

**RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND FRANCE WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MILITARY MATTERS, 1960-1990**

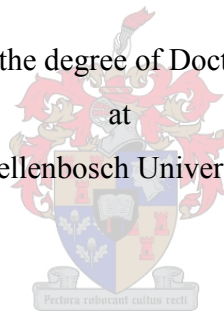
by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the role played by France in the supply of military equipment and the transfer of technology to South Africa from 1960. This Franco-South African defence cooperation was opportune for South Africa, as she faced escalating international criticism over the apartheid issue and, from December 1963, the first military embargo, one joined by her erstwhile arms suppliers.

The accession of the National Party (NP) to power in South Africa in 1948 brought a range of legislation that gave substance to the nationalist policy of apartheid. The suffering of the South African black population and the refusal of the South African government to revise its domestic policy, despite the growing international pressure, induced the newly-independent, Afro-Asian countries to press the United Nations (UN) to take tougher actions against Pretoria. At the same time opposing Black Nationalist movements, the African National Congress (ANC) the South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) adopted militant actions in response to increasingly repressive race legislation in South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia.

Furthermore, when in 1961 South Africa left the British Commonwealth, she lost the long-term military commitment from London she had enjoyed for much of the twentieth century. South Africa would now have to satisfy her defence needs elsewhere. Pretoria knew that she needed a strong, well-equipped defence force in order to face the growing internal conflict as well as a possible military onslaught from outside the country.

As a result, South Africa faced the first arms embargo in 1963 when her traditional arms suppliers, Britain and the USA elected to observe the voluntary terms of the embargo instituted by the UN. France, at the time under the leadership of General Charles de Gaulle, identified an opportunity to strengthen her relations with South Africa and acquire the much-needed strategic materials for her nuclear programme; he decided to fill the space in the military market vacated by Britain and the USA. From 1964, France became Pretoria's most important arms supplier, a relationship that lasted throughout the Gaullist administration. De Gaulle's decision to supply South Africa with French military

equipment and the transfer of technological know-how was based mainly on political, military and economic considerations. In short, De Gaulle wanted to free France from a military dependency on the United States, which had come to dominate NATO, and, by extension, Western Europe. Feeling hemmed in by *les anglo-saxons*, France, facing a shortage of North American uranium for her nuclear programme from 1957, sought new partners to shore up her own strategic vulnerability and ensure a role for her in world politics. Moreover, in the early 1960s, Apartheid had not yet become an electoral issue in France, as it was in Britain and the USA, and, in any case, France herself was drawing negative comment for her actions in the Algerian war of national independence. The logical outcome was a comfortable rapprochement, for the moment at least, between Paris and Pretoria.

This military cooperation was broad-fronted and sustained until France implemented her first partial military embargo in 1975 and voted for the UN mandatory arms embargo in 1977. But, by this time, the weapons industry in South Africa, home-grown with French assistance, was well-established and placed South Africa in a position to launch military campaigns against the frontline states, commencing with Operation Savannah in late 1975.

This study analyses the content and impact of the military cooperation between Paris and Pretoria and creates a better understanding of political and economic dimensions that were the key in the conduct of Franco-South African defence relations between 1960 and 1990.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek die rol van Frankryk in die voorsiening van militêre toerusting en die oordrag van tegnologie na Suid-Afrika sedert 1960. Die Frans-Suid-Afrikaanse militêre samewerking het Suid-Afrika goed gepas aangesien die land vanaf Desember 1963 toenemend met die moontlikheid van militêre sanksies moes rekening hou.

Die magsoorname van die Nasionale Party (NP) in 1948 is gevolg deur 'n reeks wette om aan apartheid uitvoering te gee. Die lyding van die Suid-Afrikaanse swart bevolking en die weiering van die Suid-Afrikaanse regering om in weerwil van toenemende internasionale druk fundamenteel aan die binnelandse beleid te verander, het die nuwe onafhanklike Afro-Asiatiese lande groter druk op die Verenigde Volkere (VN) laat plaas om sterker stappe teen Pretoria te neem. Terselfertyd het swart nasionalistiese organisasies soos die African National Congress (ANC), South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) en die Pan Africanist Organisation (PAC) hulle tot militêre optrede gewend om rasgebaseerde wetgewing te opponeer.

Toe Suid-Afrika in 1961 die Britse Statebond verlaat het, het die langtermyn militêre ondersteuning wat die land vir die grootste gedeelte van die twintigste eeu van Londen ontvang het, in gedrang gekom. Suid-Afrika moes nou ook elders begin kyk. Pretoria het besef dat 'n sterk en goed toegeruste verdedigingsmag nodig was om die moontlikheid van interne onrus en militêre aanvalle van buite Suid-Afrika die hoof te bied.

Gevolgtrek het Suid-Afrika in 1963 die eerste wapenverbod van haar tradisionele wapenverskaffers, Brittanje en die VSA in die gesig gestaar toe dié lande die embargo wat deur die VN ingestel is, eerbiedig het. Onder die leierskap van Charles de Gaulle het Frankryk hier 'n geleentheid gesien om die vakuum wat deur Brittanje en Amerika gelaat is te vul deur bande met Suid-Afrika te versterk en bowenal belangrike strategiese materiaal vir haar kernprogram te bekom. Vanaf 1964 het Frankryk Pretoria se belangrikste wapenverskaffers geword en die verhouding was vir die duur van die De Gaulle administrasie in swang. De Gaulle se besluit om Suid-Afrika met Franse militêre toerusting en die oordrag van tegnologiese kennis by te staan was hoofsaaklik gebaseer

op politieke, militêre en ekonomiese oorweginge. Kortliks wou De Gaulle Frankryk van militêre afhanklikheid van Amerika wat NAVO en by implikasie Wes-Europa domineer het, bevry. Ingeperk deur die Anglo-Saksiese wêreld, het Frankryk in die lig van Amerikaanse uraantekorte vanaf 1957 nuwe vennote gesoek om sy gewaande strategiese kwesbaarheid te besweer en 'n rol in werêldpolitiek te beding. Hierbenewens het apartheid in die vroeë 1960's nog nie as 'n verkiesingskwessie in Frankryk gefigureer nie soos dit wel die geval in Brittanje en Amerika was nie. Frankryk het inderdaad self negatiewe kritiek ontlok as gevolg van sy optrede in die Algerynse nasionale vryheidstryd. Die logiese uitkoms op die bepaalde tydstip was gemaklike toenadering tussen Pretoria en Parys.

Die militêre samewerking het oor 'n breë front plaasgevind totdat Frankryk in 1975 'n gedeeltelike embargo ingestel het en in 1977 in die VN vir die verpligte embargo gestem het. Teen dié tyd was die plaaslike wapenindustrie reeds goed gevestig en het Suid-Afrika sy eie wapens vervaardig. Militêre veldtogte is dan ook geloods soos Operasie Savannah in laat 1975.

Hierdie studie ontleed die impak van die militêre samewerking tussen Parys en Pretoria en poog om tot 'n beter begrip te kom van die politieke en ekonomiese dimensies wat die sleutel was tot die wyse waarop Frans/Suid-Afrikaanse verhoudinge tussen 1960 en 1990 vorm aangeneem het.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC: Allied Control Command
ADO: African Defence Organisation
AEB: Atomic Energy Board
AECI: African Explosives and Chemical Industries
AMD: Aéronautique Marcel Dassault
ANC: African National Congress
Armcor: Armaments Development and Production Corporation
AS: Air-to-Surface
CDA: Combined Development Agency
CEA: French Atomic Energy Commission
CFP: Compagnie Française des Pétroles
CFTH: Compagnie Française Thomson-Hotchkiss Brandt
CNPF: Conseil National du Patronat Français
COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSIR: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DMA: Délégation Ministérielle pour l'Armement
DFA: Department of Foreign Affairs
DOD: Department of Defence
DOE: US Department of Energy
DRC: Defence Research Council
DTA: Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
DTAT: Direction Technique de L'Armement Terrestre
EDC: European Defence Community
EDF: Electricité de France
EEC: European Economic Community
ERDA: Energy Research and Development Administration
ESCOM: Electricity Supply Commission of South Africa
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
FCP: French communist Party

FF: French Francs (Former French currency)
FNL: Front de Libération Nationale
FNLA: Frente Nacional Libertação de Angola
FRELIMO: Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
FRG: Federal Republic of Germany
FSP: French socialist Party
HCT: High Commission Territories
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
ICI: Imperial Chemical Industries
IDAF: International Defense and Aid Fund
IDC: Industrial Development Corporation
ILO: International Labour Organization
IDC: Industrial Development Corporation
MAA: Mouvement Anti-Apartheid
MEDO: Middle East Defence Organisation
MK: Umkhonto we Sizwe
MP: Member of Parliament
MPLA: Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
MRP: Mouvement Républicain Populaire
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIDR: National Institute for Defence Research
NP: National Party
NPT: Non Proliferation Treaty
OAU: Organisation of African Unity
OEEC: Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
OFEMA: Office Français d'Exportation de Matériel Aéronautique
OPEC: Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAC: Pan Africanist Congress
PF: Permanent Force
PFP: Progressive Federal Party
PLAN: People's Liberation Army of Namibia

R: Rand
RI: Républicains Indépendants
RM: Rand Million
R&D: Research and Development
RPF: Rassemblement du Peuple Français
RPR: Rassemblement Pour la République
RSA: Republic of South Africa
SAA: South African Artillery
SA Army: South African Army
SAAF: South African Air Force
SADF: South African Defence Force
SAMS: South African Medical Service
SAN: South African Navy
SANDF: South African National Defence Force
SAP: South African Police
SATO: South Atlantic Treaty Organisation
SNECMA: Société Nationale d'Etudes et de Construction de Moteurs d'Aviation
SWA: South West Africa
SWATF: South West Africa Territorial Force
SWAPO: South West African Peoples' Organisation
UDF: Union Defence Force
UDF: United Democratic Front
UDI: Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UDR: Union des Démocrates pour la République
UN: United Nations
UK: United Kingdom
UNR: Union pour la Nouvelle République
UNITA: União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
USA: United States of America
USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VLCCs: Very Large Crude Carriers

WHAM: Winning Hearts and Minds

WHO: World Health Organization

WW I: World War I

WW II: World War II

ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People's Union

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Introduction

The National Party decision to abide by its apartheid policy despite growing international pressure in the early 1960s led the Pretoria government to look for other arms suppliers than Britain and the USA. The decision of these two countries (Pretoria's traditional arms suppliers up to 1963) to follow the terms of the UN voluntary arms embargo in 1963, forced Pretoria to look for new arms suppliers within the general context of an internal and external onslaught on the newly independent South Africa. As a result, France decided to fill the gap left by London and Washington. Thus from 1964 onwards, the Gaullist administration was to become Pretoria's most important arms supplier. The South African Defence Force (SADF) was to become one of the strongest armies on the African continent through the delivery of French military equipment, technology transfer and licences production know-how. By the time, France decided to adopt her first partial military arms embargo against Pretoria in 1975, the SADF was already detaining all major French arms and technology that would enable Pretoria to circumvent the UN 1977 mandatory arms embargo.

Meanwhile, the origins of Pretoria's defence forces could be retraced to the early twentieth century. In fact, after the unification of the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal provinces in 1910 under the British rule, a central defence force became one of the priorities of the South African Government. The first important step towards this goal was the passing of the South African Defence Act on 14 June 1912, which brought the Union Defence Force (UDF) into existence on 1 July 1912.¹

The UDF was modelled on British military at its creation and was dependent almost entirely on British equipment. In fact, the last British Army forces were withdrawn in 1921, but South Africa's defence remained closely linked to the British Empire. The Royal Navy retained its bases at Simon's Town and Walvis Bay.

¹ Act No 13 of the 1912 establishing the Union Defence Force of the Union of South Africa as the first major military force for the new territory just 10 years after the end of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) from: *South African Defence Force Review 1991*.

As early as 1945, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was founded to undertake military research and development, among other tasks. The war experience created a basis for later weapons technology development, as did the search for new minerals, first of all uranium.²

In 1954, military Research and Development (R&D) was separated as a special unit through the creation of the National Institute for Defence Research (NIDR), still under the CSIR control.

