80). De Klerk’s rise to the ranks of head of state came as something of a surprise therefore, and he had to adapt quickly to the political and systemic environments around him. Ralph Lawrence confirms this view of De Klerk’s conservatism, but also elucidates the personal and political changes he underwent. According to Lawrence, “within the cabinet, De Klerk was not known as a reformist. However”, opined Lawrence, “he represented a new generation of NP leaders. Younger, born to political office, not scared by memories of Afrikaner oppression, better educated and more cosmopolitan, he was able to edge beyond Botha’s ideological limits” (Lawrence 1994:7).

De Klerk’s lack of international experience, and the radical changes in world affairs that he had to confront and contend with, is what partly explains his reliance on this powerful executive clique. He had to surround himself with trusted and seasoned colleagues that would help him to chart the course of the turbulent and uncertain world of international affairs at a time when tectonic shifts were occurring in global affairs. On this score, Johnson and Jacobs asserted that “...De Klerk’s subsequent actions in repealing apartheid laws and on drafting the new Constitution were done out of necessity and with considerable pressures from international and domestic forces” (Johnson and Jacobs 2012: 80).

Thus, it was the nature of his domestic reforms he embarked on, and the far-reaching changes in global politics that propelled him into an active and decisive role in foreign policy and diplomacy, demonstrating the link between South Africa's domestic and foreign policies (Landsberg 1994). He was after all a quick learner, a man able to think on his feet, and this stood him in good stead in foreign policy and diplomacy. Indeed, the tumultuous and revolutionary changes in global politics, with the demise of communism, the end of the Cold War, and collapse of the Soviet Union, were major socialising factors which helped to shape De Klerk's politics in new and fundamental directions.

De Klerk's choice of foreign policy decision-making mechanisms and styles were influenced in real terms by the shifts in the global balance of forces. The decision-making mechanisms and processes embarked on and put in place by a state is often a reflection of an assessment of the national and international factors and stimulations that are at play. Indeed, shifts in both the regional and international balance of power had decisive impacts on De Klerk's timing and policy choices during the transition years. The effects of the US-brokered tripartite talks which led to the Namibian Independence Accords; the withdrawal of Cuban troops from the region; the "snowballing" effects of Namibia's independence settlement; the South African Defence Force's military defeat at Cuito Cuanavale (Angola); the "siege economy" brought about by sanctions and isolation; and of course the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989; the "velvet revolutions" of 1989; and the eventual disintegration of communism in Eastern Europe all played major roles in propelling De Klerk *en route* to negotiations and on a new peaceful course of action in favour of ending the apartheid dispute without violence (Landsberg 2010). The observation by Ralph Lawrence is apropos in this regard: "The implosion of communism several months before deprived the ANC of moral and material support. Negotiations with the Soviets over Namibia had shown that they were more interested in a quiet life abroad than in exporting revolution. With a recent electoral victory behind him, and his foe in disarray, what better moment for De Klerk to launch the transition game?" (Lawrence 1994:8).

In the scheme of FW de Klerk's "rational model" of foreign policy decision making the NP government during the period 1989-1994 pursued "established goals, a set of options, and an algorithm for deciding which option best meet its goals". While PW Botha pursued an aggressive, "coercive diplomacy" in search of a "total strategy" to combat a perceived "total onslaught" against the white-ruled Republic, De Klerk was determined that, through his strategies, South Africa "... shall become part of the international community – finally, fully and with honour and dignity – and play a full role in the rest of Africa and the world" (Hansard 1991:21). In this elite-driven rational model, De Klerk's grand vision was of South Africa becoming a part of the international community "fully". In his epoch

making opening of parliament speech of 2 February 1990, in which the ANC, PAC, Communist Party and other liberation movements were unbanned, and the decision was announced that Nelson Mandela would be released, De Klerk conceded “that the speech was mainly aimed at breaking our stalemate in Africa and the West. Internationally we were teetering on the edge of the abyss” (W de Klerk 1994:5). Ralph Lawrence described the 1990 speech as “the bombshell” that marked “a decisive turning point in South African politics” (Lawrence 1994:7).

