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BOTSWANA AND THE BULLY: APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION CONFERENCE, 1978-1986

ABSTRACT

This article examines how events in South Africa between 1978 and 1986 impacted Botswana and the broader Southern African region. During the apartheid era, South Africa went to extraordinary lengths to gain the support of its neighbours. It implemented the destabilisation policy in an attempt to persuade neighbouring states to accept apartheid after failing to convince them to sign non-aggression pacts. This resulted in events that shaped Botswana's political ties with South Africa and the latter's economic links with the other Southern African countries. Meanwhile, regional and international developments added to the complexity of Botswana -South African relations. In 1976, South Africa was put under international sanctions while in the region, the independent countries established the Southern African Development Coordination Conference to counter South Africa's attempts to assert authority over the region. This paper, thus, advances that Botswana was caught in a balancing act between its economic relations with both hegemonic South Africa and fellow independent African states. To examine how Botswana tactfully manoeuvred this complex period, the research relies on archival sources from Botswana, South Africa and Britain, and newspaper reports, all contextualised within existing historiography on South Africa's sub-imperialism.

Keywords: Botswana, South Africa, Apartheid, Sanctions, Destabilisation, SADCC

1. INTRODUCTION

This article looks at how events in South Africa from 1978 to 1986 affected Botswana and the rest of Southern Africa. During the apartheid era, South Africa went above and beyond to win the support of its neighbours. This essay, therefore, contends that Botswana was compelled to strike a balance between its economic ties with independent African states and hegemonic South Africa. The paper also seeks to evaluate Botswana's skilful handling of this challenging time.

Botswana and South Africa share intimate close tribal/ethnic and cultural ties that date back to the nineteenth century. There are more Setswana-speaking people in South Africa than in Botswana. The two share a border of more than 1 000 km.¹ The British and the South Africans agreed to include a clause for the eventual incorporation of the High Commission Territories (Lesotho and Swaziland) and Southern Rhodesia in an undetermined future. Due to vehement opposition from succeeding Chiefs Khama III, Sebele I, and Bathoen I, Britain was forced to abandon this agreement. However, the inclusion debate was never completely resolved, and in 1949 South Africa's Prime Minister Daniel Francois Malan brought it up once more. He argued that his country should incorporate Bechuanaland, Lesotho, and Swaziland because,

South Africa had the right, by virtue of its position as a white man's country and its experience during the course of the years in connection with the native problem and the coloured problem, to aspire to leadership in this matter and to act as adviser to the peoples of the Northern Territories.²

Malan sought to convince the British to give up the High Commission Territories, but they refused. By the late 1950s, as the condemnation of apartheid policies mounted around the world, as a result, any transfer of authority was politically impossible.³ The first South African politician to realise

1 Botswana and South Africa had close political and economic ties dating back to the first half of the nineteenth century, in addition to a long-shared border. Politically, the Boers migrated from the Cape after the British took over in the 1830s, eventually settling in the Tswana-speaking territory that became the western Transvaal. Furthermore, the formation of Botswana's political parties in the early 1960s was strongly linked to South African politics, with South African refugees playing a role in that development. In the nineteenth century, migrant workers from Botswana went to the Kimberly and Witwatersrand gold mines. See, CJ Makgala and B Seabo, "'Very brave or very foolish? gallant little' Botswana's defiance of apartheid's golden age' 1966-1980", *The Round Table* 106 (3), 2017, pp. 304-305.

2 RS Jaster, *The defence of white power: South African foreign policy under pressure* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), p. 10.

3 DE Torrance, "Britain, South Africa and the high commission territories: An old controversy", *Historical Journal* 41 (3), 1998, p. 754; R Hyam and P Henshaw, *The lion and the springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer war* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

that Botswana's merger into South Africa was not going to happen and that Britain was preparing the region for eventual independence was Hendrick Frensch Verwoerd, who served as prime minister of South Africa from 1958 to 1966. In 1961, South Africa finally gave up on the incorporation idea.⁴ In fact, after World War two, Britain had been heavily devastated by the war, as a result, was no longer eager to continue clinging on to its colonies and the decolonisation fever was catching up. The war returnees (African) and politics of decolonisation were gaining momentum as well.⁵ The British started preparing the High Commission Territories for independence in the early 1960s, and by the end of the decade, all were independent. Independence was granted to Botswana on 30 September 1966.⁶ When Botswana obtained independence from Britain in 1966, it strengthened its economic ties with South Africa despite their political differences. Some Batswana migrated to South Africa as migrant workers; in 1968, there were only 24 500 wage earners in Botswana but 42 000 in South Africa.⁷ In 1969, the two nations together with Lesotho and Swaziland, renegotiated their customs agreement to ensure that all parties received a fair share. In 1971 Botswana got into a diamond exploration and mining partnership with a South African diamond mining company (De Beers) this partnership started with a 15/85 per cent agreement, and in 1974 Gaborone renegotiated for a 50/50 partnership. Botswana introduced its currency in 1974 and left the Rand Monetary Area in 1976.

This article concentrates on the years 1978 through 1986. It begins in 1978 when South Africa's so-called Total Strategy concept was launched, barely two years after Botswana left the Rand monetary area to develop its economy independently from the Rand. The narrative continues until 1986, a year after the South African Defence Force's worst attack on Botswana, which killed innocent civilians and severely strained the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising in 1976, which resulted in the mounting condemnation of apartheid abroad and an expanding wave of domestic challenges to white minority rule at home, white South Africa sought

4 P Du Toit, *State-building in Southern Africa: A comparative study of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe* (Pretoria: Human Science Resource Council Publishers, 1995), pp. 80-81.

5 See, E Myrice, "The impact of the Second World War on the decolonization of Africa", Paper presented at the 17th annual Africana studies student research conference, Bowling Green State University, Ohio, 13 February 2015.

6 KJ Panton, *Historical dictionary of the British empire* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), p. 228.

7 Botswana National Archives (BNA), BNB 2366, R Bodenmiller, "Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland: Their external relations and attitudes towards South Africa".

new ways to defend its interests. When Pieter Willem Botha became Prime Minister of South Africa in 1978, he developed a plan for South Africa to maintain its dominance in the region through the Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS), which was a strategy to restore the Apartheid South Africa's economic and political power in the region. However, Botha's initiative failed to gain support, especially after Zimbabwe became independent in 1980 and joined the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).⁸ Had Zimbabwe opted to join CONSAS, Pretoria would have been able to declare an emerging regional organisation, which would have strengthened its diplomatic and security status in the region.⁹ Matthew Graham advanced that seeking to exert maximum control over all aspects of the apartheid system, the National Party securocrats devised a new policy in 1978 known as "Total Strategy", which utilised political, military, and economic levers to combat the growing pressures it faced internally and externally.¹⁰ CONSAS was conceived as an integral part of Botha's Total Strategy.¹¹ Total Strategy was based on an effort to globalise issues the apartheid government faced. Botha believed that external involvement, not colonialism or apartheid, was the root of instability and conflict, both within South Africa and throughout the Southern African region.¹² Dan O'Meara pointed out that,

The fundamental objective of South African regional policy was now defined as the creation of a Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS). Recognizing that apartheid was a barrier to formal alliances with neighbouring states, part of this tactic involved raising the spectre of "Marxism" in order to generate a counter-strategy. Pretoria, therefore, argued that all the states in the region faced a common "Marxist" enemy and that they could not rely on the Western powers for support. It proposed "regional solutions" to this allegedly "regional problem". This boiled down to the need to create a regional political and economic alliance around South Africa.¹³

8 K Matlosa, "South Africa's regional economic strategy 1970-1990". In: M Sejanamane (ed.), *From destabilisation to regional cooperation in Southern Africa* (Roma: Institute of Southern African Studies, 1994), pp. 11-12. See also, "External aggression and destabilisation: The road to the SADF", www.historicalpapers.ac.za/inventories/inv-pdf/ag1977-A3-9-5-001-jpeg.pdf, accessed 13 September 2016.

9 M Evans, "The Frontline States, South Africa and Southern African security, military prospects and perspectives", *Zambezia* 12, 1984/5, p. 2.

10 M Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy: diplomacy, leadership and the role of the African National Congress* (London: I.B Tauris, 2015), p. 50; J Hanlon, *Apartheid's second front: South Africa's war against its neighbours* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 21.