What was worth noting about this pre-embargo period was that some of the most vital preconditions for domestic arms production were created well before the first embargo of 1963. When it became necessary to produce armaments, South Africa had a thriving steel industry and an explosives industry serving the mines. An abundance of power was available from indigenous coal. A large number of western skilled engineers and scientists were already working in South Africa.

After a first period of concentration on the construction and systematic implementation of the policies of apartheid, the first NP government turned its attention to the country's armed forces.³

Regarding weapons procurement, it was not yet an urgent issue to achieve independence from British supplies during the 1950s while South Africa was still a member of the Commonwealth. In this capacity, South Africa was able to receive nearly 80 war-surplus Vampire fighters and trainers from the UK in 1952-54, and some 200 Centurion tanks between 1955 and 1959.⁴

The UDF became officially the South African Defence Force (SADF) in 1957 through the passing of the defence Act, No. 44 of 1957.⁵

² South Africa was at the time the West's second largest producer of uranium, the raw material needed in the atomic industry.

³ E S Munger: *Notes on the Formation of South African Foreign Policy*, p. 46.

⁴ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's military Industry*, pp. 37-39.

⁵ J Cock and Laurie Nathan (Ed): *War and Society, The Militarisation of South Africa*, p. 40.

In this Cold War period the Western states organized alliances to counter Communist expansion, and the South Africans wanted a similar coalition covering Africa. At their most optimistic, the South Africans hoped that two types of alliance might develop with the West. One would be an African alliance, similar to the one they had tried to nurture at the Nairobi and Dakar defence conferences. The other would be primarily a maritime alliance based on the oceans and coastlines around the Cape. They would especially have liked the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to extend its cover into the South Atlantic. Pretoria's failures to join any of the Western states military alliances did not deter the South Africans from continuing their search for a broader African alliance.⁶

The South Africans did not lose heart, and it was partly in terms of this search for alliances that the Simon's Town Agreement between Pretoria and London was to be reached in 1955.⁷

In April 1956 J G Strijdom, the South African Prime Minister, said that Britain and South Africa hoped that other Western powers interested in Africa and in the coastline of Southern Africa would become parties to the Agreement. He specifically mentioned France, Portugal, and the United States.⁸

With its strong opposition to communism, the South African government was prone to interpret international politics as a simplistic power-cum-ideological struggle between communist and anti-communist. Thus, Pretoria's fears of communist subversion led to a break in diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1956 when the Russians were told to close their embassy and the South African representatives were recalled from Moscow. The specific complaints ranged from contacting subversive groups to holding drinks parties for mixed racial groups.⁹

Regarding Franco-South African relations, until the post-war period exchanges between Paris and Pretoria were kept at a minimum, with substantial infusion of French capital into the gold mines on the Witwatersrand being the only event of note. Nationalist Party

⁶ J Barber: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, 1945-1970*, pp. 82-84.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

rule from 1948 onwards not only institutionalized apartheid but brought with it the desire for greater self-sufficiency and a reduced economic dependence on Britain, which led to greater state intervention in the economy and a wider range of trading partners. The Malan government, anxious to start demonstrating its independence from Britain, started pushing for an embassy in France, which it got in June 1949 soon after France upgraded her own legation in South Africa to embassy level. France, driven by post-war economic expansionism, soon responded by increasing her economic involvement in South Africa, encouraged by favourable conditions such as the mineral riches and cheap and abundant labour, so by the early 1950s such giants as Air Liquide, Total, SOCEA, CGE and Peugeot had arrived on the South African market.¹⁰

The inauguration of the French Fifth Republic in 1958 did not prompt any major changes in French foreign policy, which remained dominated by three issues, namely the Common Market, French aid to developing countries and the building up of French nuclear force. As a result, South African strategic minerals, notably gold and uranium became particularly important to France during this period, as de Gaulle pushed ahead with France's nuclear programme and the decision to base his monetary strategy on the Gold Exchange Standard.¹¹ Yet the 1963 voluntary United Nations (UN) arms embargo against South Africa was to give France an opportunity to strengthen its military cooperation with Pretoria. Thus, between 1963 and 1975, France was to become the main arms supplier to South Africa, its principal ally in countering the 1963 UN arms embargo.¹² Yet, between 1960 and 1974, the South African economy grew at an average 5.5 percent per annum enabling the country to acquire most of its military equipment without foreign financial assistance. But between 1975 and 1985, Pretoria faced an economic crisis with an economic growth rate at only 1.9 percent leaving the economy increasingly exposed for the future and dependent on foreign loans.¹³

¹⁰ C Alden & J-P Daloz: *Paris, Pretoria and the African Continent*, pp. 68-69.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹³ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 10.

The South African involvement in wars on the Allied side between 1914 and 1953 as well as its pro-western position did not avoid some criticism about the discriminatory policy of apartheid, which affected the black population.

Indeed, the increase of the SADF manpower and the new acquisition of modern equipment by the South African government by 1960 was a result of the unsettled world political conditions as well as the growing domestic protest against the apartheid policy. Thus, a military assessment was made during 1960 of a possible threat to South Africa's peaceful existence and safety. It established what the strength and structure of the defence force should be and what equipment (weapons, stores, vehicles, aircraft, ammunition) had to be acquired. These requirements were reviewed from time to time as circumstances dictated. This expansion in manpower and equipment was matched by a boom in defence expenditure, which soared from R 45 843 604 for the financial year 1960-61 to R 210 000 000 during 1964-65 financial year.¹⁴ The growth in military expenditure resulted from an unprecedented expansion in the apartheid economy during the 1960s which grew at a rate second only to that of Japan.

For the outside world, the Sharpeville incident acted as a catalyst for the public boycott campaign focused on pressuring governments for an arms embargo against South Africa. In fact, the first UN Resolution (Resolution 134) came on 1 April 1960 just after the Sharpeville massacre. The UN Security Council called on the South African government to cease that kind of violence towards people and to take all measures to assure harmony between races based on equality, so that the Sharpeville situation does not extend or repeat itself; and above all to abandon its apartheid policy based on race discrimination. During that vote France and the UK abstained.

The UN Resolution 181 came three years after the first one.¹⁵ The UN Security Council noticed with concern that the South African government had been building a strong military force with the assistance of some Western countries such as France between

¹⁴ White Paper on Defence, 1964-65, p. 5.

¹⁵ Resolution 181 was the first real action taken by the International community under the UN leadership to denounce the apartheid policy and its consequences on the South African population.

1960 and 1964.¹⁶ Seeing that the apartheid policy was becoming more and more oppressive towards the black population, the UN Security Council appealed to all state members to cease all arms deals with South Africa. In fact, South African traditional arms suppliers came under fire from international public opinion and Afro-Asian countries.¹⁷

Thus, in March 1963, the newly elected Labour Party leader of Great Britain, Harold Wilson, was strongly in favour of a boycott. In August of that year, the United Nations Security Council called on all states to cease the sale and shipment of armaments to South Africa. In the same month, the United States decided to support the United Nation's embargo. Despite Harold Wilson's position for an arms embargo against Pretoria, the UK and France abstained once more from the vote.¹⁸

Moreover, French authorities of the Fifth Republic especially General de Gaulle himself did not have a lot of respect for the international organization.¹⁹ He thought that the UN was at the service of the US. The decision to build up an independent nuclear force and the necessity to improve the economy and modernize the industrial infrastructure brought South Africa into the picture as a supplier of gold and uranium, and as a customer for French armaments. As the French authorities wanted to achieve nuclear power like others in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Soviet Union, de Gaulle and even his successors could not follow the UN resolutions towards South Africa.²⁰ Indeed, South Africa offered France the possibility to build its nuclear capability by selling her the necessary uranium. Therefore, the French attitude regarding apartheid was quite understandable.

¹⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No 9/56/9 Vol. 1. France: Relations with South Africa, 4/4/1963- 26/8/64. Between 1 April 1961 and 11 August 1964 France sold to South Africa major military equipment worth more than R 77 million becoming in the same way one of Pretoria's major military suppliers despite UN resolutions.

¹⁷ Britain and the USA were the main military suppliers of South Africa before the first UN arms embargo in 1963.

¹⁸ *Digest of South African Affairs*, 21 March 1963 p. 2: *Eric Louw's reply*. UN Resolution of 7 August 1963 was adopted by the organization to manifest its disapproval of the apartheid policy in South Africa, which was affecting the non-white population.

¹⁹ R Williams, *Beyond old borders: Challenges to Franco-South African security relations in the new millennium* at <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/8No4/Williams.html> on 27.01.2005.

²⁰ Force de Frappe at <http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/France/FranceOrigin.html> on 15 March 2006. The USA, UK and USSR were the first countries to have nuclear power. Under de Gaulle presidency, France became the fourth country to reach that stage of military power in 1960.

For political reasons France could not continue opposing the ban, but South African industrialists could circumvent it by way of the Rugina project. The Rugina project was a French proposal to offer credit facilities, technical know-how and trained personnel as part of France's plan to develop the economic infrastructure of South Africa, particularly in those fields that would be potentially suitable for rapid conversion to defence and armament production. Keeping Israel and South Africa on their feet was a part of de Gaulle's overall strategy to develop his country as a non-communist counterweight to the US. In addition, regarding the apartheid issue, in 1961 the French delegation stated at the UN that there was a conflict between the law and morality and that the UN's call on South Africa to mend its ways was a 'moral appeal to the good sense of the South African government and to the public of that country'. It feared that sanctions would harm those they were intended to help. It repeated this view in 1963, but did not challenge South Africa to make a change.²¹

French military assistance to South Africa from 1960 onwards was to affect all spheres of the SADF and help Pretoria to build one of the strongest if not the strongest army on the African continent. What was the background to the military cooperation between the two countries and why did Pretoria choose France as a military partner? What role did politics play during that cooperation? What were the financial interests for both countries? To what extent did the military cooperation between Paris and Pretoria affect the South African defence policy in the region and in South Africa itself? Did any other agreement exist at the time that Paris decided to go against the UN 1963 voluntary arms embargo against Pretoria?

What motivated France to supply Pretoria with military equipment that was to help the apartheid regime to hold on power despite growing international pressures? To what extent did the French military assistance in South Africa take place and how did Pretoria benefit from such unexpected help? What were the reasons for Paris to adopt the UN 1977 mandatory arms embargo against South Africa? What was the nature of the relations between the SADF and France after 1977?

²¹ T Wheeler: *History of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs 1927-1993*, p. 441.

These are some of the issues to be addressed within the general context of the relations between the South African Defence Force and France between 1960 and 1990.

Some interesting books have been written on the French military assistance to South Africa and other countries particularly by French authors. For instance Daniel C Bach edited *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains* (1990), a collection of papers originated from the 1986 conference on "Southern Africa and France" held in Paris. The authors discuss a wide range of topics involving Franco-South African relations, from historical background to more recent relations. Bach's paper concentrates on Franco-South African relations between 1963 and 1977. Among other things he gives details of Paris-Pretoria collaboration over arms and the nuclear sector as well as the contribution of a powerful pro-South Africa lobby which had penetrated the Gaullist network during that period. Other authors published on French military supplies on the world market with some references to the South African case. Thus, O Brachet *et al* published *La France Militarisée* (1974). The authors criticize the impact of the French military industry on the economy, arms supplies to countries such as South Africa regardless of political antipathy and international condemnations. Jean-François Dubos published *Ventes d'Armes: Une Politique* (1974). Here the author talks about the growth of the French armament industry and its consequences on the world market. The same book investigates Paris' defence policy and various political and industrial actors. A little reference to South Africa is made in this book. Two other relevant books published by anti-apartheid movements talk about the French military industry supplies on the world market among other issues, with much reference to South Africa: *Les Trafics d'armes de la France* (1977) and *La France et l'Afrique du Sud* (1978). Most of these works concentrate on the Gaullist period (1958-1977).