Earlier De Klerk also conceded that “by the end of 1989 it had become more and more clear to me that the government’s emphases had landed us in a dead-street...We had to escape from a corner where everything had stagnated into confrontation” (Lawrence 1994:7). International motivations loomed large in De Klerk’s political gambles. In his inaugural address as new head of state of white ruled South Africa of 20 September 1989, De Klerk was committed to see “important advances...in our contacts abroad” (FW de Klerk 1989). De Klerk conceded that “months before the time I had become convinced that something drastic needed to be done, and it is that need that the speech of February 2, 1990, tried to address” (W de Klerk 1994: 14). This internationalisation and de-isolation vision, was translated into specific foreign policy aims, viz (Landsberg 2010:88):

1. Ending South Africa’s enforced isolation, reintegrating it into the international community, and claiming maximum credit for it;
2. Persuading the foreign community to end sanctions and support a liberal, free-market economic dispensation for a future South Africa; and
3. Securing international (read: western) backing for the NP’s goal of a consociational democratic dispensation in which (white) minorities would enjoy a veto right over decision making in a majoritarian system.

Govan Mbeki, ANC and SACP stalwart, and father of former President Thabo Mbeki, observed poignantly that “the object of all these [reformist De Klerk] moves is to have economic and financial sanctions lifted as well as to have the many measures removed that were designed to isolate white-dominated South Africa” (Papenfus 2010:651).

Government and the diplomatic service were thus expected vigorously to pursue these goals, and diplomats were under instruction to open up new missions abroad as tangible evidence that isolation was being defeated. A key feature of South Africa’s domestic and foreign policy decision-making style was the notion of “civilianisation”, or “civilian” control in policy formulation as he promoted “international co-operation and trust” (De Villiers *et al.* 1993). He moved towards a paradigm of “reform with security” and away from a posture of “force for white security” (Landsberg 2011:234).

De Klerk emphasised words like “normalisation” and “reform”, and promised to go about achieving these goals through “consensus, persuasion and argument... consulting closely with his cabinet before taking any major decisions” (*The Star* 1990). The notion of normalisation was earmarked in particular for restoring relations with the west and rekindling old “family” ties between the west and the white government. De Klerk’s government espoused an “open door” approach to policy formulation; he preferred openness within the governmental system he established, as well as outside it. But contrary to the promise of an “open door” approach, De Klerk and his foreign policy brass engaged in personalised, often behind-the-scenes diplomacy (Landsberg 2010:89). A special place was reserved for courting the outside world, especially the western powers. It is almost as if western politicians and diplomats were allowed a special place in South African foreign policy formulation. He constantly sent messages and diplomatic notes to foreign governments, eliciting their support for his domestic reforms. De Klerk wanted trade-offs: in exchange for fundamental change at home, he wished to be rewarded with carrots and the lifting of stinging sanctions and isolation abroad. The Nationalist Party leader was interested in the normalisation of the Republic’s international relations. He even forced the ANC to engage in counter-diplomacy efforts as they tried to roll back De Klerk’s basking in international praise and glory (Landsberg 2010:94).

In practice, this rational approach to the formulation of policy did not follow a neat clearly identifiable pattern. Instead, policy formulation was a rushed, action-packed, even *ad hoc* and frantic process in search of new friends and allies, and new foreign missions abroad. In this rushed process De Klerk quickly moved to abandon the security structures used for decision making in government during the PW Botha years of militant diplomacy. He signalled to the armed forces that he intended to take the politics out of the security forces, and the security forces out of the politics. He also restored the primary role of the party caucus in decision making, including in matters of foreign affairs and diplomacy.

Even before his formal inauguration as head of state, he moved away from PW Botha’s securocratic style of government, and restored the role of civilian bodies in decision making. As Deon Geldenhuys put it, “shortly after taking office, De Klerk began restructuring Botha’s vast national security management system” (Geldenhuys 1994:289). The role of cabinet as the foremost decision-making body was restored over that of PW Botha and BJ Vorster’s State Security Council (SSC). The SSC was subsumed as an “advisory” body under the new Cabinet Committee for Security Management (CCSM), a body chaired by the president himself (Kotze and Geldenhuys 1990:22). As FW de Klerk embarked on his domestic and foreign policy decision-making style of “civilianisation” or “civilian” control in policy formulation, he speedily moved towards a posture of cabinet decision making in