11 N Thede, "SADCC: Autonomy or submission?". In: N Thede and P Beaudet (eds.), *A post-apartheid Southern Africa?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), p. 31.

12 D O'Meara, "Destabilization in Southern Africa; total strategy in total disarray", *Monthly Review* 37, 1986, p. 51.

13 O'Meara, "Destabilization in Southern Africa; total strategy in total disarray", p. 51.

CONSAS and Total Strategy essentially had the same objective. The CONSAS was intended to align South Africa with its neighbours, and the Total Strategy would make use of the military, economic, and political might it had. Based on that rationale, South Africa hoped the world would understand its view and render its support.

When CONSAS failed, Pretoria embarked on a campaign of economic sabotage, assassinations, kidnappings, and bombings in neighbouring countries across the region, in what became known as destabilisation.¹⁴ Scholars have analysed the causes and consequences of South Africa's destabilisation campaign on the region, describing it as a crucial element in Botha's overall policy of Total Strategy.¹⁵ South Africa's terror activities were part of a Total Strategy to strengthen its dominance in Southern Africa.¹⁶ In some of these accounts, Botswana receives only passing mention. However, scholars such as Paul Spray emphasised the magnitude of destabilisation's consequences on Gaborone.¹⁷ For Spray, what infuriated South Africa the most about Botswana was its "open door" policy, which allowed political refugees and African National Congress (ANC) members to seek refuge in Botswana.¹⁸ Neil Parsons stated that Botswana found itself in a difficult position as a country that supported African liberation while maintaining economic ties with its white neighbours. However, the concept of it being a refuge was fundamental to its identity.¹⁹ Part Mgadla corroborates Parsons and Spray's claims, asserting that the Botswana government supported refugees and liberation movements despite that being morally wrong. It, however, vehemently denied housing freedom fighters who intended to use force to destabilise minority regimes in its neighbouring countries.²⁰ Roger Southall believes Botswana was likely to be forced to enter a regional conflict if it kept granting political asylum to people fleeing white oppression.²¹ Therefore,

14 Matlosa, "South Africa's regional economic strategy 1970-1990", pp.11-12. See also, External aggression and destabilisation: The road to the SADF", www.historicalpapers.ac.za/inventories/inv-pdf/ag1977-A3-9-5-001-jpeg.pdf, accessed 13 September 2016; P Mgadla, "A good measure of sacrifice": Botswana and the liberation struggles of Southern Africa (1965-1985)", *Social dynamics* 34 (1), 2008, p.10.

15 J Dzimba, *Destabilisation of Zimbabwe, 1980-89* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), pp. 1-2.

16 S Kibble and R Bush, "Reform of apartheid and continued destabilisation in Southern Africa", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24 (2), 1986, p. 205.

17 P Spray, "Botswana: cautious but outspoken". In: J Hanlon, *Beggar your neighbour: Apartheid power in Southern Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 219.

18 Spray, "Botswana: cautious but outspoken", p. 219.

19 N Parsons, "The pipeline: Botswana's reception of refugees, 1956-68", *Social Dynamics* 34 (1), 2008, pp. 28-29.

20 Mgadla, "A good measure of sacrifice", p. 8.

21 R Southall, "Botswana as a host country for refugees", *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 22 (2), 1984, p. 160. See also, C Saunders, "Botswana and the liberation of Southern Africa", *Social Dynamics* 34 (1), 2008, p. 3.

these accounts offer the base to examine the level of bullying suffered by Botswana and other SADCC countries from South Africa. Richard Dale and John de St. Jorre recounted South Africa's efforts to get its neighbours to sign the non-aggression pact, which Mozambique ultimately signed "out of relative weakness", while Botswana's President Ketumile Masire, vowed that Botswana would never be placed in such a situation.²² As Gilbert Sekgoma stated, despite the fact that Botswana was economically dependent on South Africa, it never gave in to the powerful neighbour's pressure.²³ Lotti Nkomo further argued that South Africa converted its neighbours' economic dependence and vulnerabilities into political resources. An instrument to whip them into submission.²⁴ This paper joins these historiographical debates by investigating the extent to which Botswana was affected by South Africa's acts of destabilisation.

It is a common cause that Botha's Total Strategy had severe repercussions for economic relations with Botswana. This paper adds new nuances to the existing literature on how Botswana responded to and manoeuvred through South Africa's aggression. It contends that Botswana pragmatically sought neutrality with both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia by preventing its territory from being used as a springboard by the liberation movements operating in Southern Africa at the time.²⁵ Gaborone did this, the paper argues, for the sake of peaceful co-existence with these countries in an effort to foster and maintain domestic stability which was vital to the newly independent country. Numerous authors, such as Joseph Hanlon, Hasu Patel, Richard Dale and Mafa Sejanamane to mention a few,²⁶ have written extensively on South Africa's destabilisation of the SADCC region, the majority of whom are cited in this article. However, this paper offers an alternative

22 R Dale, "Not always so placid a place: Botswana under attack", *African Affairs* 86 (342), 1987, p. 75; J de St. Jorre, "Destabilisation and dialogue: South Africa's emergence as a regional superpower", *Africa Notes*, 26, 1984, p. 6.

23 GA Sekgoma, "A note on Botswana's foreign and ideological stance", *Transafrican Journal of History* 19, 1990, p.154.

24 L Nkomo, "A country can only have a foreign policy it can afford: South Africa's economic reaction to Zimbabwe's Independence, 1980-1982", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 48 (3), 2022, p. 580.

25 Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 50; Hanlon, *Apartheid's second front*, p. 21; "Botswana shock at SA reaction", *The Star's Africa news service*, 5 September 1973 and R Dale, "The in man out: Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana and the Southern African subordinate state system", 7th annual meeting of the African studies association, Chicago, 30 October -2 November 1974.

26 See, R Dale, "Not always so placid a place", In: M Sejanamane (ed.), *From destabilisation to regional cooperation in Southern Africa* (Roma: Institute of Southern African Studies, 1994); Hanlon, *Apartheid's second front*; H Patel, "South Africa's destabilisation policy", *Round Table* 76 (303), 1987.

point of view by emphasising the voices of Batswana leaders through the use of unexplored primary documents.

Although Botswana opposed the apartheid government, it was committed to close economic cooperation with South Africa because the country was heavily dependent on South Africa and was closely linked through ethnic, cultural, and economic connections as well as migrant labour. This was unique not only to Botswana but also to Lesotho and Swaziland. Migrant labour from these countries was readily employed at South African mines and income earned from there formed the bulk of the remittances to their home countries. The Government of Botswana realised that despite its deep ideological aversion to apartheid and white minority rule, Botswana required technical and economic assistance from its powerful southern neighbour.²⁷ In turn, Gaborone's economic dependence made Pretoria believe it could turn Botswana's economic reliance on South Africa to its advantage by establishing an open diplomatic and economic channel to a "hostile Black Africa" to the North.²⁸ However, the South African government mistakenly assumed that this economic dependence would translate into open support of the apartheid regime in international forums, something which Botswana's first President, Seretse Khama, never acquiesced to and in fact, opposed. Seretse Khama's remarks at the United Nations strengthened Botswana's opposition to the apartheid regime when he said, "Botswana was entrusted with the responsibility of upholding the universal values of democracy and non-racialism of human dignity and equality in a part of the world where they were being distorted, turned upside down and even destroyed".²⁹ Therefore, South Africa's stranglehold over Botswana's economy was unsuccessful in capturing the political and ideological support of its much smaller neighbour. This paper, in part, adds to the narrative that advocates Botswana's agency in response to South Africa's bullying. While all the countries certainly resisted in one form or another, Botswana had little room to manoeuvre because of the legacy of its status as a High Commission territory managed from South Africa.

Given the complicated context in which these events were happening, several themes are discussed in this paper to understand how Botswana reacted to the bullying by South Africa. And in doing so, the paper highlights the developments that were happening in South Africa, which motivated its aggression and responses by Botswana thereof. The paper shows that South Africa sought to be the regional hegemon by all means and tactics,

27 "Bechuanaland triumph for moderates: extremists rejected", *Sunday Times*, 7 March 1965.

28 "Independence for Botswana: Seretse Khama tells of his problems and plans", *The Argus Africa News Service*, 4 April 1965.