Robert E. Edgar (Ed) published *Sanctioning Apartheid* (1990), a book that talks about general international sanctions against South Africa. The USA and the international community tried to impose sanctions on South Africa aimed at ending the apartheid policy. Other authors have also published articles in international journals on general sanctions against Pretoria. Thus, Solomon Major and Anthony J. McGann published "*Caught in the Crossfire: "Innocent Bystanders" as Optimal Targets of Economic*

Sanctions” in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.²² Dmitriy Gershenson issued “*Sanctions and Civil Conflict*” in *Economica*.²³ Simon J. Evenett wrote on “*The Impact of Economic Sanctions on South African Exports*” in *The Scottish Journal of Political Economy*.²⁴ Masako Osada published “*Sanctions and honorary Whites: Diplomatic Policies and Economic Realities in Relations between Japan and South Africa*” in the *International Journal of Africa Historical Studies*.²⁵ While all of these authors talk about general sanctions against South Africa, none of them touches military relations between Pretoria and Paris during the apartheid era.

My work investigates the role played by France in the building of South Africa’s military capability between 1960 and 1990. It also invokes international political, and economic motives and dimensions that led successive French regimes to supply military weapons and technology to South Africa when the latter faced growing international disfavour due to apartheid. While preceding works concentrate mostly on the Gaullist regime, my dissertation examines Franco-South African military relations beyond that period, covering a period of 30 years. This thesis gives more details than existing publications as I was fortunate to have access to some relevant files on the matter, particularly French military files (reports of French Military Attachés in South Africa during the Gaullist rule) that were still undisclosed when precedent works were published. I also use articles from the French newspaper *Le Monde* that help to find useful information where primary sources are not available. Therefore, it complements existing works as it reveals some missing explanations of the time.

However, the writing of this thesis did not go without some difficulties that characterize the academic world. In fact, the search for primary documentation was not at all easy as the topic touched sensitive foreign relations between two countries. Thus, most of the primary sources collected in South Africa came from the Archives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Pretoria where they made most of the documentation available concerning

²² Solomon Major and Anthony J. McGann, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 2005; 49; 337.

²³ Dmitriy Gershenson, *Economica* (2002) 69, 185-206.

²⁴ Simon J. Evenett, the *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 49, No. 5, November 2002.

²⁵ Masako Osada, the *International Journal of Africa Historical Studies*, 35 (2-3): 2002.

foreign relations between France and South Africa between 1960 and 1984. The remaining period (1985-1990) is still closed to the public.

As far as the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Documentation Centre was concerned, I had to wait for more than two years for the declassification process to take place. At the end, most of the requested files were not made available to me as I was hoping. They told me that the relevant files were still closed to the public and I could get only few of them. My inability to use Afrikaans was also a great problem as I could have missed some interesting information.

In Paris, at the French Foreign Affairs Ministry also known as Quai d'Orsay, I have collected a few files concerning the Franco-South African relations for the period 1960-1965 as most files were still closed to the public. In the Archives of the French Defence Ministry, I had to wait for several months before a special defence committee gave me access to some of the files concerning French Military Attachés in South Africa for the period 1960-1974. As a result, I had to rely also on secondary sources found at Nanterre University Library for International Studies in Paris.

The lack of access to certain South African and French primary sources of crucial importance had imposed some limitations to my interpretations and conclusions in my dissertation. Access to those key primary materials would have provided a better understanding and analysis of the partnership between both actors during the relevant period of study.

Despite the above-mentioned difficulties, my work is the first of its kind dealing with Franco-South African military relations during the apartheid era. It is also the first time that primary and secondary material both from French and South African archives and research centres are used almost equally. This thesis improves understanding of the French military assistance to South Africa between 1960 and 1990 as it provides new knowledge to the existing publications.

Chapter 1

The military-strategic situation in Southern Africa, 1940-1976.

This chapter focuses on the role played by Pretoria within the western defence strategy against the background of the Cold War. The start of the Korean War in 1950 forcefully illustrated the existence of two antagonistic blocks which were already evident at the end of World War II: the capitalist world with the United States of America (USA) as a leader and the communist world with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as the leading nation. The competitive and conflicting interaction that had previously characterized the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union re-emerged from 1950 onwards. The polarization of the world affected all continents, causing political and military antagonisms between countries regarding their membership of either the East or the West block. South Africa had to play a major role on the western side.

This chapter will also focus on South Africa's involvement in the regional conflicts that took place in the mid-1960s and in which South Africans were heavily involved. As a result of political and military instability in the region, the government of South Africa had to redefine its defence policy by increasing its defence budget and buying adequate armament to respond to such a threat.

This chapter gives an essential background of the military-economic situation in Southern Africa in general and in South Africa in particular. It is an important part of the thesis as it sets the historical importance of South Africa in the defence and economic strategies of the Western nations prior to 1960. It helps to understand the political situation that prevailed before Pretoria's decision to declare independence from Britain and to abide by the apartheid policy by all costs.

1.1 South Africa's strategic position and the importance of its minerals to the West.

The second Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902, was a result of finding significant gold reserves on the Witwatersrand in the late nineteenth century. The British provoked a war with the

Boer republics to guarantee their control of the mineral riches of Southern Africa and as a result guarantee British dominance. The war had corresponded with a move in the international financial system to the gold standard. The Reef provided a quarter of new gold production worldwide, and after 1910 this rose to more than one third. Consequently the Bank of England relied on it to run the Imperial financial system.¹ As the colonial power of the time, Britain was able to secure the South African gold market until 1921 when the Union of South Africa created its own Reserve Bank, which took over from the Bank of England, to manage the domestic financial market.² Furthermore in 1925, South Africa made the significant decision to admit an autonomous gold standard regardless of tough disagreement from Britain.³

Nevertheless, it was not only gold that made South Africa one of Britain and Allies consistent partners, particularly throughout the war moments. The passing of the Cape of Good Hope into the hands of Great Britain during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic conflicts created a keystone of British sea dominance. Indeed, without control of the sea-lanes around the Cape, the British position in the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean would have been exposed, and the architects of British strategy knew this. Again in World War II, the Cape sea route had a key responsibility for the passing and defence of British and Allies vessels en route to Europe while the Mediterranean was closed by the Germans, as the majority of their fleet rounded the Cape. Ever since, the significance of the Cape route continued to grow.⁴

During WW II, South African Prime Minister, General J Smuts (1870-1950), was appointed a Field Marshal and Counsellor on allied strategy to Churchill.⁵ Accordingly, he was in a position to notify the Allied Command in 1941 of the existence of uranium in South Africa as a by-product of the gold-mining industry. South Africa became an essential exporter to both the United States and the United Kingdom (UK). South African production could now outshine that of Canada and the Congo, which were the allies' suppliers throughout WW II. In addition, the South African uranium would grant Britain

¹R Ally: *Gold and Empire, the Bank of England and South Africa's Gold Producers, 1886-1926*, pp. 13-15.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

³*Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴L H Gann and P Duignan: *South Africa, War, Revolution or Peace?* p. 10.

⁵H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 8.

the crucial asset it required to support its lost global defence capabilities, principally in relation to the Americans who were the first to have a nuclear weapon in 1945. South Africa was, in any case, party to the Commonwealth defence agreements.⁶

Smuts understood the business implications of the uranium discovery, thinking of uranium transactions directly to the United States. Smuts' plan was inadequate from a British perspective. By delivering uranium to the USA, the South African government desired to attract American investments in the mining industry. In 1945, the British were economically exhausted by WW II so they stressed the strategic importance of uranium in building their nuclear capability to avert future conflict to South Africa and Canada, which were still Britain's dominions. In the beginning, the Americans were quite 'nervous' about a nuclear partnership with Britain. They afterward reacted positively to Britain's objectives to build up a nuclear capability, as they feared a raw material scarcity since South Africa stayed pro-British. Indeed, throughout much of WW II, Americans and British had been working together on nuclear development which resulted in the development of the atom bomb (the so-called Manhattan Project). As a result, Britain undertook to promote uranium production in the Commonwealth and so, South Africa. The cooperation would appear under a Combined Development Agency (CDA).⁷ British influence in South Africa was, naturally, viewed by Washington as the greatest input Britain could make to the efforts of the CDA. Yet, Britain 'regarded South African uranium as her trump' in her atomic connections with the United States government in the post-war decade.⁸

During WW II, a growing relationship between South Africa and the United States developed as their soldiers saw combat together in Italy in 1944-45 (the 6th SA Armour Division fought under the command of the US 5th Army).⁹ In 1950, South Africa placed her squadron in Korea (2nd Squadron SAAF) under American command – the 18th Fighter Bomber Wing and in December 1952, it was announced that 2nd Squadron SAAF was to be re-equipped with American Sabres, which were South Africa's first jet aircraft. This

⁶ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 38.

⁷ P Henshaw: *South Africa's External Relations with Britain and the Commonwealth, 1945-1956*, unpublished PhD thesis, pp. 80-95.

⁸ G Berridge: *Economic Power in Anglo-South African Diplomacy*, p. 56.

⁹ *Kommando*, June 1962, p. 33.

was a clear signal to Britain and a statement of Pretoria's independence, but also a consequence of the perception that South Africa could get better, more modern equipment from the Americans. South African minerals and raw materials were useful to curry favour.¹⁰

Therefore, the National Party victory of 1948 did not distress the Americans or the British. They were persuaded that South Africa would develop uranium, because mining was the foundation of her economy. The South African government was also definitely anti-Communist. In return, South Africa desired financial support in the form of economic assurances on investment and credit. On hearing this, the Americans and British turned deaf. South African natural resources were a strategic asset, not subject to business gain. Slowly negotiations were delayed. Since South Africa was the major provider of a mineral Britain exploited as its chief bargaining chip in relations with the USA, South Africa claimed a particular place in the Combined Development Agency (CDA), particularly requiring access to confidential information.¹¹

The Korean War intensified direct American attention to South African uranium. It led to an agreement signed in 1950 but its terms did not provide South Africa a unique place in the nuclear club. The CDA representative in South Africa was an American. The CDA purchased the whole production of six South African producers up to 1964.¹² South Africa would obtain material indispensable for treatment plants. Mining corporations would be given credits. This arrival of funds and technology would have not only an effect on the uranium mining industry but a further general inspiring result on industrial production in South Africa. For Britain, the objective after 1950 was to get access to South African uranium that was not managed by the USA. The USA was the leading, competitive and, regrettably, very well off collaborator in the CDA. South Africa was also demonstrating interest in the civil development of nuclear power.¹³

¹⁰ *Kommando*, June 1962, p. 59.

¹¹ P Henshaw: *South Africa's External Relations with Britain and the Commonwealth, 1945-1956*, unpublished PhD thesis, pp. 96-185.

¹² A Seegers: *The Military in the making of modern South Africa*, p. 205.

¹³ P Henshaw: *South Africa's External Relations with Britain and the Commonwealth, 1945-1956*, unpublished PhD thesis, pp. 190-92.

Under stress, Britain consented in 1954 to a programme of cooperation with South Africa. Prime Minister J G Strijdom, as well as his lieutenants H F Verwoerd and Eric Louw, were not to Britain's taste. But cash, strategic worries, and the UK-USA connection were not to be cancelled by the taste the Nationalists left on the political palate. The biggest share of Britain's input to the CDA would go to South Africa.¹⁴

In the mid-1950s, nevertheless, the structure of strategic mineral exchanges changed irreversibly. The chief causes were an expansion in international production and a change of use in a civil direction. Uranium was becoming less scarce, just as production in South Africa began to reach considerable quantities. In 1955, the British struck a hard bargain. South Africa would continue supplying uranium and plutonium, and in return South Africa was discharged from the contract that stipulated its uranium should be confined to military and research use.¹⁵

In 1955, the civil use of atomic power in South Africa was not thought to be workable. Greater attention was given to the heavy-water industry. The British consented to technological cooperation, partially to preserve access to economical uranium, and to forestall the possibility of South Africa turning to West Germany. South Africa also got a seat on the first board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Not a single British postwar administration desired to relinquish its access to low-priced South African uranium. It was too vital for Britain's worldwide strategic ambitions.¹⁶

The diversification of the atomic industry offered South Africa an opportunity to investigate connections with states other than Britain. Thus, the USA and Britain invested in uranium processing facilities in South Africa, where the first processing plant was opened in 1952. Between 1953 and 1966, Washington imported more than 40 000 tons of South African uranium oxide valued at US \$ 450 million, when US government purchase agreements stopped.¹⁷ The USA was developing uranium for civil use, and encouraged South Africa to become part of its Atoms for Peace programme. In 1957, South Africa

¹⁴ P Henshaw: *South Africa's External Relations with Britain and the Commonwealth, 1945-1956*, unpublished PhD thesis, pp. 190-92.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 315-21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 322-31.