foreign policy; he restored the constitutional role of cabinet as the most important decision-making organ (Landsberg 2011:234). De Klerk vowed that, henceforth, he would seek to build and construct “consensus, persuasion and argument... consulting with his major cabinet colleagues before taking any major decisions” (Landsberg 2011:234). Upon assuming the role of president, De Klerk moved away from the hawkish posture of his predecessor and quickly introduced the notion of cabinet decision making in foreign policy; he made good on his promise to relegate the role of security structures and apparatus in decision making and elevate the position of cabinet and civilian actors. Ralph Lawrence again reinforced this idea when he linked De Klerk to the “quintessential party man” who “jettisoned the inner core of corporatist rule, the NSMS, and sidelined the SSC. The supremacy of cabinet was restored” (Lawrence 1994:7).

Willem de Klerk, FW de Klerk's brother, confirmed the new role of cabinet, for example when he observed that how De Klerk opined that, “we – the cabinet began by asking ourselves how we could normalise the political process. The concept of initiative and high moral ground became a theme. We considered anew how you could justify what you were doing. That was when an intensive process began” (W de Klerk 1994:22). Willem de Klerk continued to give us an insight into the workings of the De Klerk cabinet when he argued that President FW de Klerk observed: “Proposals were tossed around; cabinet committees examined aspects of possible actions. We tried to anticipate what could go wrong or right if we decided this or that. In the process, things ripened rapidly, grew corporatively among us. But it was very hard work. Nothing was done on the spur of the moment” (W de Klerk 1994:22). This fascinating insight into the making of decision making reinforces the idea of a rationalist mode of decision making amongst De Klerk and his cabinet colleagues.

De Klerk relied more on “national intelligence” as opposed to “military intelligence”. In this regard, National Intelligence Services (NIS) and the Bureau for Information were moved to the Office of the President; NIS became *primus inter pares*. Open government media affairs and secret intelligence were also coordinated by De Klerk's office.

De Klerk populated his important ministries with civilian doves, including in the crucial ministries of Finance and Constitutional Development, together with Foreign Affairs; there was a major departure of hawkish securocrats from these departments.

4. NEW IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS AT DFA

De Klerk's epoch-making speech of 2 February 1990 had profound implications, not only for the Republic's foreign policy outlook, but also for institutional

redesign and reconceptualisation of foreign policy implementation agencies. The start of negotiations between the NP government and other parliamentary groups on the one hand, and the state's liberation adversaries on the other, spelled serious implications for the DFA. As soon as the changes at home set in, "the Minister of Foreign Affairs immediately turned his attention to securing South Africa's interests abroad" (Papenfus 2012:668). President De Klerk also vowed that "the international dimension and the lifting of sanctions were of cardinal importance" (Papenfus 2010:670).

Even in terms of foreign policy implementation, the emphasis was on ending South Africa's status as a skunk among the family of nations; and reversing the ingrained image of the Republic as a pariah and "crime against humanity". With the new opportunities created with the De Klerk openings, "government and diplomats were expected to pursue these goals vigorously, and diplomats were under instruction to open up new missions abroad as tangible evidence that isolation was being defeated".

Within the DFA, we witnessed "a complete overhaul of the top structure of all branches of the Department with effect from 1 October 1991" (De Beer 2005:593). Foreign Minister Pik Botha saw his role, and that of the entire diplomatic core "... to open international doors for South Africa that had remained obstinately shut" (Papenfus 2010:50). A key goal of the reformed DFA was that of meeting "the demands to which they would have to respond as South Africa returned to its place in the family of nations and came to terms with the need to expand its representation abroad at an almost exponential rate" (De Beer 2005:653). A mandate given to diplomats was to go abroad to "go and show the flag" by doing all in their powers to open new missions abroad, especially in countries that were hitherto "no-go" areas (Olivier 2008). Thus, while the Verwoerd, Vorster and Botha governments desperately sought to counter isolation, the De Klerk government was determined to end isolation and to take the credit for it by flat-footing the ANC and its allies. Pik Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, was particularly interested in opening up forays into Africa and the former Soviet Union, two regions in which South Africa felt the brunt of isolation and banishment the most.

As far as the Southern African region was concerned, for example, Pik Botha's ploy was to sell to leaders of the region the idea of a "Marshall Plan" for the development of Southern Africa (Papenfus 2012:598). If regional leaders could be convinced about the "Marshall Plan" arrangement, then "South Africa would be able to take her place in the community of Southern African nations" (Papenfus 2010:598).