29 As cited in, W Henderson, "Independent Botswana: a reappraisal of foreign policy options", *African Affairs* 73 (290), 1974, p.40.

ranging from aggression and impingement of state sovereignty to attempts at signing non-aggression pacts. As this unfolded, South Africa suffered global economic sanctions after the Soweto Uprising in 1976. Thus, how sanctions affected economic cooperation between Gaborone and Pretoria as South Africa looked to diminish the impact of sanctions requires an assessment. The paper closes with an assessment of the influence and direction of pan-regional decisions which impacted the relationships between Botswana and South Africa, including the formation of the SADCC and the CONSAS. When the neighbouring countries refused to be part of CONSAS, South Africa had no choice but to scale down and amend some of its ideas to design what became the restructure of relations between South Africa and the Bantustans.

This article relies on archives from the Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNA) in Gaborone, the National Archives (TNA) at Kew in London, the University of the Free State Contemporary Archives in Bloemfontein, and the National Archives of South Africa (Pretoria Repository). These were government-to-government negotiations, and their correspondences were deposited in the respective national archives. Furthermore, The British National Archives (TNA) at Kew were also important because Britain played a major part in dealing with South Africa's aggression in the region, therefore, had frequent interactions regarding their relations. From these records, I utilised correspondence letters, parliamentary debates, newspapers, and minutes. I also referred to secondary sources, including books, journal papers, and Internet sources.

2. SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION CONFERENCE: A COUNTER-CONSTELLATION?

In 1979, South African Prime Minister Botha proposed the establishment of a "Constellation" of Southern African States (CONSAS) as part of South Africa's new "Total Strategy". Botha's key objective was to make CONSAS an association of 11 states, which included; South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, and the internationally unrecognised Bantustans.³⁰ The underlying objective was for these countries to strengthen their economic and political relations, with South

30 The Bantustans were the pseudo-self-governing homelands within South Africa that were set aside for separate African development. See, Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 50; Evans, "The Frontline States, South Africa and Southern African security: military prospects and perspective", pp. 1-19 and Dzimba, *Destabilisation of Zimbabwe, 1980-89*, p. 6.

Africa serving as the pivot.³¹ According to Khabelo Matlosa, "CONSAS would include bilateral non-aggression treaties, multilateral security/defence pacts among members and a common political programme aimed in the main at ensuring profit-maximisation for monopoly capital and political-economic stability for South Africa".³² The constellation of states was envisaged by the National Party as a means of diluting the international pressure mounting against the South African state, establishing greater legitimacy for the system of apartheid with "black Africa", removing the threats posed by African liberation movements including the ANC, and to secure the economic interests of South African businesses.

If the Southern African states had agreed to join CONSAS, South Africa would have been able to establish more political control over the region by forcing them to evict the liberation movements operating within their borders and to express support for apartheid internationally while importantly developing and maintaining their deep economic links with South Africa.³³ South Africa's Foreign Minister Roelof Frederick "Pik" Botha believed that ten states comprising 40 million people south of the Zambezi and Kunene rivers would join forces in this constellation of states to establish a common approach in the security and political fields; it was not meant solely for the expansion of the economic ties, despite this being a vital consideration.³⁴ Unsurprisingly, the independent Southern African states were not eager to deal with the apartheid state and instead sought ways to loosen their connections to South Africa rather than strengthen them.³⁵ However, the Bantustans chose to go with the CONSAS with South Africa. Prime Minister Botha stated on 2 November 1979, during the Carlton Conference, which featured government officials and business executives, that; "the concept "constellation of states" does not primarily denote a formal organisation, but rather a grouping of states with common interests and developing mutual relationships and between which a clear desire to extend areas of cooperation exists." On 16 February 1980, South Africa, Bophuthatswana, Transkei, and Venda (as the Bantustans) formalised CONSAS in its reduced form in Port St Johns, South Africa.³⁶

31 JC Chipasula and K Miti, "South Africa and its SADCC neighbours", *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies* 7 (1), 1991, pp. 165-167.

32 Matlosa, "South Africa's regional economic strategy 1970-1990", pp. 11-12.

33 Matlosa, "South Africa's regional economic strategy 1970-1990", pp. 11-12.

34 D Geldenhuys, "The constellation of Southern African states and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Council: towards a new regional stalemate?", *The Southern African Institute of International Affairs*, (Special Study), 1981, p. 2.

35 Matlosa, "South Africa's regional economic strategy 1970-1990", p. 13.

36 Geldenhuys, "The constellation of Southern African states", p. 5.

The CONSAS concept sparked outrage in the region, prompting a swift and immediate response from several Southern African countries, including Botswana, which responded by calling for an economic alliance solely comprised of black majority-ruled states. The region ignored South Africa's proposals and instead formed the SADCC, an alternative multilateral organisation. The Frontline States' Foreign Ministers met in Botswana in May 1979 to discuss potential areas of economic cooperation, which led to the formation of SADCC.³⁷ This was followed two months later by a conference in Arusha, Tanzania, which considered various economic policies and objectives, as well as agreed to invite other majority-ruled Southern African countries to participate in drawing up a plan for the development of the region.³⁸ SADCC's main aim was to accelerate economic growth, improve living standards and conditions for citizens and curb their overarching dependency on South Africa.³⁹

It is worth mentioning that the concept of establishing the SADCC as a regional organisation was not unique. Other regions also had organisations that were comparable to this, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Founded in 1975, ECOWAS was focused on promoting economic and social integration in West Africa with no mention of peace and security. However, it enacted a non-aggression protocol in 1978, followed by a protocol referring to mutual support in defence. Similar to ECOWAS, Central African states had also established the Economic Community of Central Africa (ECCAS) in 1983 but lay dormant until 1999. The fundamental goal of its founding treaty was to establish a customs union.⁴⁰ SADCC, therefore, was following precedence from other regions.

The SADCC alliance was formed to allow South Africa's neighbours to reduce their economic and political dependency on their hegemonic neighbour. These countries had extremely close ties that ranged from tourism and transport to formal agreements governing the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), the Rand Monetary Area (RMA), and the supply of labour to

37 The Frontline States (formed in 1974) was a political and economic organisation that expanded into SADCC by the inclusion of Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, which joined the founding states; Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana. The frontline state's formation was motivated by the external threats that were perceived by Botswana, Tanzania, and Zambia. See Geldenhuys, "The constellation of Southern African States", p. 19; J Moma, *The Frontline States alliance and the management of threat in Southern Africa* (MA, Ohio University, 2009), p. 9.

38 Anon, "SADCC: The Southern African Development Coordination conference", *The Black Scholar* 18 (6), 1987, p. 37.

39 "SADCC: The Southern African Development Coordination Conference", p. 37.

40 B Moller, "Africa's sub-regional organisations: seamless web or patchwork?", Working Paper No.56-Regional and global axes of conflict, Danish Institute for International Studies, August 2009.

South Africa.⁴¹ Botswana understood the significance of the venture the region was about to embark on. Seretse Khama even said in Arusha 1979, “what we are trying to achieve is the ability to exercise some degree of choice which ensures us against the domination by one powerful partner”.⁴² Furthermore, in an interview with the *Botswana Daily News* in September 1981, President Ketumile Masire noted that Botswana contributed to this grouping (SADCC) in several ways. For instance, Botswana’s President would serve as the SADCC’s first chairman, the country would host the secretariat, and the SADCC house would be operational by July 1982.⁴³

In addition to reducing the economic dependency of its member states on South Africa, SADCC also sought to forge links for the creation of “genuine and equitable regional integration”, to mobilise the resources of member states so that they could implement their national, inter-state, and regional policies through concerted actions which would secure international cooperation.⁴⁴ The SADCC leaders realised that to achieve the objectives, they needed to establish regional transport and communication systems that were less integrated and reliant on South Africa, especially for its landlocked members. To achieve this, a Southern Africa Transport and Communication Commission (SATCC) was signed on 1 April 1980 in Mozambique to develop additional transport and communication networks.⁴⁵ This was done through the implementation of the SADCC Protocol on Transport, Communications, and Meteorology, which set out to,

coordinate the use of existing transport and communications systems and the planning and financing of additional regional facilities to establish adequate, efficient and sustainable transport, communications and meteorology services in the region; achieve self-sufficiency in the maintenance of equipment and plant, technical manpower, training and development.⁴⁶

This was meant to improve transport and communication in the SADCC region, especially for landlocked countries like Botswana, and reduce significant dependence on South African transport and communication system.