¹⁷ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 153.

and the USA signed a 20-year agreement under the Eisenhower administration's Atoms for Peace programme.¹⁸

This accord was to be modified to increase its capacity and period in 1962, 1967 and 1974, then extended up to the year 2007. According to the agreement, the US Corporation Allis Chalmer in 1961 provided South Africa with the first research reactor known as SAFARI I, which began working in 1965. French and West German firms were also engaged in the construction of SAFARI I. The USA also agreed to provide the enriched uranium from Fluor Corporation, USA, needed for SAFARI I based at Pelindaba, and later another reactor (SAFARI II). By 1976, 104 kg of enriched uranium had been supplied to Pretoria. These supplies were thus not disrupted by the change in Washington's policy towards Pretoria that became evident from 1975. Therefore, the exit from the Commonwealth was not a technological setback for the Nationalists.¹⁹

Despite mounting worldwide denunciation of the apartheid policy all over the 1950s, South Africa remained remarkably reliant on Britain as a buyer and seller in 1960 as the British government was (due to Britain's own peculiar economic reliance on South Africa) in no position to apply economic means to oblige a political transformation in South Africa as the country had always held a key position for the Western economy. In fact, ranked amongst the world's five largest providers of non-fuel natural resources, South Africa had continuously displayed her potential, goodwill and reliability as the West's most significant source of minerals and strategic raw materials.²⁰

Therefore, South Africa exercised an extremely significant stabilizing influence on the delivery and costs of vital, strategic minerals and raw materials, a fact that was of the furthest magnitude to the Western economy. Were South Africa's gold and other mineral resources to fall into the hands of the communist bloc, the strategic and economic situation of the West would experience inestimable harm.²¹ Yet, gold production was set to rise gradually in the 1960s without significant new injections of capital. Industrial

¹⁸ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 153.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

²⁰ R Hyam & P Henshaw: *The Lion and the Springbok, Britain and South Africa since the Boer War*, p. 142.

²¹ White Paper on Defence 1977, p. 38. See also General Sir Walker Walter: *The Bear at the Back Door*, pp. 11-13.

expansion had to some extent lessened both the relative importance of the mining industry and the necessity to hold the South African economy completely open to outside investment. The development of Afrikaner-dominated business indirectly brought more of the economy under what was comparable to government control. In addition, South Africa had, after 1955, an effectively increased money market (in the form of short term capital), in that way decreasing the country's reliance on the London market.²²

The importance of the South African mineral wealth to the West is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Production of some strategic metals in South Africa and the USSR (world rank order and percentage of world production).

Product	South Africa		USSR	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
Vanadium	40	1	29	2
Chromium	34	1	23	2
Vermiculite	35	2	9	3
Manganese	20	2	39	1
Diamonds	20	3	28	2
Titanium	16	3	8	6
Antimony	13	3	12	4
Fluorite	9	3	11	2

Source: S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 28.

²² R Hyam & P Henshaw: *The Lion and the Springbok, Britain and South Africa since the Boer War*, p. 142

Table 1 shows the strategic importance of some South African raw materials in western industry in the overall situation of Cold War. Pretoria was the major source of supply of vulnerable metals required by the West as the country shared this leading position with the USSR, the other major supplier of non-fuel natural resources during the West-East confrontation. Therefore, South Africa could play a strategic role in the world economy, as the country was also the world's largest producer of gold, a raw material needed in the international financial system.

Other South African minerals consisted of barytes, bentonite, beryllium, bismuth, calcite, corundum, feldspar, fire clay, flint clay, fluorite, Fuller's Earth, graphite, gypsum, kaolin, kieselguhr, lead, limestone, magnesite, mica, mineral pigment, pyrite, pyrophyllite, salt, silica, sillimanite, talc, tantalite-columbite, tantalum and tiger's eye (Cf Appendix 1). In 1974, the RSA's mineral production reached the record level of Rand Million (RM) 3928 which included a gold production of RM 2533.²³

The significance of South Africa to Western countries derived also from its geographical situation in the Southern hemisphere. The Cape sea route and its value had been a topic of debates since the days of Prince Henry the Navigator and Vasco Da Gama. At different occasions in history the weight of the Cape, and consequently South Africa itself, as halfway house between the West and the East, was highlighted. This occurred particularly when the Suez Canal was threatened, as in WW II, or when it was closed as in 1956 and again in 1967.²⁴

During WWs I and II, South Africa played a central role in several ways as discussed above. Indeed, apart from its manpower supply to the war effort as part of the Imperial military agreement with Britain, South Africa played a major part in the strategy of the Western defence against the Axis powers. Great Britain and its Allies could hardly have continued hostilities against the Axis powers in the Middle East without control of the Cape route.²⁵ As a result, within the new situation of West-East struggle at the end of WW II and communist determination to get access to African minerals, ships of the

²³ White Paper on Defence 1977, p. 38.

²⁴ White Paper on Defence and Armament Production, 1973, p. 13. See also General Sir Walter Walker: *The Bear at the Back Door*, p. 10.

²⁵ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A Historical Analysis*, p. 187.

South African and Royal navies always took part in an annual naval exercise, from the early 1950s onwards codenamed Operation CAPEX for the protection of the Cape sea route and the west coast of Africa. Ships and aircraft of other powers having interests in Africa took also part to these military exercises.²⁶

Thus, from 7 September to 24 October 1959, for the first time since WW II, South Africa, Britain, the USA and Portugal joined forces in the maritime exercises in South African waters as part of Operation CAPEX.²⁷ In 1960, other countries such as France and Nigeria also took part in the annual military exercises of the Western powers aimed at protecting Southern Oceans from potential communist attack.²⁸

When the Mediterranean Sea was locked by the Germans during WW II, the Cape played an equally essential part in the defence of Allied shipping; experts have estimated that out of five convoys of 1 million tons each approaching Europe in wartime, four had to round the Cape. Had German U-boats denied the use of the Cape route to Allied ships, Great Britain would surely have been hard pressed and Nazi Germany might well have won WW II. The significance of the Cape route has continued to grow since then.²⁹

South Africa and the facilities it could offer the West were the key to the entire notion of defense of the Southern Oceans. South Africa's strategy had been and was to supply to the best of her ability, those facilities such as replenishment, repair, maintenance, and communications that were so crucial to the sea traffic around South African coasts. The South African maritime forces were established to defend not only these facilities, but also the vessels using the Cape sea route. Britain's departure from the Middle East and mainly from the Suez Canal in 1967 gave significant control to the USSR in the area as by that time the East was now broadly opened.³⁰

Yet on 17 June 1967, China came into the nuclear club by exploding a hydrogen bomb as the second successful detonation after having tested an Atomic bomb. It was reported that

²⁶ *Kommando*, February 1961, p. 22.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, November 1959, pp. 6-7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, February 1961, p. 22.

²⁹ L H Gann and P Duignan: *South Africa, War, Revolution or Peace?* p. 10. See also *Why South Africa Will Survive, A Historical Analysis*, p. 187.

³⁰ White Paper on Defence and Armament Production, 1973, p. 13.

Chinese nuclear tests took place within a period of two years and eight months, whereas after ten years France had not yet mastered the H-Bomb.³¹ As a result, the only protected route open to the West remained via the Cape. By 1969, communist menaces had increased and the stress had shifted to increasing the RSA's sea capability. The South African Navy (SAN) and Air Force (SAAF) carried the task of the country's maritime defence.³²

Following WW II, control of the Cape route remained a chief asset to the West. For instance, an average of 6800 vessels called at South African harbors every year between 1957 and 1966. The figure nearly doubled when the Suez Canal was shut as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It reached an annual average of about 12 000 ships for the period 1967 to 1972.³³ In the first 18 months after the Suez Canal was closed, 10 000 additional boats went around the Cape, and of these, 6 000 put into South African ports. It seemed evident that the South African waters in war would form a crucial point for allied shipping and an incredibly happy hunting ground for opponent submarines.³⁴

The Cape route remained strategically significant to the Western economy as in 1970 one-fifth of the world's oil supplies, as well as practically all the oil destined for Europe, was carried via the South African route.³⁵ Though, there were two substitute itineraries for the supplies of Middle East oil to Europe and the USA, namely the Panama Canal and the Cape Horn, which were shorter distances to cover, the Cape sea route remained cost-effectively and strategically the most consistent for Western supplies. Indeed, the two alternative routes were unstable areas which could become even more so with the British departure from Singapore.³⁶

In addition, even if the Suez Canal were to reopen, the huge size of the tanker fleet being built, which was estimated to reach 160 ships of 200 000 tons and over by 1970, with a yearly carrying capacity of 200 million tons of oil, the Suez Canal would have been an

³¹ *Kommando*, March 1968, p. 9.

³² White Paper on Defence and Armament Production, 1973, p. 13.

³³ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive*, p. 187.

³⁴ *Kommando*, March 1970, p. 19.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

uneconomical option in terms of tanker size and the cost of shipping oil via it would have cost 60 US cents per barrel, while the transport via South Africa in massive tankers would be 40 US cents per barrel.³⁷

By 1975, some 24 000 maritime ships went by this particular ‘choke point’ each year. Of those 24 000 vessels, 9 476 docked in South African ports, including 1 600 or so from Great Britain, 1375 from Greece, 1064 from Liberia, 590 from the Netherlands and 382 from the United States.³⁸

The Cape sea route played a strategic role in global trade (Cf Appendix 2). During the month of February 1974, almost 1000 ships from numerous nationalities passed around the Cape. Even though the figure demonstrated that it was essentially Western countries that utilized South African waters, it also exposed the involvement of communist vessels in the Cape route. The strategic position of South Africa vis-à-vis the Southern hemisphere waters played a key role in the West’s defence system, as their armed forces made use of the South African civilian and military port facilities.³⁹

The Cape sea route was particularly vital to oil tankers, whose previous route to and from the Mediterranean took them through the Suez Canal. Most of these ships had become too large to go through the canal, so that more than half of Europe’s oil supplies – and a quarter of its food – passed round the Cape of Good Hope. Moreover, the ever-increasing reliance of the United States on imported oil had further amplified the American stake in the Cape route – already the world’s most crowded shipping road; by the 1980s, according to some estimation, 60 percent of US oil may have been delivered via the Cape. Furthermore, the United States had defence treaties with 43 countries, 41 of which lie overseas; 99 percent (by volume) of its overseas trade was conveyed by ship. Any menace to the world’s sea-lanes consequently endangered American national security.⁴⁰

Seventy percent of Western Europe’s strategic materials were already coming round the Cape. The Cape sea route had consistently played to some extent a leading role in

³⁷ *Kommando*, March 1970, p. 17.

³⁸ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A historical Analysis*, pp. 187-188.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, *South Africa, War, Revolution or Peace?* p. 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, *Why South Africa Will Survive, a historical Analysis*, p. 189.

Western sea trade, so had its harbor facilities. According to Dr Alvin J. Cottrell, numerous aspects worked against a shift from the Cape route to the Suez Canal for Western supplies, particularly crude oil and raw materials. The repair facilities of South Africa were rising in importance. The existing glut of tankers for storage purposes deducted from the marginal time savings achieved by using the shorter Suez route. The expansion of South African resources and industries had altered previous patterns of trade, and more shipping was now going to South Africa rather than around it. South African-European trade links were being tightened by advances made in containerization, a development that added to the dimension of cargo ships and presented them with difficulties comparable to those already experienced by supertankers.⁴¹

Very large crude carriers (VLCCs) necessitated expensive services for refueling and massive dry docks for repair. During the 1970s, the South African government decided to expand and improve existing port facilities and create new ones to accommodate tanker traffic and to supply dry-dock facilities. Another main venture was Richards Bay harbour, which was connected to the expansion of Sishen-Saldanha iron-ore export scheme. The deep-water harbor at Richards Bay was planned to accommodate ships displacing up to 152 000 tons and, ultimately, those transporting 254 000 tons. As part of a major expansion project, the harbour was being equipped to handle bulk cargoes such as bituminous coal and anthracite. Between them, the new harbors were to increase the traffic of existing ports.⁴²

As a source of strategic raw materials, South Africa was of immense significance to the Western world. Whether in peace or war, such provisions would have been tough to substitute were they denied to the West, or if they came under Soviet control. Table 2 shows the importance of strategic South African and Soviet raw material reserves in the world during the late 1970s.⁴³

⁴¹ L H Gann and P Duignan: *South Africa, War, Revolution or Peace?* , p. 12.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

Table 2: Combined South African and USSR percentages of world's reserves of selected mineral commodities.