In terms of the Soviet Bloc, Pik Botha opined in 1990 about the events of that constellation of states: "Never before did anything that happened overseas influence the position in South Africa as much as perestroika" (Papenfus 2010:637). In the

biography *Pik Botha and his times*, Theresa Papenfus writes: "To get liaison with the Soviet Union working, Pik Botha availed himself of the services of a diplomat attached to the South African mission to the UN...In the corridors of Foreign Affairs John Mare had heard several times over the years that Pik was interested on both an intellectual and a human level in the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union" (Papenfus 2010:629). Papenfus goes further to argue that "from 1989 onwards, when Mare became South Africa's Deputy Director responsible for Central and Eastern Europe, he played a part in facilitating Pik Botha's strategy of reaching out to the Eastern Bloc" (Papenfus 2010:629).

In order to achieve their limited goals the DFA was transformed into "a highly sophisticated organisation, comprising 1280 posts at home and 364 abroad, to which should be added 236 attached from other departments and 1602 locally recruited staff members" (De Beer 2005: 652-653).

In line with President De Klerk's "civilianisation" approach, top brass in the Department of Foreign Affairs insisted that policy making and diplomacy should return to professional entities, and that the DFA should be "responsible for the application and execution of all aspects of the country's foreign policy as delegated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs" (De Beer 2005: 638). "To ensure the co-ordination and uniformity of foreign policy and action by the government, as well as to avoid confusion and misunderstanding", senior diplomats insisted it was "essential that other state institutions should at all times maintain close liaison with the DFA on matters which might affect South Africa's foreign policy or relations in any way" (De Beer 2005:638-639). After years during which foreign policy making was dominated by Botha and Vorster's notorious State Security Council, it again became the responsibility of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to co-ordinate matters affecting the Republic's foreign affairs.

Director-general, Neil van Heerden, and his senior colleagues were in favour of the DFA going on massive staff recruitments in order to "respond swiftly to the changes in the international arena". Even though the tactic of diplomatic lobbying was used to try to exploit the opportunities brought about by "F.W. De Klerk's policy announcements", the DFA constantly found itself "hampered from time to time by general public service regulations concerning the creation of posts and the opening of missions" (De Beer 2005:650); budgetary constraints also limited this growth in diplomatic posts. But while the Department faced constraints with recruiting staff at home, senior management had far more latitude to expand offices abroad. The Department gained authorisation to open offices abroad "without obtaining prior approval, giving it the scope necessary to cope with a quickly changing international environment and to order its priorities, political or financial, for opening and closing missions on the assumption that it had full control over such missions" (De Beer 2005:650).

Foreign Minister Roelof “Pik” Botha, director-general Neil van Heerden, and other senior foreign affairs cadres pushed hard for the establishment and grading of new missions abroad, that would be ranked according to political and strategic importance to the Republic. Category “A” embassies embraced those missions in those states “with which South Africa’s relations should be maintained and improved at all costs and at every level” (De Beer 2005:647). They essentially represented kith and kin and special family associations with the nationalist government, and included London, Washington, Paris, Bonn and Tel Aviv (De Beer 2005: 648). The permanent mission at the United Nations in New York was also graded with an “A” ranking (De Beer 2005:648).

Category “B” missions were those where South Africa wished to see “possible improvement” in ties, and with whom relations had been established a while ago (De Beer 2005: 648). These included Tokyo, Taipei, The Hague, Canberra, Vienna, Ottawa, Brussels, Brussels (EC), Rome, Geneva, Madrid, Lisbon, Buenos Aires, and the Bantustan capitals of Thohoyandou, Umtata, Bisho and Mmabatho (De Beer 2005:648).

Category “C” missions were those missions that South Africa hoped would result in full-fledged political relations with host countries, but some refused steadfastly to have full diplomatic ties at ambassadorial level (De Beer 2005:648). These included Helsinki, Copenhagen, Wellington, Montevideo, New York (consul-general), Santiago de Chile, Brasilia, Athens, Stockholm, Bern, Asuncion, Harare, Maputo, Lima and Lilongwe (De Beer 2005:648).

Category “D” missions included consulates in Hamburg, Munich, Milan, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, Glasgow, Marseilles and Sydney (De Beer 2005:648).