41 G Maasdorp, “Reassessing economic ties in Southern Africa”, *Optima*, 1981, p. 113.

42 F Gwaradzimba, “SADCC and the future of Southern African regionalism”, *Journal of Opinion* 21 (1), 1993, p. 53.

43 *Botswana Daily News*, 3 September 1981.

44 GH Oosthuizen, *The Southern African Development Community: The organization, its policies, and prospect* (Midrand: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2006), pp. 59-60.

45 Oosthuizen, *The Southern African Development Community: The organisation, its policies and prospect*, pp. 59-60.

46 <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100061374>, accessed 13 November 2018.

Through regional collaboration, the SADCC took substantial measures to reduce its dependence on South Africa and foster economic growth. Half of the organisation's 398 projects valued at US \$4.8 billion had been finished, implemented, or were under active negotiation by 1986. The main priority was transportation, with Mozambique able to provide ports to international markets for five other countries. The development of food production came second on the list, with at least 35 agricultural projects obtaining funding totalling US \$125.9 million and an additional 37 projects in the discussion.⁴⁷ The SADCC countries saw the new organisation as a crucial step toward greater economic, political, and social liberation. For example, the President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, believed that SADCC's quest for independence was part of a wider general struggle for decolonisation that extended beyond the region.⁴⁸ Similarly, Simba Makoni, one time Zimbabwean Minister of Finance, saw SADCC as, "a logical and natural progeny of the political struggle, and the translation of the tactics and strategies of the political struggle into the economic struggle".⁴⁹ Makoni viewed the SADCC as a genuine effort by the region's governments to cooperate in developing and freeing the region. He stressed that political independence was hollow and meaningless if there was no economic independence concluding that,

In the months and years that lie ahead, there will be many false friends whispering in our ears that the road we have chosen is too difficult, that the company we keep is not trustworthy and that the struggle is not worth the effort.⁵⁰

The South African initiative of CONSAS was to promote interregional transport, energy, investment and manpower planning while maintaining its power and influence over the region's fledgling independent nations.⁵¹ It was particularly because of the latter aspect that the SADCC countries objected to joining CONSAS, fully realising the external dependency that this policy would establish over their sovereignty, which would reduce them to perpetual client status.⁵² Moreover, they had little inclination to support or even legitimise the

47 RH Green and CB Thompson, "Political economies in conflict: SADC, South Africa and sanctions". In: P Johnson and D Martin (eds.), *Destructive engagement: Southern Africa at war* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986), p. 264.

48 "Botswana praised for coordination", *Botswana Daily News*, 1 December 1980.

49 "SADCC is a liberation movement, not group of beggars-Makoni", *Botswana Daily News*, 26 April 1985.

50 SADCC is a liberation movement, not group of beggars- Makoni", *Botswana Daily News*, 26 April 1985.

51 D Chitala, "The political economy of SADCC and imperialism's response". In: S Amin, D Chitala and I Mandaza (eds.), *SADCC: Prospects for disengagement and development in Southern Africa* (London: The United Nations University, 1987), p. 30.

52 Geldenhuys, "The constellation of Southern African states", p. 38.

apartheid state, including the Bantustans. Quite clearly, as Seretse Khama had bluntly stated, the SADCC was, in large measure, a direct response to CONSAS.⁵³ Therefore, the region actively sought to cooperate in their opposition to South Africa's power. Frustrated in his attempt to draw the region into a constellation of states dominated by South Africa, was prompt for Botha to escalate the policy of destabilisation in an effort to "convince" the region that their future development lay with the apartheid state and not through the path set by the SADCC.⁵⁴

Consequently, Botha's Total Strategy switched to an overt and explicit attempt to destabilise the region. Historian Matthew Graham vividly describes how South Africa made sure that SADCC did not succeed in its objectives because, "South Africa skilfully manipulated the regional interdependences lingering from the colonial era for its benefit, for example by destroying infrastructure or blocking trade access ensuring that SADCC aims were never realised".⁵⁵ South Africa continued seeking legal and illegal mechanisms to subvert SADCC member states, pursuing policies that drove a wedge across the region. For example, it utilised the historically established finance and capital connections between the region and Pretoria. Most South African investment in the SADCC countries was in the mining sector, with companies such as De Beers in Botswana and Anglo-American in Zambia. Tanzania and Angola were the only SADCC countries that did not have direct trading links with South Africa, mostly because of distance and the ongoing and destructive conflict in Angola.⁵⁶ However, they were still affected by any instabilities in the links between South Africa and other SADCC states. South Africa also had a transport and communication network centred on it. Its transport network was the most vital in SADCC countries, especially for trade with overseas countries.⁵⁷ It is apparent, therefore, that the formation of SADCC was an important step towards greater independence from South Africa which Southern African states had articulated in the 1970s and had for a long time

53 As clearly stated, Botswana was at the forefront of the formation of the SADCC together with the other frontline states; J Hentz, *South Africa and the logic of regional cooperation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 39.

54 Hentz, *South Africa and the logic of regional cooperation*, p. 40.

55 South Africa violated its customs union agreement with Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, imposed border restrictions on its immediate neighbours, including Botswana, limited the use of South African railways by manipulating wagon availability, and regulated the export of goods to the black states, particularly food and oil. See Patel, "South Africa's destabilisation policy", p. 304; Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 50.

56 Oosthuizen, *The Southern African Development Community: The organisation, its policies and prospect*, pp. 59-60.

57 Oosthuizen, *The Southern African Development Community: The organisation, its policies and prospect*, pp. 59-60.

aspired to achieve. But South Africa sought to scuttle this initiative through its destabilisation.

3. THE DESTABILISATION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

After the formation of SADCC and the regional leaders' overt declarations of enthusiasm for their greater capacity to deal with the issue of overreliance on apartheid South Africa, Pretoria responded to the regional rejection of the CONSAS concept. South Africa's response should also be understood in the context of the increased domestic and international pressure it faced in the 1970s and early 1980s. Following the Soweto Uprising in 1976 and the exodus of thousands of young militant youths fleeing South Africa, the ranks of the ANC were swelled with recruits which put them in a much stronger position to challenge apartheid. Placed alongside the wider geopolitical changes in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the ANC could intensify its international activities thereby permitting it to usher in a newfound sense of assurance within the movement. The ability to infiltrate guerrilla fighters into South Africa by the late 1970s and early 1980s meant a notable increase in incidents of armed propaganda, which spectacularly targeted symbols of the apartheid regime, including the Koeberg Nuclear Facility.⁵⁸ In response to these emerging threats, South Africa implemented the Total Strategy as the key principle of its foreign policy to target not only the ANC but also the nations which harboured them.⁵⁹ Pretoria disregarded state sovereignty and attacked any country that it suspected to be harbouring ANC cadres, to end guerrilla activities and cease the Southern African government's support of the movement.

South Africa's destabilisation campaign posed a great threat to the region's peaceful co-existence and security.⁶⁰ In 1981, the South African Defence Force (SADF) launched its first strike against the ANC's guerrilla fighters in Matola near Maputo in Mozambique. This attack resulted in the death of 12 people.⁶¹ Furthermore, in January 1983, South Africa invaded Lesotho, where it despatched over 100 commandos and helicopter

58 Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 45.

59 Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 50.

60 E Kwakwa, "South Africa's May 1986 military incursions into neighbouring African states", *Yale Journal of International Law* 12 (2), 1987, p. 423. See also, D Geldenhuys, "The destabilisation controversy: An analysis of a high-risk foreign policy option for South Africa", *South African Journal of Political Studies* 9 (2), 1982, p. 31.