Commodities	RSA's % of World's reserves	USSR's % of World's reserves	Combined RSA and USSR %
1. Platinum Group Metals	86	13	99
2. Vanadium	64	33	97
3. Manganese Ore	48	45	93
4. Chrome Ore	83	1	84
5. Gold	49	19	68
6. Fluorspar	46	4	50
7. Iron Ore	4	42	46
8. Asbestos	10	25	35
9. Uranium	17	13	30
10. Titanium	5	16	21
11. Nickel	10	7	17
12. Zinc	9	8	17
13. Lead	4	13	17

Source: W.C.J. van Rensburg and A. D. Pretorius, South Africa's Strategic minerals – *Pieces on the Continental Chessboard*, p. 136.

1.2 South Africa as a key military ally and Pretoria's search for military alliance with the West during the Cold War.

Although the South African government wished to remain neutral during WW II, the country joined the war through the Parliament, by 80 votes to 67. As a result, some 350 000 South Africans went to war, of whom 12 046 were killed.⁴⁴

After WW II, the UDF saw more than 20 years of tranquillity, merely momentarily interrupted by the Berlin Airlift of 1948, and the deployment of a fighter-bomber squadron to the Korean War in 1950-1953 where approximately 800 South Africans served as part of the United Nations Armed Forces mainly through 2nd SAAF Squadron and a small army contingent.⁴⁵

As early as 1948, the NP used gradually more draconian techniques to strengthen the oppression of Black South Africans by reinforcing the pass laws, tightening residential separation, closing the gates to African progression on the factory level, and containing the national liberation struggle. At the same time, the NP was also concerned with advancing the comparatively underprivileged Afrikaner employees, farmers and small businessmen in South Africa. In fact, for centuries the Afrikaner community felt itself to be kept down by the British and by English-speaking white South Africans. Afrikaners were worse off in industry and commerce, while the state remained mostly a safeguard of the English-speaking whites. That condition of antipathy between the Afrikaners and the English-speaking community had symbolized South African politics for centuries. By winning the general elections in 1948 by a tiny majority, the National Party knew that it had to strengthen its authority by controlling the armed forces which were at the time under English-speaking and British influence. Thus, the National Party soon rotated its interest to the armed forces, where intensive efforts were made to replace the predominantly English-speaking officers with Afrikaners.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ W Dorning: *'A concise history of the South African Defence Force 1912-1987'*, *Militaria*, Vol. 17/2, 1987.

⁴⁵ *Paratus*, July 1978, p. 14.

⁴⁶ G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 11.

The '*Afrikanerisation*' of the armed forces was not total in terms of affecting the development of the country, however. The measures taken by the National Party to eradicate British trappings and practices of the armed forces did not imply an exclusion of the Union from the British sphere of influence. The South African government had achieved a high level of assimilation with the Western powers throughout the First and Second World Wars and General Smuts played a leading role in establishing institutions like the UN and the Commonwealth.⁴⁷ In 1918, South Africa signed the Treaty of Versailles (France), which gave her a mandate over South West Africa (Namibia).⁴⁸

In 1948, the Nationalist government of Dr Malan desired to strengthen the position of South Africa in the Western world command. It was also distressed at the accelerating drive towards national sovereignty in the Third World, predominantly on the African continent. It was determined to enter into a defence alliance and to draw the Western powers into a commitment to maintain white rule in South Africa, if not in Africa as a whole.⁴⁹

The South African government needed a military alliance with Western powers in order to preserve white rule over the prosperous South African territory. South African officials believed that South Africa, by virtue of her white, Christian, anti-communist government and her leading economic and strategic situation in Africa would be a welcomed and appreciated partner of the West in the fight against communism. The 1950s were, definitely, a time when the Cold War and containment of Soviet expansionism were the dominant worries of Western governments; but their consideration was focused on Europe and Western democracies. The African continent was far from the major ground of the East-West struggle. South Africa nonetheless found the Cold War era an appropriate moment in which to execute her plan as representative of Western values and interests in Africa. Pretoria was against the decolonisation in Africa and wished it to be a piecemeal and selective process, taking place over several years. While banking on the Western powers to oppose the danger of general communist attack, South Africa

⁴⁷ G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 11.

⁴⁸ Anon: '*The Battle of Delville Wood, July 1916*', *Militaria*, Vol 17/1, 1987, p. 28.

⁴⁹ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 6.

promptly expressed her eagerness to play a responsibility in Western defence proportionate with her dimension and capabilities.⁵⁰

Originally the South African government made approaches to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). As South African membership would have deeply altered the nature of the organisation and opened up a hornet's nest of political difficulties, Pretoria's overtures were rejected, mainly as a result of opposition by the United States. In fact during the late 1940s, the external defence of Africa was not regarded as a main concern and little consideration was given in London or Washington to the continent's incorporation into their security designs.⁵¹

In the late 1940s, the Soviet Union did not have the aptitude to project its military power that far as it had much more serious worries closer to hand. Furthermore, South Africa's motivation to provide broad support to the West (via military alliances) was encouraged by an aspiration to engage the compassion of the United States in the rising troubles caused for the Union delegation at the United Nations by the policy of apartheid.⁵² Thus, prior to the official birth of NATO in April 1949, Malan sent Charles Te Water, his itinerant ambassador, to Washington in November 1948 where he met American officials including President H S Truman himself and lobbied for South Africa's incorporation to the Atlantic defence treaty or a similar one.⁵³

Pretoria's demands were not taken into consideration by the Americans and their allies at the birth of NATO. Consequently, the South African government pushed for the establishment of an African defence alliance, both to halt the progress of African nationalism and to implement Smuts' strategic point that the best line for the defence of South Africa lies as extremely north as Kenya.⁵⁴ To satisfy anti-British feeling amongst Afrikaners, this alliance was envisaged as a multilateral one between the European-

⁵⁰ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 6.

⁵¹ G R Berridge: *South Africa, the Colonial Powers and 'African Defence', the Rise and Fall of the White Entente, 1948-60*, pp. 1-2.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 9.

controlled African countries and the various European powers.⁵⁵ The United States would also be engaged through its connections with Liberia.⁵⁶

Yet in 1951, South Africa and the USA signed an agreement for reimbursable military help under the US Mutual Defence Assistance Act.⁵⁷ In August 1951, Prime Minister D F Malan and his Defence Minister F C Erasmus joined Britain in backing a conference in Nairobi to examine the defence of East and Central Africa. South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and all colonial powers in the region attended the conference. Unfortunately, under Britain's persistence the meeting was restricted to considering the logistics and the difficulties of communications in the experience of war: strategic development was not part of the debates, nor was any resolution taken. Indeed, London did not want to divulge too much regarding its defence plans for the Middle East and Africa, and was completely aware of the danger that the Malan government would exploit the conference to form an African Pact tied to NATO by the back door.⁵⁸

A similar meeting to discuss West African defence took place in Dakar in 1954 that demonstrated an analogous lack of evolution. Of the five participating countries (Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and South Africa) at Dakar's conference, only South Africa came away claiming that she had undertaken substantial commitments in the event of communist aggression in Africa. The South African idea of promoting an African Defence Organisation did not get off the ground. Western policy immediately after WW II was generally in favour of the process of decolonisation and newly independent countries like India put up strong resistance to international alliances with apartheid

⁵⁵ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, South Africa: 1960-1965. According to a French report on French-South African relations dated on 15 Mars 1961, South Africa wanted to lead a European Defence alliance on the African continent in which South Rhodesia and most of all Angola and Mozambique would be incorporated.

⁵⁶ R Ovendale: *The South African Policy of the British Labour Government 1947-51*, pp. 44-46.

⁵⁷ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A historical Analysis*, p. 270.

⁵⁸ G R Berridge: *South Africa, the Colonial Powers and 'African Defence', the Rise and Fall of the White Entente, 1948-60*, p. 65.

South Africa. Furthermore, Britain was reluctant to allow South Africa into multilateral arrangements that might weaken its ties to the Commonwealth.⁵⁹

Having failed to establish an African pact, Pretoria willingly accepted a provisional invitation by Britain to join the Middle East Defence Organisation (MEDO), but once again South African participation in this alliance was prevented by the opposition of Third World countries. The Pretoria government nevertheless purchased tanks and Canberra aircraft from Britain as evidence of its willingness to support Western military campaigns. Pretoria's desire to involve herself in NATO or a similar alliance, and the West's partial acceptance of this aim, was underscored by her participation in the Berlin airlift of 1948-49 and the Korean War in the early 1950s. A squadron of South African fighters and some ground forces participated in the Korean conflict. In the last year of the war, 1952-53, South African pilots flew new American Sabres jet fighters, on loan from the US Air Force. Shortly thereafter 36 Sabres from Canada were delivered to South Africa.⁶⁰

By the mid-1950s, it was clear that the face of the World was changing at a rate far more rapid than the South African government had imagined and that much of Africa would soon be independent. Internally the government faced the strongest test of white domination since the defeat of the African armies at the end of the nineteenth century. The African National Congress (ANC) and its allies were engaged in a countrywide campaign of passive resistance that was being ruthlessly dealt with by the police. This conflict was fuelling growing global condemnation of the apartheid policy, led by India and other newly independent countries. In 1955, South Africa signed the Simon's Town agreement with Britain, which provided for joint use of the naval base at Simon's Town and was the only concrete result of the apartheid regime's search for a formal defence alliance. This agreement - which was terminated only in the mid-1970s - provided the South African government with something of a lifeline when international opinion against apartheid

⁵⁹ J Barber and J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 57. See also G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 11 & G Berridge: *Economic Power in Anglo-South African Diplomacy*, pp. 132 -33.

⁶⁰ *Paratus*: July 1982, p. 16; November 1979, pp. 12 -15.

began to harden in the 1960s and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) was formed in 1961, legitimising the purchase from Britain of sophisticated naval and air force equipment.⁶¹

However, South Africa's departure from the British Commonwealth when it became a republic in May 1961, further amplified its international isolation. Yet in 1958, due to Pretoria's reinforcement of the apartheid policy the USA, for the first time, voted in support of a UN resolution conveying concern over South Africa's racial policies instead of refraining on such verdict.⁶²

Furthermore, during the J F Kennedy era (1961-3) relations between Washington and Pretoria worsened. Indeed, the Kennedy administration went further than any previous American administration in its attacks on South Africa. President Kennedy proclaimed that the United States would cease selling arms to South Africa after 1963. The Johnson administration pursued the precedents set by Kennedy, and in some ways went even beyond them. In 1964, for instance, the United States voted for a UN Security Council resolution to study the feasibility of sanctions against South Africa.⁶³

However, despite this growing American hostility to South Africa on the political sphere, trade between the two countries was to grow in a striking fashion, as during the 1960s American reliance on South Africa minerals was to increase. For instance, as early as 1968-9 the United States depended primarily on South Africa for 85 percent of its antimony, 38 percent of its chrome, and more than 33 percent of the metals deriving from the platinum group.⁶⁴

1.3 The independence war in Southern Africa and the start of the new South African defence policy in the region.

Military ties between South Africa and Portugal existed long before the start of the liberation wars in Southern Africa. . Attempts at international alliance failed, as Pretoria wanted to play a major role in Southern Africa. However, since the end of WW II, the

⁶¹ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 7.