Category “E” missions comprised those foreign stations where just two Foreign Affairs Officials could handle all aspects of the work in their areas of jurisdiction (De Beer 2005:649). These missions were located in Montreal Funchal (Madeira) and St Denis (La Reunion) (De Beer 2005:649).

By 1993, De Klerk’s government could boast 61 missions in 45 countries (De Beer (b) 2005:622), more than double the amount of missions South Africa had by the time of PW Botha’s departure in 1989. Diplomats and foreign affairs officials in all these missions – from Category “A” to Category “E” – were entrusted with implementing the “new” diplomacy, geared in the main towards ending decades of ostracism and establishing new ties for the reforming Republic.

It should be stressed though, that while many states rewarded South Africa’s domestic reform initiatives by establishing formal ties with the Republic, many were reluctant to establish full diplomatic relations. The De Klerk government and the Department of Foreign Affairs in particular, tried to circumvent this setback by creating “a variety of non-conventional titles” for new heads of

missions from Foreign Affairs stationed in new countries (De Beer 2005(b):650). The most frequently used title, especially in neighbouring states, were that of "Trade Representative" (De Beer 2005(b):650-651). Other titles used were those of Representative; Commercial Representative; Head: Office of South African Interests; Head: Permanent Mission; Head: South African Representative Office; and consul-general. Some states upgraded their links with South Africa to that of full diplomatic status, and allowed South Africa to appoint ambassadors, *Charge d'Affaires* or consul-generals as they became convinced about progress with negotiations, and the "irreversibility of change" at home (De Beer 2005(b):651).

The main purpose of the Africa branch, for example, "was now defined as managing South Africa's interests in Africa, and its functions defined as promoting specific development actions in Africa and in dealing with bilateral and multilateral relations with African states" (De Beer 2005:593). The fact that government anticipated an expansion of both bilateral and multilateral relations with the continent was indicative of the profound impact domestic reforms had on the country's hitherto circumscribed international relations.

While the DFA under the leadership of Neil van Heerden foresaw a continuation of a focus on the TBVC states, the Southern Africa Chief Directorate was divided into two directorates (De Beer 2005:594): one directorate dealt with Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia; and the other focussed on Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Angola and Tanzania. A key objective of this chief directorate was that of "improving bilateral relations" with these African states. The Chief Directorate: "Rest of Africa" managed multilateral relations with the continent in one directorate, while another looked at bilateral relations with countries of north, central, west and east Africa (De Beer 2005:594).

The Europe 1 and European Organisations Directorate were also asked to redirect their functions, and to focus on "promoting relations with overseas countries, directing bilateral and multilateral communications in them, providing a protocol service and handling public and media liaison" (De Beer 2005(b):627).

A new Communications Planning Directorate was established "to co-ordinate image-building projects" and to "market" the transition (De Beer 2005(b):627). In October 1991, a new Multilateral Relations branch was created "with the main aim of making use of South Africa's opportunities to participate in international forums". On 1 August 1991, "a post of Senior State Law Advisor was transferred to Geneva to facilitate direct access to the various bodies and organisations there" (De Beer 2005(b):628).

To sum up, the De Klerk government did not only embark on a new civilian-driven foreign policy-making process as it articulated a "new" diplomacy; it also restructured diplomatic and foreign policy implementation agencies to help operationalise new international strategies on the basis of a new "open door" policy

and an “open approach” to decision making and implementation. However, the promise of a new “open door” approach notwithstanding, foreign policy brass in many respects continued to engage in “personalised, behind the scenes diplomacy” (Landsberg 2011:235) as they tried to court the outside world not just to change their stance *vis-à-vis* the Republic, but to reward the government with diplomatic ties, and aid and trading opportunities.

5. THE TEC AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY

During the pre-1994 election period, when constitutional negotiations were underway, South Africa’s foreign policy and international relations were undergoing a transition also in the institutional realm; the Transitional Executive Committee (TEC) became a key and new instrument for the execution and operationalisation of foreign policy during this transitional phase. The ANC in particular saw the TEC as a mechanism to keep a check on the NP and De Klerk’s control of the levers of foreign policy. The TEC was established by an act of parliament, TEC Act 151 of 1993. That Act determined that “foreign policy had to benefit the country as a whole and not one or the other party” (TEC 1994). The TEC Sub-council on Foreign Affairs had to “endeavour to attain progressively the broadest possible consensus on matters affecting South Africa’s international interests, secure appropriate agreements with the international community regarding its contribution to democracy in South Africa and promote relations that will benefit the country as a whole” (TEC 1994).