61 See, R Davies, "South African strategy towards Mozambique in the post-Nkomati period- A critical analysis of effects and implications", Research Report No.73, *The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies*, 1985.

gunships to strike 12 ANC locations in and around Maseru, which resulted in 42 fatalities.⁶² The infiltration into Lesotho was the largest by the SADF in Southern Africa, besides the then-ongoing military activities in Angola.⁶³

Aside from the military strikes, from 1980, South Africa utilised its unequal economic power relationships to suspend and violate the provisions of the Customs Union Agreement it had signed with Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland by limiting the use of its railways and harbour facilities for export and import activities.⁶⁴ South Africa, for example, imposed additional punitive charges on transported goods and manipulated the availability of railway trucks for cross-border journeys.⁶⁵ Further restrictions were imposed on the number of goods that the aforementioned countries could export through South Africa. Besides Pretoria seeking to regulate the movement of people from across the region by creating delays at the border posts, it also regulated the exportation of several goods to Botswana, especially foodstuffs, oil, machinery as well as spares.⁶⁶ However, Botswana did not buckle under South African pressure. Besides being a conduit for ANC exiles heading to Tanzania and Zambia, Botswana did not only allow ANC activists to remain in the country but also maintained an open-door policy for refugees and repeatedly as well as publicly criticised the apartheid policy.⁶⁷

In 1983, Barend Schoeman, South Africa's Minister of Transport, argued that South Africa's acts of destabilisation were only targeted towards where ANC bases were located. Schoeman assured Malcolm Rifkind, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, that Botswana should not be concerned about any attacks if they were not harbouring ANC activists.⁶⁸ This implied that if Botswana hosted the ANC members, then she was at a heightened risk of being attacked by South African security forces. While threatening the ANC activists and neighbouring countries that harboured members of the movement, Botha also stressed that South Africa had no hesitation in targeting any group or movement that threatened Afrikaner and white-minority interests. He attempted to embellish the threat by stating that Botswana and South Africa traditionally had good relations, which he hoped would continue in the future.⁶⁹

62 Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 50.

63 Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 50.

64 SACU was established in 1910 as a trade agreement between Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa. It regulated much of Botswana's trade with South Africa and other members. See, Hanlon, "Destabilisation", p. 30.

65 Hanlon, "Destabilisation", p. 30.

66 Hanlon, "Destabilisation", p. 30.

67 Spray, "Botswana: cautious but outspoken", p. 219.

68 The National Archives (TNA; Kew), FCO 105/1173, Telegram no. 125, by Howe, 27 June 1983.

69 "Muller to check Khama's terror stand", *'Mail' African Bureau*, 5 September 1973.

On 21 April 1983, Botha provided the Botswana Minister of External Affairs (1974-84), Archie Mogwe, with a list of ANC “terrorists” in Botswana and demanded their arrest.⁷⁰ Botha was dictating to Botswana how to deal with the people it labelled terrorists. As a result, the two sides met in March 1984 to discuss ways to deal with potential risks and confrontations between them. The meeting was also necessitated by the fact that the early 1980s witnessed an increase in the number of attacks on the apartheid government from the guerrillas, some of whom were allegedly infiltrating South African boundaries through its border with Botswana.⁷¹

Given this stance, the President of Bophuthatswana, Lucas Mangope, dispatched a personal message to Gaositwe Keagakwa Chiepe, Botswana’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (1984-94), reporting that his territory was experiencing an increase in “terrorist activities”, which were considered to originate from Botswana.⁷² Since Mangope did not want to create tension between Bophuthatswana and Pretoria, he immediately took assertive actions against any allegation of “terrorist activities”, even if that meant attacking Botswana.⁷³ Botswana was sternly informed that if the guerrilla activities were not stopped, Bophuthatswana would be left with no alternative but to engage in cross-border pursuit operations against the “terrorists”.⁷⁴ Mangope then informed Botha about this crucial step he had taken as an attempt to warn the Botswana government about the extent of the problem. On 28 January 1985, Botha and Thathe Molathwa, Foreign Minister of Bophuthatswana, met in Cape Town, from where they sent a message to Chiepe, informing her of the need to hold serious discussions on matters concerning security arrangements. Chiepe positively responded indicating her willingness to visit Cape Town to discuss the issue and to clarify any misconception about the guerrilla fighters and their activities originating from Botswana.⁷⁵

70 “Muller to check Khama’s terror stand”, *Mail African Bureau*, 5 September 1973.

71 “Muller to check Khama’s terror stand”, *Mail African Bureau*, 5 September 1973.

72 National Archives of South Africa (NASA)/ National Archives Repository (SAB), MSB 147, 1/15/7/6, Letter from RF Botha, South Africa’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and information about terrorist infiltration through Botswana to the RSA and Bophuthatswana, to Dr GKT Chiepe, 20 February 1985.

73 NASA/SAB, MSB 147, 1/15/7/6, Letter from RF Botha, South Africa’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and information about terrorist infiltration through Botswana to the RSA and Bophuthatswana, to Dr GKT Chiepe, 20 February 1985.

74 NASA/SAB, MSB 147, 1/15/7/6, Letter from RF Botha, South Africa’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and information about terrorist infiltration through Botswana to the RSA and Bophuthatswana, to Dr GKT Chiepe, 20 February 1985.

75 NASA/SAB, MSB 147, 1/15/7/6, Letter from RF Botha, South Africa’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and information about terrorist infiltration through Botswana to the RSA and Bophuthatswana, to Dr GKT Chiepe, 20 February 1985. See also, CJ Makgala, “Botswana-Bophuthatswana relations in the context of Lucas Mangope’s quest for international diplomatic recognition 1977-1994”, *New Contree* (86), 2021, p.105.

Despite the presence of ANC cadres in Botswana at the time, Chiepe assured Botha that all ANC members in the country had been expelled and those that were to be found in possession of arms would be prosecuted.⁷⁶ However, Botha argued that Botswana security forces were not cooperating with South Africa, including failure to respond to a request for fingerprints and other details of a suspected terrorist who had escaped to Botswana from Ellisras in August 1984.⁷⁷ Moreover, Botswana had a large number of ANC cadres who lived freely in the country with no measures implemented to suppress their activities. Botha was particularly incensed by the white South Africans who had escaped military service in South Africa and fled to Botswana, whom he accused of spreading false propaganda against the apartheid state.⁷⁸ He further stressed that Botswana Police's lack of commitment to stopping ANC activists was influenced by the political stand that the country took against the apartheid regime. Indeed, Botha was willing to threaten Chiepe about the dangers facing Botswana's industrial development if they refused to cooperate on joint projects in the region.⁷⁹ However, the Botswana government remained unmoved by South Africa's threats, a stance reiterated in a statement from Botswana's Office of the President which categorically stressed that the country's position regarding apartheid and African political freedom remained unchanged. Botswana was fully aware of the unequal power dynamics at play, yet despite being sympathetic with other African liberation struggles, it still opted not to get involved. The Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere recognised this fact in a speech he gave in Dar es Salaam on 1 October 1973, stating,

The Botswana government does not give active support to the liberation movements in Southern Africa, there are no bases for the liberation movement in the country. Botswana is not involved in the military struggles of the people in Southern Africa nor Africa, or the liberation movement so stupid as to ask Botswana to commit suicide by providing such facilities.⁸⁰

What emerged was that Botswana was walking a delicate tightrope. On the one hand, the government rhetorically and in a limited fashion materially supported regional liberation movements. On the other hand, it was aware

76 Spray, "Botswana: cautious but outspoken", p. 223.

77 BNA, OP/13/113, GG Garebamore, "Minutes of Meeting held on 22 Feb 1985 Between Honourable RF(Pik) Botha and Honourable GKT Chiepe in Pretoria to discuss security", Secretary for external affairs, Gaborone, 1 April 1983.

78 Southall, "Botswana as a host country for refugees", p. 163.

79 NASA/SAB, MSB 147, 1/15/7/6, Letter from RF Botha, South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs and information about terrorist infiltration through Botswana to the RSA and Bophuthatswana, to Dr GKT Chiepe, 20 February 1985.

80 "Muller to check Khama's terror stand", *Mail African Bureau*, 5 September 1973.

of the dangers posed by Pretoria and the enormous damage that could be inflicted if Botswana was to be more proactive in challenging the apartheid state.