⁶² L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A historical Analysis*, p. 270.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

British Navy and the South African Navy were responsible for the security of the Cape sea route in terms of the Allied defence strategy in the Southern hemisphere. For instance, in 1959, South Africa, Britain, the USA and Portugal joined in maritime exercises in South African waters for the first time since WW II.⁶⁵

By the mid-1960s South Africa saw itself in the position of the dominant power in the region when Britain was withdrawing from its Southern African territories of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Zambia and Rhodesia (prior to her Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965). South Africa took advantage of these new circumstances in the region by proposing economic support to the newly sovereign mini-states, and these – unlike previous South African approaches to Africa – were cordially received by Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi.⁶⁶

The South African position was strengthened also in the two Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, which were under ineffectual and crumbling Portuguese rule. In fact, in 1961 and 1964 armed struggles were launched in Portuguese-controlled Angola and Mozambique by the newly formed liberation movements, the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO). There was no reason for Pretoria to question the short-term survival of Portuguese colonialism, but the armed struggle was a reminder that white minority regulation in Africa was not guaranteed to last forever. In fact, by the early 1960s many French and English-speaking Black African countries were granted independence by France and Britain, and after 1961 Portugal's relations with Africa's new independent states were tremendously limited. The Portuguese consulates in former colonies were closed down after independence. Thus for security reasons, South Africa and Portugal had to rely on each other for their survival on the African continent where many countries were granted independence by Britain and France. As long as Angola and Mozambique remained under Portuguese rule, Pretoria felt protected as the two colonies were regarded as important buffer zones for survival of the white rule in Southern Africa.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Kommando*, November 1959, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁶ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 17.

⁶⁷ W S Van der Waals: *Portugal's war in Angola 1961-1974*, p. 134.

Meanwhile, South Africa continued to administer the South West African territory that it inherited from the Western powers in 1920 under the League of Nations mandate. Yet by 1966, the revolutionary struggle in the Portuguese African colonies reached a deadlock and Portugal deployed 120 000 men in its African possessions, the largest military force in its history.⁶⁸

Military ties with the Lisbon dictatorship were strengthened and the South African government did everything in its power to assist the Portuguese forces. A thousand South African troops were reported to have been sent to Mozambique and in 1968 a joint Portuguese-South African command centre was established in Angola to initiate air strikes against guerrillas.⁶⁹ Portugal committed ever greater numbers of troops and military resources to its colonial wars – by the early 1970s 100 000 troops were tied down in Angola and Mozambique. In fact, although the liberation movements had not gained military dominance, insurgency was spreading and threatening the security of Portuguese officials and civilians. The military effort needed to oppose this had placed immense pressures on Portugal, where by 1970 nearly 40 percent of its annual budget was being assigned to the military with 150 000 troops serving in the African territories and a death toll by 1972 of over 13 000 servicemen.⁷⁰ At that moment it was obvious that the freedom factions had forced the Portuguese military into a position that could at best be considered as a stalemate, and social and political troubles in the metropolitan centre were starting to weaken the Lisbon dictatorship.⁷¹

South Africa was also facing international pressure on the Namibian occupation. Although South Africa's right to administer the territory was upheld, its attempts to have Namibia incorporated as a fifth province of South Africa after the Second World War were rebuffed by the international community. In 1950 the International Court of Justice determined that Namibia should remain an international responsibility. Resisting efforts by the UN to intervene, Pretoria set about systematically extending its apartheid policies in Namibia. In the early 1960s, Liberia and Ethiopia took Namibia's case to the

⁶⁸ W S Van der Waals: *Portugal's war in Angola 1961-1974*, p. 136.

⁶⁹ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 19.

⁷⁰ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A historical Analysis*, p. 175.

⁷¹ R S Jaster: *A Regional Security Role for Africa's Front Line States, Experience and Prospects*, p. 4.

International Court of Justice seeking to bring to an end the South African illegal occupation of Namibia. The Court decided that it was unable to make a ruling, although the UN General Assembly shortly afterwards declared South Africa's occupation of the territory to be illegal. In 1959, South African police and military units killed 11 Namibians and wounded 54 during a demonstration in Windhoek against the forced removal of the city's black population to a new segregated township, Katutura.⁷²

The massacre stimulated the Namibian people into forming the South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO), which quickly created a network of members throughout the country. Realising that the success of diplomatic pressure to end the South African occupation of their country would be improbable, SWAPO began to formulate preparations for an armed struggle.⁷³ Due to the failure of the International Court of Justice to deliver a judgement on the South African occupation, SWAPO proclaimed from its external headquarters in Tanzania that Namibians had 'no option but to rise in arms and bring about our liberation'.⁷⁴ On 26 August 1966, SWAPO forces collided with a South African Police division at Omgulumbashe and the next month a guerrilla unit demolished an administrative complex in the same area. Guerrillas also broke through white farming regions around Grootfontein.⁷⁵

Like the MK members, the SWAPO combatants encountered significant, even though not quite as severe, logistical complications. Portuguese-occupied Angola was of little utility as a rear base and the closest transit facilities were in Zambia. In order to get to the populated regions of the country it was crucial for the guerrillas to cross hundreds of kilometres through the Caprivi Strip. Pretoria reacted to the guerrilla menace by significantly toughening its Police counter-insurgency forces in the Caprivi Strip and expanding South African safekeeping laws to South West Africa.⁷⁶

The Terrorism Act was established explicitly to suppress the Namibian struggle and 37 Namibians were detained for long periods under this act in 1968. 'Strategic' or 'security'

⁷² *Paratus*: May 1985, p. 31.

⁷³ SWAPO: *To be born a Nation: The liberation Struggle for Namibia*, p. 176.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 19.

villages were established on the Okavango River, which forms the border with Zambia, and a curfew was enforced by the South African government. SWAPO claimed that acts of vengeance against the local natives were carried out and questioning as well as torture became common.⁷⁷

The South African government did not want at first to commit the SADF to operations in Namibia where the South African Police had to deal with the protection of the territory on its own. Thus, as the guerrilla situation was growing in Namibia, Pretoria increased counter-insurgency training for the police and provided them with military equipment.⁷⁸ With the aid of draconian 'security' laws and with a massive show of force in the north, the police were able to put down the first wave of armed resistance in Namibia. Military forces were kept in reserve, but their strength was increased.⁷⁹

The introduction in 1967 of universal conscription for white male South Africans and Namibians, which replaced the ballot system, was an indication of how seriously the regime regarded SWAPO's military initiative. The SADF was for the first time sent to Namibia in January 1972 with operational instructions to assist the police in 'restoring order'. On 4 February, legislation amounting to martial law was imposed on the Ovambo Bantustan – this was later extended to other areas of the country. SWAPO claimed that hundreds of people were rounded up by police and soldiers, held for months without trial and tortured. On the other side of the border, in Angola, the Portuguese also sent in heavily armed troops. By 1973, the SADF had taken over control of all military operations in northern Namibia from the South African Police (SAP).⁸⁰

The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain by the Ian Smith government in Rhodesia in 1965 led newly-independent Zambia to offer the British government bases for an invasion of Rhodesia but the offer was not taken up. Britain requested the UN to apply sanctions against Rhodesia. The UN complied, and all member

⁷⁷ SWAPO: *To be born a Nation, the liberation Struggle for Namibia*, p. 178. See also G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 19.

⁷⁸ IDAF: *The Apartheid War Machine, the Strength and Deployment of the South African Armed Forces*, Fact Paper on Southern Africa, No. 8, p. 53.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

states broke off trading relations with Rhodesia, except South Africa.⁸¹ UDI and the British failure to act against the Smith government proved to be the breaking point for Zimbabwe's national liberation movement, which began an armed struggle in 1966. In 1967 in the Zambezi valley, members of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the banned ANC, had launched a serious guerrilla campaign inside Rhodesia, which led Pretoria to send 2 000 policemen to Rhodesia to prevent ANC infiltration.⁸² The aim of the ZAPU and ANC forces was to strike a blow against the common enemy of white racism and to move guerrillas forward to within striking distance of South Africa. At the political level, the ANC and ZAPU formally appealed to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) for acknowledgment and support in 1967.⁸³

The apprehension that guerrilla activities might be instigated from bases in neighbouring Botswana and Swaziland was unquestionably an essential factor in South Africa's attempts to build strong and long-term economic and technical connections with these states. South Africa's new Prime Minister, John Vorster, saw benefit in projecting South Africa's newfound power 'outwards to influence and improve the external atmosphere in which the Republic's foreign strategy was shaped'. Pretoria policemen in Rhodesia did the work of troops and supported white Rhodesians in their fight against ZAPU and ZANU.⁸⁴

More realistic and far less dogmatic than his precursor, Vorster was better talented to take advantage of ad hoc occasions. Thus, he took the resolution to exchange ambassadors with Malawi in 1967, which remained the sole African state to establish diplomatic ties with Pretoria. Vorster's decision to set up diplomatic relations with Malawi resulted from the threat that communists, who, he believed, had penetrated into Tanzania, might expand their power from the East to the West coasts, cutting Africa in two. The so-called 'outward policy' was performed principally through trade and aid.⁸⁵

⁸¹ B J Liebenberg & S B Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 443.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 444.

⁸³ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 17.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18. See also B J Liebenberg & S B Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 444.

⁸⁵ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 18.

South Africa's exports to Africa increased, but, by 1972, amounted barely R 300 million (15 percent of her total exports) and a large amount of the increase later emerged to have been reported by South Africa's 'captive' trade partners, Rhodesia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. The main black African reaction to the 'outward policy' was the Lusaka Manifesto of 1969, in which 13 African countries rebuffed cooperation with South Africa and required the liberation of Black Southern Africans.⁸⁶

A coalition between South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal came to dictate regional politics from the mid 1960s onwards. South Africa's open support for the illegitimate Rhodesian government and its deliberate violation of UN sanctions, which were imposed soon after UDI, further amplified its worldwide isolation and compounded its troubles in achieving a closer defence pact with Western countries.⁸⁷ Also, despite amplifying guerrilla confrontations in South West Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese provinces of Angola and Mozambique, the South African government thought that it had removed the major threat in South Africa, the ANC. White political self-confidence was soaring and the South African economy was booming. As the 1960s unfolded, the Pretoria government grew more and more confident about its long-term survival. This self-assurance was reflected in an increasing enthusiasm to 'go it alone', to drive South Africa into a point of unchallenged regional power.⁸⁸

The arrival of President R M Nixon in office in 1969 was good news for the Portuguese government, which got American support for its survival in Africa. The support of the Portuguese by the Nixon-Kissinger strategy stemmed from the strategic military significance of the Azores and the Portuguese African territories to American Cold War defence arrangements.⁸⁹ In fact, in 1970 Nixon asked for open NATO support for Portugal in its colonial conflicts in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. The Nixon administration wanted to prevent the rapid expansion of communism in the region, which remained an essential source for strategic minerals and a safe route for Western shipping around the Indian and South Atlantic oceans. A rapid collapse of Portuguese rule over its

⁸⁶ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 18.

⁸⁷ G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁸⁹ M A El-Khawas and B Cohen (Ed): *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa, National Security Study Memorandum 39*, p. 45.

Southern African provinces could have been a total military and economic disaster for NATO member states.⁹⁰

Moreover, in 1971 the Nixon administration offered a credit-loan to Portugal of US \$ 436 million via the US Export-Import Bank, a number four times the full amount the Export-Import Bank had extended to Portugal between 1946 and 1971. Consequently, Portugal was able to acquire helicopters, aircraft, large airliners and other equipment that could be adapted to military use as the need came up.⁹¹

Between 1971 and 1972, for example, the Nixon administration approved the direct sale of two Boeing 707 and two Boeing 747 aircraft to Portugal for use as military transport planes in Africa. Furthermore, the Export-Import Bank granted loans and guarantees supporting the sale of twelve Bell helicopters, and a number of Rockwell photo-reconnaissance aircraft. In fact, through the cooperating financing arrangement extended to Portugal under the Azores agreement, Washington supplied Portugal with military support averaging about US \$ 1 million per annum and maintained the training of Portuguese military staff.⁹²

Despite growing American support for Portugal's colonial wars in Africa during the first half of the 1970s, the regional policy of Southern Africa changed by an unexpected military coup in Portugal in April 1974.

On 25 April 1974, while white South Africans were listening to the outcome of their general election, news came of a military coup in Lisbon. This dramatic incident, totally unexpected by South Africa, set in train developments that were to change the face of Southern Africa and lead to the collapse of colonial and white supremacy of the subcontinent, with the exception of South Africa itself and Namibia. Indeed, the collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship announced the end of colonial rule in Mozambique and Angola, leaving South Africa exposed to guerrilla and communist threats. These two

⁹⁰ M A El-Khawas and B Cohen (Ed): *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa, National Security Study Memorandum 39*, pp. 46-47.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

colonies played a crucial role in Pretoria's defence policy in the region prior to 1974.⁹³ The events in Portugal also lent momentum to African claims for the complete decolonisation of the continent, and worldwide pressures on the white minority governments in Pretoria and Salisbury were increasing.⁹⁴

Suddenly South Africa and Rhodesia were the only remaining white-ruled states in sub-Saharan Africa. It was then apparent that the apartheid government could no longer rely on strategic buffers around South Africa and that Pretoria's remaining regional ally, Rhodesia, would be left dangerously exposed to the guerrilla forces of the Zimbabwean liberation factions.