During the negotiations on the Terms of Reference of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), it was agreed by the negotiators that the role and function of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) would be to liaise about, monitor, make recommendations and, where it is considered necessary, assist with the making of foreign policy (TEC 1994(b)). The goals during this period were to help (TEC 1994(b)):

1. “achieving progressively the broadest possible consensus on matters affecting South Africa’s international interests, particularly its long-term interests;
2. securing appropriate agreements with the international community regarding the contribution that the community could make to the peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa;
3. in consultation with the Sub-council on Finance necessary in order to address the socio-economic needs of the people as a whole and not to serve the interests of one or other political party;

4. ensuring that any foreign policy initiative benefits the country as a whole and not serve the interests of one or other political party;
5. promoting such international relations including trade; finance; culture and sport relations, as in the opinion of the Sub-council will benefit the country as a whole”.

The Sub-council on Foreign Affairs of the TEC became actively involved in the conduct of South Africa's international relations, as regards not only policy matters but also the creation of the new DFAs, budgetary matters, senior personnel appointments, the opening of the new missions abroad and other management matters of medium or long term importance (TEC 1994(b)).

The Sub-council also participated in a series of policy planning conferences, involving all South African ambassadors and other South African foreign representatives of major political organisations. In New York, Geneva, Brussels and Addis Ababa the conferences dealt with South Africa's multilateral interests and the role the country can play in international organisations. During conferences in Washington, Paris, Nairobi and Singapore, the Sub-council reviewed South Africa's bilateral relations with all areas of the globe. The conferences formulated directives, which the Department of Foreign Affairs and its representatives abroad used as policy and operational guidelines during the transition process.

The TEC Sub-council placed a huge premium on restoring relations with the Southern African sub-region and the African continent more broadly. The ANC members serving on the Sub-council were especially interested in normalising relations with African states, as well as building future economic relations with the continent (TEC 1994(b)).

6. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In De Klerk's oligarchic-rationalist-organisational model, huge emphasis was placed on “civilianisation” and restoring the role of cabinet as the most important decision-making structure in government. De Klerk promised an open style of government and appointed many civilian doves in his cabinet as opposed to the military hawks as preferred by the PW Botha regime.

De Klerk's “new” diplomacy promoted co-operation and trust as he sought to achieve his goals through consensus, persuasion and argument, while consulting closely with an inner core of cabinet colleagues before taking any major decisions.

The idea was that, through rational decision making, reforms and political openings on the home front would be rewarded with anti-ostracism and de-isolation measures; and the latter in turn would encourage further change and political openings at home. De Klerk's epoch-making speech of 2 February 1990 had

profound implications for the institutional redesign and reconceptualisation of foreign policy implementation agencies. It led to a complete overhaul of the top structure of all branches of the Department with effect from 1 October 1991. Indeed, the DFA became a much larger organisation, comprising 1 280 posts at home and 364 abroad, to which should be added 236 attached from other departments and 1 602 locally recruited staff members.

These new diplomats spent most of their time trying to end isolation which was measured through the opening up of new diplomatic missions all over the world, especially in previously no-go areas. Diplomats were hurried in *ad hoc*, pressurised fashion to win over new friends for the De Klerk Republic by showing the flag in places where it was banned in the preceding decades. Lots of emphasis was placed on symbolic diplomacy.

During the pre-1994 election period when constitutional negotiations were underway, efforts were made, especially by the ANC, for mutual control and management of foreign policy and diplomacy by introducing the Transitional Executive Council (TEC). It was agreed that the TEC would liaise about, monitor, and make recommendations about foreign policy.

In short, during the transition from apartheid to democracy during the years 1989-1994, the government led by FW de Klerk tried to pursue a foreign policy model based on a clear set of international goals that would help to achieve their domestic aims of achieving a domestic transition in which their interests, and that of their white minority, would be clearly served. If we consider that South Africa's domestic and foreign policies had long been intertwined during the apartheid and white minority decades, then this was rational decision making *par excellence*, a belief in cause and effect.

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