According to Sekgoma, “the choice and pursuit of the non-interference and resolution of political problems through peaceful negotiations did not sufficiently shield Botswana from frequent attacks by its racist neighbours”.⁸¹ For instance, South Africa violated not only Botswana’s sovereignty but also international law as it attacked Gaborone in June 1985. Despite the SADF claims that the attack was focused solely on key ANC activists, 12 innocent civilians were killed.⁸² Rok Ajulu and Diana Cammack have pointed out that,

The true motives for the attack seemed to be to try to silence a vocal community of South African exiles as well as frighten and alienate the Botswana community from the exile community, exerting pressure on the government to expel South African exiles and generally boosting morale in South Africa by dramatizing the attack as a “successful” offensive against terrorists.⁸³

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chiepe was understandably furious and accused Botha, as well as the SADF, of not only targeting innocent people but also destroying property. Chiepe, in her own words in a letter to Roelof Frederik Botha, remarked,

In the wake of this act of aggression, six refugees, two ordinary residents, one of whom was a Somali national who had only arrived in Botswana in 1984, two visitors, a student from South Africa and a six-year-old child from Lesotho and two Botswana women lost their lives. In addition, three refugees, two Botswana nationals and a Dutch citizen were injured. Some of whom will be permanently crippled. Vehicles and machinery were destroyed and houses were reduced to rubble. The raiders also fired indiscriminately at passing motorists who were driving home.⁸⁴

Although this raid was the most deadly and destructive against citizens living in Botswana, it was, in fact, the third attack that year, demonstrating that the security agreement was not worth the paper it was written on. The raid by the SADF ensured that Gaborone questioned the South African authority’s sincerity and good faith. Pretoria’s acts of unprovoked aggression violated the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Botswana. Thus, the actions prompted the United Nations to seek to accord Botswana some protection

81 Sekgoma, “A note on Botswana’s foreign and ideological stance”, p.154.

82 R Ajulu and D Cammack, “Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland: captive state”. In: P Johnson and D Martin (eds.), *Destructive engagement: Southern Africa at war* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986), p. 151.

83 Ajulu and Cammack, “Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland: captive state”, p.151.

84 BNA, OP/13/113, Letter from Chiepe to RF Botha, 18 August 1985.

and Resolution 572, which obliged South Africa to make full compensation for the damages of property and the loss of life that resulted from its aggressive actions. Chiepe's plea to Botha was for South Africa to end its acts of unwarranted violence for the sake of their good neighbourliness.⁸⁵

Nonetheless, the 1985 attack was a huge challenge to the relationship that existed between the two countries. In a public address made in Gaborone on 15 June 1985, President Masire responded to the raid's news by describing it as, "the wanton and unprovoked act of aggression and violation of the territorial integrity of my country with horror and indignation".⁸⁶ He condemned this act and the killing of innocent civilians, particularly since South Africa had accepted that Botswana's policy on refugees had not changed at a meeting on 22 February 1985. From Botswana's perspective, following this, "act of bad faith or more bluntly of duplicity and treachery", South Africa could not expect to be trusted on matters relating to any agreement.⁸⁷ However, we must place these acts of aggression by South Africa into context. Undoubtedly, the apartheid state sought any means necessary to protect its diminishing legitimacy and security, primarily through force. Recognising this fact, Botswana's Minister of Home Affairs, Englishman Kgabo, described South African raids into neighbouring countries as, "the last kicks of a dying horse"⁸⁸, urging them to respect Botswana, because it had adopted a policy of good neighbourliness toward the white South African government.⁸⁹

South Africa's actions were criticised by many international leaders, including President Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, who argued the raids were conducted as a "sinister" way of intimidating and blackmailing Botswana while showing a callous disregard for international law and civilised norms of behaviour.⁹⁰ Likewise, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned Pretoria's acts of aggression and insisted that its reckless behaviour towards its neighbours could not be tolerated any longer.⁹¹ International laws demanded that the Security Council use its power to force South Africa to end

85 BNA, OP/13/113, Letter from Chiepe to RF Botha, 18 August 1985; United Nations security council resolutions, "Resolution 572: Botswana-South Africa", 1985 <http://unsr.com/en/resolutions/572>, accessed 14 June 2018.

86 BNA, OP/13/113, Statement by QKJ Masire, following a South African raid in Gaborone on 14 June 1985", 25 September 1985.

87 BNA, OP/13/113, "Meeting between GKT. Chiepe, Minister for External Affairs of Botswana and Roelof Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa", 25 September 1985.

88 BNA, OP/13/113, "Meeting between GKT. Chiepe, Minister for External Affairs of Botswana and Roelof Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa", 25 September 1985.

89 "SA should respect our policy-Kgabo", *Botswana Daily News*, 5 August 1985.

90 "World leaders deplore South African blackmail attempts on her neighbours", *Botswana Daily News*, 4 July 1985.

91 "World leaders deplore South African blackmail attempts on her neighbours", *Botswana Daily News*, 4 July 1985.

acts of violence and aggression in Southern Africa.⁹² Under Resolution 568 (1985), the Security Council reaffirmed that all states were obliged to refrain in their international relations from threatening or even using force against the sovereignty and integrity of any country. It consequently expressed concern over the way apartheid South Africa resorted to military attacks against, “a defenceless and peace-loving Botswana”. The Council, therefore, “demanded the immediate, total and unconditional cessation of all acts of aggression by South Africa against Botswana, denounced and rejected racist South Africa’s practice of “hot pursuit” to terrorise and destabilise Botswana and other countries in Africa”.⁹³ The Security Council further reaffirmed that Botswana had the right to, “receive and give sanctuary to the victims of apartheid in accordance with its traditional practice, humanitarian principles and international obligation”.⁹⁴ The Secretary-General was then requested to send a mission to Botswana to assess the extent of the damage that was caused by South Africa and find ways in which Botswana could receive and assist South African refugees.⁹⁵

Besides facing international condemnation, by July 1985, tension had increased significantly within South Africa. South Africans inside the country had been resisting and opposing the apartheid government, and they brought the revolution home. A year earlier, approximately 600 people had been killed and 1 000 incarcerated as waves of protests led by the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the trade union movements began to challenge apartheid.⁹⁶ These internal developments increased the state’s paranoia leading to its conclusion that it was being coordinated by exiles, including those in Botswana.

In an appearance at the “International Conference on Apartheid and Southern Africa: The West European Response”, in Amsterdam on 12- 14 September 1985, Chiepe condemned the apartheid state, arguing that it pushed the violence and terror within South Africa across international borders, showing an utter disregard for the sanctity of human life. This destabilisation by South Africa haunted all countries in the region. Chiepe observed that,

92 “World leaders deplore South African blackmail attempts on her neighbours”, *Botswana Daily News*, 4 July 1985.

93 United Nations security council resolutions, “Resolution 568: Botswana-South Africa”, 1985 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/568>, accessed 14 June 2018.

94 United Nations security council resolutions, “Resolution 568: Botswana-South Africa”, 1985 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/568>, accessed 14 June 2018.

95 United Nations security council resolutions, “Resolution 568: Botswana-South Africa”, 1985 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/568>, accessed 14 June 2018.

96 BNA, OP/13/113, “Meeting between GKT Chiepe, Minister for External Affairs of Botswana and Roelof Botha”.

The apartheid regime still had not addressed its problems even though the struggle for freedom had intensified. It rather focused on attacking its neighbours causing destabilisation and repressing its people. It blames its neighbours for and has caused havoc on them as it believes they were fuelling political strife and instability in the country. But the simple thing to do was for South Africa to abandon apartheid and recognise the black majority.⁹⁷

The apartheid regime faced increased pressure which, as has already been shown, forced it to adopt a more radical and militant way of containing the rising tide of revolutionary forces. Destabilisation inadvertently worsened South Africa's international position, especially diplomatically, as it led to widespread condemnation within and outside the region. Apart from destabilising its neighbours, South Africa attempted to coerce them into signing the non-aggression pact, which is discussed in the following section.

4. THE NON-AGGRESSION PACT

Aside from the aggressive acts of destabilisation, the South African government concurrently utilised the threat of violence as a means to establish military alliances in Southern Africa, especially by signing non-aggression pacts. However, as one of the targets, Botswana resisted continued South African pressure to sign a "non-aggression and good neighbourliness pact".⁹⁸ It is worth noting that other countries, such as Swaziland, which signed the non-aggression pact in February 1982, were unable to withstand the pressure imposed by South Africa.⁹⁹ The sustained direct economic, political and military destabilisation eventually forced Mozambique to succumb and, consequently, signed the Nkomati Accord in March 1984.¹⁰⁰ This latter pact gave Mozambique the obligation to expel ANC cadres from within its borders.¹⁰¹ In February 1984, the South African government presented Botswana with an 11page document similar to the Nkomati Accord. However, Botswana refused to sign, fearing that expelling ANC members would delink it from the aspirations of other black African countries.¹⁰² In a final attempt to gain Botswana's support for the non-aggression pact, on 30 October 1984, the

97 BNA, OP/13/113, "Address by the Honourable Dr. GKT Chiepe, Minister for External Affairs, Botswana to International Conference on Apartheid and Southern Africa: The West European Response, Amsterdam," 12- 14 September 1983.