Within a few months the political and security situation in Southern Africa had thus changed fundamentally and the outlook for Pretoria had become hostile. The perception that regional stability could be preserved by the pursuit of the common interests and military power of the white governments was crushed.⁹⁵

The South African Prime Minister John Vorster reacted to the regional developments by re-launching his 'outward policy', dressed up in a new label, 'détente', and with a stronger regional emphasis. Thus, he began to campaign actively for peace in Rhodesia. The core aim of the 'détente policy' was to strengthen the government's strategic position and to avoid becoming still more isolated. Vorster expected that the global community would be less hostile towards Pretoria's apartheid policy if he could convince Smith to admit black majority rule. Contact was made with a small faction of pro-Western African countries, and Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda was predisposed to collaborate in an effort to bring the warring parties in Rhodesia together around the conference table. But Pretoria's main aim was to set up an 'internal settlement' in Zimbabwe that would stop the liberation forces coming to power and leaving South Africa as the only white-ruled state in Southern Africa.⁹⁶

⁹³ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A historical Analysis*, p. 175.

⁹⁴ G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 23.

⁹⁵ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A historical Analysis*, p. 176.

⁹⁶ B J Liebenberg & S B Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 444.

Seeing that the Smith government had no chance of long-term survival regardless of the South African military backing, Pretoria applied economic and political pressure on the Rhodesian government to achieve a settlement agreement with the freedom movements, or at least to build a convincing multiracial government. Indeed, between September 1974 and February 1975, South Africa carried out high-level, secret negotiations with African leaders to come to a peaceful resolution to the mounting Rhodesian crisis. This attempt died in August 1975 when talks at Victoria Falls collapsed. The failure of the South African proposal for a peaceful resolution of the Rhodesian crisis led the Vorster government to initiate the South African departure from Rhodesia.⁹⁷

The collapse of the Portuguese regime in 1974 also pressed South Africa to initiate a five-year military modernisation and development programme, requiring a drastic increase in defence expenditures. An important organisational shake-up of the SADF's fighting forces was started with the institution of separate conventional and 'Special Forces' formations. The establishment of the heavily armed South African Special Forces significantly increased the army's conventional strike capability for attacks on neighbouring countries – 'to counter-attack or to take preventive action'. The Special Forces consisted of secret unconventional units, the Reconnaissance Commandos, which would have the capacity for small-unit operations in neighbouring states.⁹⁸

In June 1975, Mozambique became independent under a FRELIMO government without South African interference, although Pretoria provided some support to members of the Portuguese secret police who tried to stage a coup in Maputo.⁹⁹ Mozambique's heavy economic reliance on South Africa was seen as a vital aspect in securing the 'friendly cooperation' of its new leaders. Thus, as soon as the Samora Machel government took office, South Africa promptly arranged to renew the established contracts for technical aid to Mozambique's railways and main harbour, as well as the particular convention under which Mozambicans employed in South Africa mines had 60 percent of their wages paid in gold at the official rate. Mozambican independence was not perceived as a

⁹⁷ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, Adelphi Papers No. 159, p. 20. See also B J Liebenberg & S B Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, pp. 444-445.

⁹⁸ White Paper on Defence 1977, p. 11.

⁹⁹ L Trainor: *South African Foreign Policy, the Immediate Impact of the Portuguese Coup*, p. 2.

threat for South Africa as the ex-Portuguese colony was deeply reliant on the South African economy for its survival.¹⁰⁰

However, the Angolese independence was a different tale for the South African government. Pretoria had very little economic influence over Angola. South Africa was also alarmed about the expected support that a radical Angolan government would grant to SWAPO.¹⁰¹

As a result, the independence of Angola was significantly overdue, presenting the South African government with greater prospects for military involvement. South Africa gave its military support to the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and the Frente Nacional Libertação de Angola (FNLA) movements – antagonists of the most important freedom movement, the MPLA. After secret discussions with the USA, the South African government apparently set itself the goal of getting hold of the capital Luanda before the Independence date, 11 November, with the intention of establishing a client UNITA/FNLA government. Accordingly, in August 1975 South African troops crossed into Angola from bases in South West Africa. The SADF progressed into Angola and met resistance outside Luanda. With expected US and African support failing to happen, Pretoria had to remove its troops, apart from those guarding the border, back to 50 kilometres inside Angola. Political aspects were vital and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) failed to support Pretoria's intrusion as hoped by the Vorster government.¹⁰²

Following the Angolan fiasco, President G R Ford ordered H A Kissinger his Secretary of State to reassess account the US-Southern African relations and to set up a new strategy taking into consideration the latest episodes in the area, especially the existence of 12 000 to 15 000 Cubans in Angola and the considerable boost in Soviet influence and reputation. The Ford administration cautioned the USSR and Cuba against military ventures in Africa and in March 1976, Kissinger personally declared that the USA would not admit further communist military interference in Africa. Consequently, to put

¹⁰⁰ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, Adelphi Papers No. 159, p. 21. See also B J Liebenberg & S B Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, pp. 447-448.

¹⁰¹ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, Adelphi Papers No. 159, p. 21

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24. See also B J Liebenberg & S B Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, pp. 450-451.

pressure on MPLA leaders, Kissinger announced the US intention to block Angola's admittance to the UN as long as Cuban troops remained in Angola.¹⁰³

The Angolese enterprise was a major political defeat for Vorster and his government as South Africa's regional situation was further weakened by the increase of SWAPO military activity in Namibia. Many of the South African troops retreating from Angola were posted in northern Namibia in an attempt to stop the progress of SWAPO rebels, who had broken out of the Caprivi Strip and opened a new front in the Ovambo Bantustan. The number of South African troops in Namibia swelled from 16 000 to over 50 000 during 1975 and 1976, and strings of new bases were established in the north. In the meantime, in 1976 SWAPO fighters achieved three times as many military operations in Namibia as the total for the previous ten years.¹⁰⁴

The shifting regional situation led Pretoria into a more vigorous pursuit of closer relations with NATO and individual Western powers such as France, which had been the major arms supplier to Pretoria between 1963 and 1977, when the UN embargo on arms sales to South Africa became mandatory for the majority of its members. Accordingly, within a month of the Lisbon coup d'état top cabinet officials were in Europe and the USA looking for guarantees from Western powers.¹⁰⁵

However, South Africa's crusade for Western backing did not bear fruit as independent African countries were applying greater pressure in the UN and elsewhere for the isolation of South Africa and its remaining ally Rhodesia. The collapse of the Portuguese rule in Southern Africa by 1974-1975 meant that Pretoria was increasingly becoming an object of guerrilla forces operating in bordering countries where the freedom conflicts provided an opportunity to SWAPO and the ANC to carry out military operations against the apartheid government.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ M A El-Khawas and B Cohen: *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa, National Security Study Memorandum 39*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁰⁴ G Cawthra: *Brutal Force, the Apartheid War Machine*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

At the same time, an unpredicted incident in Soweto in June 1976, led South Africa to a domestic crisis of major importance, which did not help Pretoria avoid the 1977 UN compulsory embargo on arms to the country. By that time Pretoria started to become really isolated as its former military allies became independent and had pro-communist governments.

The fact that the UN military embargo of 1963 was not compulsory for its members gave Pretoria an opportunity to develop its military power between 1960 and 1977 with the assistance of some Western powers, such as France. In fact, by 1963, France became Pretoria's strongest military supplier when the regime was facing some cuts from its traditional military allies, Britain and the USA. The French involvement in South Africa helped the regime survive through the acquisition of modern weapons, which became a key factor in the survival of the apartheid policy.

Chapter 2

De Gaulle's difficult rise to power, his opposition to Anglo-Saxon domination and the birth of the French Fifth Republic, 1940-1962.

De Gaulle was a passionate nationalist who was convinced that France could regain her lost grandeur and the dominant position that she enjoyed during the Middle Ages in Europe. He believed that the only way of achieving this was to develop a strong independent French military capability and most importantly attain the nuclear stage status that would enable the country to play a role in international issues. For de Gaulle, France's foreign policy was to be defined by her military capability due to the fact that she had a vast colonial empire that she was not prepared to leave to the mercy of a growing Anglo-Saxon hegemony. Furthermore, international events like the Korean War and the Berlin Crisis forced him to believe in the necessity for France to adopt a position independent of both the Western camp and the Eastern bloc with regard to world issues.

It is important to know the background of de Gaulle's relationship with his Anglo-Saxon counterparts prior to his return to power in 1958 when the country depended on American aid for her reconstruction. Also, de Gaulle did not forget the treatment he received during WW II when the fate of France was in the hands of Churchill and Roosevelt who took most decisions without consulting him, even after they recognised him as the leader of fighting France. As a result, de Gaulle developed a degree of antipathy toward Anglo-Saxons from WW II onwards. He feared the danger of a world democracy described by Washington and London.

However, de Gaulle's legitimacy as French leader after WW II was short-lived, as he had to deal with a strong opposition in the parliament, at the time dominated by communists and socialists. He was forced to resign in January 1946 and had to wait for 12 years before another conflict brought him back to power, this time with the full support of the French electorate. With this unexpected return to French politics and the outcome of the Algerian conflict, de Gaulle would have the occasion to rule the country the way he always wanted, as by that time, the traditional communist-socialist opposition to Gaullism had ceased to dominate France's political arena. Thus, de Gaulle's desire to

elevate France to a nuclear power would become the key element of his foreign policy, as he wanted to regain France's lost prestige as a world power. From that time onwards, given the authority he lacked during the 1940s and the 1950s, de Gaulle would reshape France's political scene. .

This chapter is an important background to understand de Gaulle's choices on world issues and his decision to militarily support the apartheid government throughout his presidency despite growing international isolation of South Africa from 1963 onwards. Indeed, French arms and technology transfer to South Africa would be at the forefront of growing relations between Paris and Pretoria when the latter's traditional partners decided to adopt the 1963 UN arms embargo.

2.1. De Gaulle's difficult relationship with the Allies during WW II and his determination to gain legitimacy as Free France leader, 1940-1945.

When German forces entered Holland and Belgium and then defeated the French army in six weeks, the then French President, Paul Reynaud made a hopeless request to Washington to commit American troops to come to the rescue of the French territory. But, France's demand was turned down due to the Congress and American public opposition as they opted for a neutral position, at least for that moment. Consequently, France had to capitulate. Soon, the Vichy government (pro-German policy) became increasingly involved in Franco-American relations as they also succeeded in maintaining France's authority in all consulates and the large majority of the French colonies under the leadership of Vichy.¹

On 18 June 1940 when General de Gaulle made his appeal to resist German occupation of France, US President Franklin Roosevelt was opposed to de Gaulle's legitimacy as leader of Free France as the latter was not a well known figure at that time. Indeed, Roosevelt's attitude to de Gaulle was based on three key elements. Firstly, he could not identify de Gaulle as France's principal spokesman between 1940 and 1943 as it would have jeopardized the Vichy government. He opted to maintain relations with the Vichy administration in order to prevent possible French military cooperation with Germany as

¹ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 33.

he especially desired to keep the French fleet neutral in the fighting and prevent French troops in North Africa opposing the 1942 November American invasion. Secondly, Roosevelt could not formally recognise de Gaulle due to the fact that a popular belief in France saw him as a probable military ruler. Thirdly, American support for de Gaulle would have implied the return of France's overseas empire at a time that the USA saw the end of the French empire as a means of not only averting French authority over its formal colonies after the war, but also as an occasion for the USA to project its air and sea power into Dakar and Indochina. Roosevelt saw this as crucial to Washington's post-conflict position as a world policeman.²

As far as the Franco-British relationship was concerned, the main difficulty was the connection of the Free French with London on the one hand and with Vichy on the other. De Gaulle believed that he represented the legitimate France and Vichy was the betrayer, in connivance with France's adversaries. Meanwhile, London was resolved to keep Vichy and its remaining flotilla out of the fighting. Consequently, British leaders were more flexible in their approach, and carried on an open diplomatic line like their American counterparts.³

Nevertheless, on 7 August 1940, an accord between Churchill and de Gaulle was reached for the administrative and financial foundations of the Free French. De Gaulle was the 'supreme commander' of the Free French armed forces but he agreed to follow the 'general directives' of London. The financial British aid to de Gaulle and the Free French came as a loan.⁴

Throughout the War years, de Gaulle's relationship with Britain and particularly the USA was difficult most of the time, as he wanted to make sure that the reputation of France was preserved. The Allies were not pleased with de Gaulle's attitude, but they were progressively coming to understand that France, under him, could not be brushed away. From that time, the status of the Provisional French government became a concern as

² R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, pp. 49-50.