98 Chitala, "The political economy of SADCC and imperialism's response", p. 32. See also, G Erasmus, "The accord of Nkomati: context and content", *The South African Institute of International Affairs*, Occasional Paper, 1984, p. 21.

99 Chitala, "The political economy of SADCC and imperialism's response", p. 32.

100 Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 58.

101 Graham, *The crisis of South African foreign policy*, p. 58.

102 Dale, "Not always so placid a place: Botswana under attack", p. 75.

Police and Defence personnel of both Gaborone and Pretoria met to discuss a security agreement, but Masire continued to refuse to sign the Nkomati accord, arguing that it was dangerous for Botswana, and more beneficial to South Africa.¹⁰³

Masire observed that there was no need for an agreement because Botswana had never been at war with South Africa. Furthermore, Masire argued that, "Botswana's policy on this question is well known, and the liberation movements of South Africa have not asked us to commit suicide because this is what it would amount to if they were to give the slightest pretext for South Africa to march in and occupy our country".¹⁰⁴ Masire, therefore, insisted that since South Africa knew that Botswana would not tolerate liberation movements using its territory, there was no practical benefit to signing the security pact.¹⁰⁵ However, Pretoria double-downed on its threats, warning Gaborone that it would invade the country if it did not stop the ANC cadres from using it as a passage to other countries, even if they were not being hosted in the country.

Although his sentiment belied his sympathies for the apartheid regime, the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Malcolm Rifkind, when answering questions during a press conference held at radio Botswana on 5 February 1983, commended Botswana for maintaining its peaceful policy and not allowing itself to be used as a springboard to attack other countries. However, Rifkind was concerned by the threats made by South Africa to its neighbours which threatened the peace and stability in the region. He, therefore, assured Botswana that Britain was ready to take any necessary measures to ensure that there was stability, peace and integrity in the country.¹⁰⁶

In February 1985, South Africa finally backed down from insisting that Botswana signs a non-aggression pact. Geoffrey Garebamore, Secretary for External Affairs for Botswana, confirmed to the press that Botswana did not need to sign the non-aggression pact with South Africa, because the latter had retreated on its earlier stance.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, in South Africa, Botha, held

103 TNA, FCO/105/1583, Telegram no. 200, W Jones, 1 November 1984.

104 BNA, OP/15/15, "Address by his Excellency the President Dr. QKJ Masire to the conference of the socialist international committee and the socialist group of the European parliament on Southern Africa", Arusha, 4-5 September 1984.

105 BNA, OP/15/15, "Address by his Excellency the President Dr. QKJ Masire to the conference of the socialist international committee and the socialist group of the European parliament on Southern Africa", Arusha, 4-5 September 1984.

106 Due to its history as a British protectorate, Botswana had a special diplomatic relationship with the United Kingdom. In fact, the British possessed extensive, strategic, and ideological interests in the region and they played a mediating role. See, *Botswana Daily News*, 07 February 1983; Nkomo, "A country can only have a foreign policy it can afford", p. 580.

107 "SA now sees no reason for Peace Accord", *Botswana Daily News*, 26 February 1985.

a press conference to inform journalists about his country's new stance, which he believed would improve the relations between the neighbouring countries.¹⁰⁸ However, John Hawkins, from the British Embassy in South Africa, argued that Botha was more concerned with Mozambique, and Angola as he had control over them; hence Botswana Lesotho Swaziland (BLS) became less of a priority. As such, the pressure on Botswana and Lesotho to sign security pacts, especially the non-aggression pact finally receded.¹⁰⁹ Thus, by the end of 1985, Botswana had scrapped through both destabilisation and increased pressure to sign non-aggression pacts with the effect that its victimhood at the hands of the apartheid regime brought the crimes of the latter to the international fora even more vividly.

5. INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA AND THE IMPACT ON BOTSWANA

South Africa's destabilisation policy in general and its cross-border expeditions into Botswana in particular, attracted international attention to the apartheid regime's violations of international law. In 1986, the international community agreed to enact sanctions against South Africa. The President of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan, and the Ministers of European Communities and Japan chose to adopt selective sanctions against South Africa and disinvestment in the country.¹¹⁰ Japan was hesitant to impose these sanctions on South Africa, though. At the time, Japan's foreign policy toward South Africa displayed cross-currents and competing demands. The reason for this is that Japan expressed solidarity with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) states in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid in South Africa and it was a member of the Afro-Asian group at the United Nations. But on the other hand, it increased its business operations and manufacturing

108 "SA now sees no reason for Peace Accord", *Botswana Daily News*, 26 February 1985.

109 KNA, FCO 105/1583, Letter from JM Hawkins, British embassy in South Africa, "South Africa/BLS relations", to Neil K. Hook at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 31 December 1984.

110 Economic sanctions are the official imposition of various economic penalties by one or more countries (senders) against another country (target) to bring about certain changes in the political behaviour (foreign policy objective) of the target country. See, MH Louw, *Economic sanctions against South Africa during the eighties* (PhD, University of South Africa, 1994), p. 8; University of the Free State Contemporary Archives (UFS CA), PV 203/PS/12/82/2, "Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr RF Botha DMS, MP- In response to the announcement of further sanctions by the European community", *European political cooperation ministerial meeting*, Brussels, 15 September 1986 ; AR Booth, "South Africa's Hitherland: Swaziland's role in strategies for sanction-breaking", *Africa Today* 36 (1), 1986, p. 41.

interests in South Africa in a way that could be considered supporting the Pretoria regime.¹¹¹

The United States Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) in 1986 (despite Reagan attempting to veto it), which severely restricted lending to Pretoria, and imposed import bans of South African products such as steel, coal, uranium, textiles and agricultural goods.¹¹² The sanctions were meant to force South Africa to abandon apartheid, with most of the provisions focused on the country's trade and finance. The most painful and damaging measure that South Africa experienced was the oil embargo. It led to a rise in prices for petroleum which, in the process, affected the whole population, if not the region.¹¹³

To understand Botswana's position concerning sanctions imposed on South Africa, it is vital to underscore the highly unequal political and economic relationship between the two countries. Botswana had limited room for manoeuvrability, something Pretoria knew only too well.¹¹⁴ A key dependency on South Africa meant that 85 per cent of Botswana's imports were from South Africa. Thus, any disruption in the supply of industrial imports such as oil would have led to Botswana suffering in terms of exports and foreign exchange. The country as a whole was greatly affected by any disruption in the supply of consumer goods; for example, Botswana imported about quarter of the grain consumed in the country.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the situation was compounded by the fact that Botswana relied on South Africa's ports to transport her key exports like beef and diamonds. Besides, Botswana feared that her remittances and migratory workers could be affected by its citizens being returned home.¹¹⁶

111 K Ampiah, *The dynamics of Japan's relations with Africa: South Africa, Tanzania and Nigeria* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 5.

112 PI Levy, "Sanctions on South Africa: What did they do?", Center Discussion Paper No.796, Economic Growth Center, Yale University, 1999, p. 7; The Comprehensive Apartheid Act, September 29 1986, <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1951-2000/The-Comprehensive-Apartheid-Act/>, accessed 15 January 2019; H Giliomme, "Democratization in South Africa", *Political Science Quarterly* 110 (1), 1995, p. 88.

113 C Hefti and E Staehelin-Witt, "Economic sanctions against South Africa and the importance of Switzerland", http://www.snf.ch/sitecollectiondocuments/nfp/nfp42p/nfp42p_staehelin-e.pdf, accessed 10 December 2018; T Bell, "The impact of sanctions on South Africa", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 12 (1), 1993, p. 9.

114 BNA, OP/13/4, "Effects on Botswana in the case of an international blockage against RSA", 18 May 1979.

115 BNA, OP/13/4, "Effects on Botswana in the case of an international blockage against RSA", 18 May 1979.

116 RA Gibb, "The effect on the countries of SADCC of economic sanctions against the Republic of South Africa", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 12 (4), 1987, pp. 400-402.

Fearing economic retaliation by South Africa, Chiepe made repeated and very publicly neutral positions on international sanctions. In February 1985, at the "International Conference on Apartheid in South Africa" in Amsterdam, she presented the views of the SADCC states concerning the global sanctions against South Africa. Chiepe argued,

Botswana's policy on these issues is well known. It is that we have no capacity to impose sanctions against South Africa, nor the capacity to stand in the way of those who call for sanctions to bring about the demise of apartheid.¹¹⁷

The effects of the sanctions and disinvestment would negatively affect Botswana as a matter of deliberate or consequential step by South Africa. In light of that, Botswana could not impose sanctions against South Africa as it did not have the capacity to, but then again, it did not have the power to stop those who wanted to impose international sanctions either. Its position contradicted the stand taken by SADCC although Botswana argued that it would be forced by others to categorically support or oppose the sanctions, even if it was at variance with other members of SADCC who were more aggressive towards South Africa.¹¹⁸ The British High Commission was concerned by South Africa's actions. In a letter to D. Dewberry at the Foreign and Commonwealth office, the frustrated diplomat said,

As you know Botswana is dependent on transit through South Africa for most of its imports and exports. Some people seem to think Botswana should be obligated to South Africa for allowing this transit. Is there not some international convention or principle of international law which requires the state to allow peaceful transit of goods, especially for the land-locked state?¹¹⁹

As pointed out earlier, SADCC'S main aim was to reduce dependency on South Africa, and as such, it supported international sanctions. Yet, the prospect of sanctions against Pretoria troubled the BLS governments, even though they were not prepared to oppose them. As a result of their geographical proximity, these countries were extremely vulnerable as their interlocking economies in terms of trade, transportation, migrant labour and fiscal arrangements with South Africa made it impossible for them to disengage completely. Botswana held only three reserves of oil and two large depots were hastily being constructed in Gaborone as sanctions began to

117 BNA, OP/13/113, Draft press release (alternate 1), Department of External Affairs-Botswana, 23 September 1985.

118 BNA, OP/13/113, ML Selepeng "Cabinet brief on Botswana's policy on sanctions/disinvestment", External Affairs 23 September 1985.

119 TNA, FCO 105/1173, Letter from British High Commission in Gaborone to Mr D Dewberry at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, 26 September 1983.

bite.¹²⁰ Botswana depended upon the rail link between Zimbabwe and South Africa for many of its key supplies, which, if disrupted by the result of oil sanctions, would be enormously costly.

If South Africa passed on the burden of the sanctions to the BLS countries, it could cause them considerable harm. Consequently, the international community was asked to meet the cost of any relief measures that were needed by these countries.¹²¹ In any event, the SADCC countries viewed sanctions as the best way of dealing with South Africa's destabilisation as the latter was badly affecting their economies. They appealed for "comprehensive, mandatory and international sanctions" to target the key levers of the South African state.¹²²

South Africa regarded economic sanctions and disinvestment as unacceptable and warned the surrounding countries they would be negatively impacted if they supported the actions.¹²³ For example, South Africa responded to Botswana's outspoken criticism of apartheid at the United Nations by delaying refrigerator wagons for abattoirs in Botswana for several days at a time while holding up fuel deliveries which caused serious fuel shortages in Botswana.¹²⁴ When Botswana sought ways of circumventing South Africa's control by building additional oil tanks, South Africa simply refused to fill them for almost a year.¹²⁵ At every point, the South African government linked its political demands to economic negotiations with Botswana.¹²⁶

While, in theory, Botswana could use an alternative rail route through Zimbabwe to the harbours of Maputo, Beira, Nacala, Dar-es-Salaam, and Lobito, in reality, the armed struggles in Angola and Mozambique made these routes virtually inaccessible. At the time, South Africa handled six million tonnes of traffic to and from the seven SADCC countries, of which 2.4 million tonnes were South African exports to the region.¹²⁷ One point six million tonnes were imports into South Africa, and the final two million tonnes were overseas imports and exports to the SADCC member states. Importantly, the imbalance in trade was represented by the BLS states receiving only 920 000

120 TNA, OD 66/27, "South Africa: Talks with French and Germans, effects of sanctions on Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS) and other African Countries".

121 TNA, OD 66/27, "South Africa: Talks with French and Germans, effects of sanctions on Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (BLS) and other African countries".

122 Hanlon, "On the Front Line: Destabilisation, the SADCC states and sanctions", pp. 187-188.

123 UFS CA, PV 203/PS/12/82/2, "Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr RF Botha DMS, MP- In response to the announcement of further sanctions by the European community", *European political co-operation ministerial meeting*, Brussels, 15 September 1986.

124 Spray, "Botswana: cautious but outspoken", pp. 220-221.

125 Spray, "Botswana: cautious but outspoken", pp. 220-221.

126 Spray, "Botswana: cautious but outspoken", pp. 220-221.

127 UFS CA, PV 203/PS/12/82/2, "Sanction and economic interdependence in Southern Africa".

tonnes.¹²⁸ For SADCC, independent transport infrastructure could be a means of economic liberation, whilst South Africa viewed it as a means of maintaining its continuing domination of the region.¹²⁹

Towards the end of the 1980s, apartheid South Africa was under immense pressure to reform. 1990 marked the beginning of tangible changes to end racial oppression in South Africa following decades of white minority rule and the considerable and devastating impacts the apartheid regime had across Southern Africa. Although secret negotiations between the state, business leaders, and exiled liberation movements had been underway since the mid-1980s, Nelson Mandela's release in February 1990 after 27 years in prison marked a symbolic change in attitudes as the aggressive opponents signalled a willingness to work together to radically change the course of South Africa's future. Furthermore, while the process of discussions and the conclusions of these talks were largely focused on the internal issue in South Africa, they had a massive influence on Southern Africa as well. Following Botha's decline in health and popularity, he was replaced by former Education Minister Frederick Willem de Klerk, who, unlike Botha, was concerned with South Africa's image abroad and took radical steps to change it.¹³⁰ This outlook was evidenced by several bold steps he took, including unbanning all the political opposition organizations and releasing Nelson Mandela from prison.¹³¹ Therefore, after strained relations in the 1980s, Botswana-South Africa's relationship improved greatly in the early 1990s. Apartheid was gradually dismantled. In the years 1991-1992, Botswana gladly closed all the ANC camps. Hundreds of political exiles returned home under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).¹³² In April 1994, in a historic vote, Mandela was elected President of South Africa. For Botswana, the end of apartheid was a dramatic and decisive recalibration of its relationship with South Africa.

128 UFS CA, PV 203/PS/12/82/2, "Sanction and economic interdependence in Southern Africa".

129 Green and Thompson, "Political economies in conflict: SADC, South Africa and sanctions", p. 247.

130 Giliomme, "Democratization in South Africa", pp. 85-86.

131 D Ottaway, *Chained together: Mandela, de Klerk and the struggle to remake South Africa* (New York: Times Books, 1993), pp. 76 and 82.

132 "Relation with African States", bit.ly/3PgJM3, accessed 5 January 2019.

6. CONCLUSION

The discussions presented in this paper underlined how political considerations in South Africa significantly influenced political, social, and economic relations with Botswana. Although efforts were made to stave off the worst of South Africa's nefarious activities, such as economic destabilisation, the evidence has shown that, in reality, there was little Botswana could do to combat these actions. The formation of the SADCC was a direct response to South African proposals to create a new regional alliance, although one with Pretoria at its centre. Understandably the region was far from receptive, and the creation of objectives set out by the SADCC was a clear attempt to challenge the hegemony of South Africa. While this multilateral organisation had some influence, it was unable to fully address the balance of power and was left helpless when South African security forces raided countries such as Botswana. The SADCC was a necessary move against Botha's vision because if he had been successful in implementing his objectives, all the independent Southern African states would have been turned into de facto satellite states under South Africa's influence.

Indeed, the escalation of destabilisation coincided with the region's rejection of South African proposals, which led to repeated and aggressive state-sanctioned violence under the guise of targeting the ANC, but in reality, was aimed at striking governments that opposed apartheid and assisted the liberation movement. The outcome was that Botswana, despite having a regional support network of like-minded independent nations, was largely unable to counteract the activities of the South African state. Admirable examples such as the successful rejection of South Africa's non-aggression pact policy demonstrated that Botswana could, in some cases, resist the pressure from Pretoria. However, as the paper indicated, when the full force of South African political, military, or economic aggression was brought to bear on Botswana, there was very little that could be done to counter it. For example, the effects of economic sanctions designed to undermine apartheid were passed-on to the BLS nations, which they could do almost nothing to avoid. The unequal power dynamics exerted by South Africa over Botswana were obvious.