³ C Williams: *The Last Great Frenchman*, pp. 137-138.

⁴ A Werth: *De Gaulle, a Political Biography*, p. 112.

they feared that the new administration would be a fragile one as it had no direct power from the nation.⁵

However, after several discussions between Churchill and Roosevelt and notwithstanding their complex relationship with de Gaulle, London, Washington and Moscow officially recognized the de Gaulle Provisional government on 23 October 1944. Despite the acknowledgment by the Allies, de Gaulle's main concern was in the strengthening of the French military that would allow France to claim her fair share in the ultimate stage of the hostilities. But, de Gaulle's determination to elevate France as a great power did not meet the Allies' approval when the post-war decisions were to be taken.⁶

Thus, in February 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin met at Yalta on the Black Sea where, without de Gaulle's participation, they developed a post-conflict resolution in Europe and the United Nations Organisation. The Allies believed that General de Gaulle's main objective was to make a reputation for himself in France by claiming a place beyond what France could claim at that time, as the liberation of Europe was effected by the Allies without a significant contribution from France.. Nevertheless, during the Yalta conference, Churchill persuaded Roosevelt and Stalin to integrate France in the commission that was to rule Germany as the British leader believed that France was an indispensable element of an established resolution in Europe. Thus, France would obtain her own occupation sector, and would be one of the powers issuing calls to the San Francisco forum that was to launch the United Nations.⁷

On 2 June 1945, during a press conference, de Gaulle came out against Churchill's attempt to take the 5000 French troops out of Syria and Lebanon in the Middle East. De Gaulle said that the British government had convinced Syria and Lebanon not to discuss their sovereignty treaties with Paris. And at the end of August 1945, de Gaulle went to the USA as a guest of President Truman. During their discussions, Truman told de Gaulle that the time had come that the French threw the communists out of the government. De Gaulle simply told his American host that the presence of communist Ministers in the

⁵ C Williams: *The Last Great Frenchman*, p. 290.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

French cabinet was a domestic French matter. Truman warned him that, in the conditions, France was not to expect significant US economic help and Washington would not support France's demands over the Saar and the Ruhr regions of Germany.⁸

As in Yalta, de Gaulle was excluded from the Potsdam conference in July 1945 where crucial decisions concerning the future of Germany were taken. The atomic bombing of Japan came also as a blow to de Gaulle and his requests for the amendment of the Potsdam decisions did not meet the Allies' approval. In December 1945, France was once more kept out of the Moscow discussions of Allies Foreign Ministers on Germany. During 1945, France experienced a hurting succession of embarrassments, reminding de Gaulle that France did not have the real muscle for big power rank. By that time, de Gaulle knew that he had to concentrate on restoring the French economy as a means to national strength via American aid and then tighten French requests on Germany where Americans raised several objections.⁹

2.2 De Gaulle's idea of France in Europe and his opposition to the Anglo-Saxon hegemony, 1945-1958.

French and American approaches over Germany were different as Paris was alarmed about the potential military threat at her doorstep. Consequently, France rejected the decisions made at Potsdam regarding Germany since Paris was not invited to the conference. During a meeting of Allies Foreign Affairs Ministers held in London on 11 September 1945, France requested that the Ruhr and Rhineland had to be detached from any new German state in order to deny Germany the military means and the geographical occasion to wage violent conflict against France. The French delegate to the conference was therefore mandated to use France's right of veto on the Allied Control Command (ACC) to try to oblige an adjustment of French requirements, a strategy that France carried on until the end of October 1945. As expected, the USA was opposed to the

⁸ A Werth: *De Gaulle, a Political Biography*, p. 191-192.

⁹ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 104.

French demands and at some stage they opted to circumvent the French, but Soviets and British refused to cooperate.¹⁰

For de Gaulle, Germany's future was a chief concern for France's security. Despite British's overtures to study French propositions, Paris failed to convince London that the plan of separating the Ruhr from the rest of Germany could work in economic terms, while French people believed that security concerns should prevail in deciding the destiny of the Ruhr. Meanwhile, the British did not wish to lose control of the Ruhr from their own occupation sector, as it would have implied a greater economic weight on London. Consequently, the French failed to see the Ruhr, Rhineland and Saarland immediately removed from the authority of the Allied Control Council. They wanted to control the industrial regions of Germany to rebuild the French economy and prevent any future military German menace to France. French plans on Germany always met increasing American opposition.¹¹

By June 1945, General de Gaulle was globally recognised as the liberator of France and leader of the French government and his political base, domestically and abroad was protected. The date of June 1945 also meant de Gaulle's official start as political figure in France. He succeeded in imposing on the Allies to identify France as a main post-conflict power among other achievements. Despite the ongoing poverty and bribery of the post-hostilities era and the challenging problems of rebuilding, the de Gaulle administration forged ahead.¹²

As soon as the summer of 1945, there were four major political groups in France: communists, socialists, the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP) also known as the Christian Democrats, de Gaulle's political base, and the radicals. All political forces wanted a new constitution based on the dominance of a solitary elected chamber, as they wanted to avoid a government by plebiscite. Meanwhile, de Gaulle yearned for a strong presidency established by plebiscite. De Gaulle revealed his own views on a future electorate on 9 July during a meeting of the Council of Ministers. Against all, he wanted

¹⁰ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, pp. 109-110.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-114.

¹² C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 305.

the French elections to be held in October, jointly with a referendum to determine the necessity of a new constitution.¹³

Despite the growing dissatisfaction with de Gaulle's lack of interest in local issues, the vote took place on 21 October 1945 and was both a referendum and a parliamentary election in which women were able to vote for the first time in France's history. De Gaulle won the referendum with 96 percent supporting a new constitution and 66 percent in favour of a Constituent Assembly of limited life. However, de Gaulle's MRP did not win the majority at the Constituent Assembly as the party came head-to-head with the communists; each obtaining 26 percent, while socialists gained 25 percent of the votes. The new Constituent Assembly re-elected the socialist Félix Gouin as its President as a result of the communist-socialist coalition.¹⁴

The election of General de Gaulle as President of the French Republic and head of the Provisional government took place on 14 November 1945 after all the winning parties within the Constituent Assembly held difficult meetings and secret talks, taking a week to make up their minds. Clashes between communists and de Gaulle restarted when the latter wanted to include them in his government, as they asked for one of the three most significant departments at the time: Defence, Foreign Affairs or Interior. De Gaulle simply refused to concede any of the three to his political opponents. As a result, communists, backed by their socialist allies, immediately refused to take part in his government. However, after several negotiations took place, de Gaulle's second Provisional government was finally declared on 21 November 1945 with a combination of Left and Right members. From that time, the Fourth Republic was to become quite a replica of the Third Republic. Having failed to gain the majority seats at the Constituent Assembly, de Gaulle knew that the new government would be a disastrous repetition and he had already made up his mind about a possible withdrawal from power.¹⁵

In 1945, already 50 percent of the French population shared de Gaulle's preference for electing the President of the Republic by direct universal ballot whereas 40 percent still

¹³ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, , pp. 306-307.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 312-313.

believed in selecting the President via parliament. While only 20 percent were opposed, a total of 66 percent of French voters approved the referendum. But at that time de Gaulle did not have a credible political base in which he could gain the votes of those who already shared his views on the future of France's political stability. Communists and socialists were still the key players on the French political arena.¹⁶

In his capacity as leader of the cabinet, de Gaulle had the final decision on all matters. Moreover, he believed that he was accountable to no one, only to God. For the new government, de Gaulle's own personality and style of government was a major problem, not only for the opposition but also for his own Ministers. That situation led to great difficulties between him and the rest of the government.¹⁷

Despite the complications that he met in dealing with a Constituent Assembly dominated by the opposition and a government that he could not control as he wished, de Gaulle tried to rule the country within the general context of social tensions that were affecting his reconstruction plans for France. Furthermore, without de Gaulle knowing it, on New Year's Eve, socialists supported by communist Members of Parliament (MP) introduced an amendment to reduce defence funds by 20 percent at a time that de Gaulle saw the rebuilding of the French army as a cornerstone to restore France's prestige in Europe and the world. After a vote of confidence at the Assembly, de Gaulle succeeded in maintaining the defence's budget but was forced to make suggestions for the transformation of the army within six weeks. De Gaulle could not take it and on 20 January 1946 he announced his resignation from the French presidency.¹⁸

De Gaulle was replaced by the socialist Félix Gouin who kept many of his predecessor's Ministers in office. Yet, it seemed that politicians were doing quite well without de Gaulle as were the French people themselves. According to a survey in February 1946, many were happy with his resignation and the new government continued a foreign policy that de Gaulle saw as flexible and anglophile under the leadership of Georges Bidault, who kept his post. De Gaulle felt betrayed and did not to forget it. Despite de

¹⁶ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, p. 56.

¹⁷ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 286.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 314-315.

Gaule's resignation, the new Fourth Republic faced difficulties in achieving its goals. The new Constituent Assembly produced a new constitution that was rejected in a referendum on 5 May 1946 and new elections took place on 2 June. The result was similar to the November 1945 elections with the MRP obtaining 28 percent, the communists 26 percent, the socialists 21 percent of the total votes.¹⁹

Yet, Bidault, who remained Foreign Affairs Minister, continued to follow de Gaulle's strategy towards Germany. He kept on pushing for a partition of the Rhineland from Germany, the Saar had to be included in France and the Ruhr had to become an international controlled zone. But his efforts did not receive British, American and Soviet support. Even his Prime Minister; Gouin did not give him support.²⁰

In February 1947, de Gaulle, no longer in power, decided to form a new political movement with the help of most of his faithful friends from Free France such as Jacques Soustelle, Gaston Paleswski, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Michel Debré, and André Malraux to mention only few. The name of the new movement was the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF). The RPF was to be a vast movement with a strong President whose decisions were final and could not be challenged. De Gaulle was, of course, the President of the RPF and was surrounded by small groups led by his companions in the decision-making process.²¹

On 5 June 1947, the US Secretary of State, General George C Marshall launched the European Recovery Programme known as the 'Marshall Plan'. He declared that the USA was ready to support European countries ruined by the war. The American offer was to transform Europe's economic hopes as London and Paris immediately accepted the proposal. De Gaulle welcomed the idea despite describing the Marshall Plan as the continuation of American self-interests in Europe. The US ambassador in Paris, Jefferson Caffery assured the Gaullists of the importance of the Marshall Aid for French recovery

¹⁹ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman* pp. 318-320.

²⁰ A Werth: *De Gaulle, a Political Biography*, p. 199.

²¹ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, pp. 324-325.

and told them that if de Gaulle returned to power, his cabinet would also be qualified for assistance.²²

Meanwhile, the RPF's growing success on the French political stage was not positively perceived by Washington. In fact, by 1947, the RPF was feared by Americans who continued to disapprove of de Gaulle's return to power, as his new political movement was perceived as a dictatorial and even fascist political force. Nevertheless, American leaders always perceived de Gaulle as an alternative solution for France in case, in the long run, the political chaos of the Fourth Republic continued.²³

By September 1949 the French government had ratified the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) after vigorous debates in the National Assembly and de Gaulle did not oppose the French adherence at that time as the country was militarily involved in Indochina. He believed that huge American military aid was crucial for France if the menace of Soviet aggression on Western Europe was to be avoided. The Federal Republic of Germany had also been proclaimed.²⁴

Having approved France's membership in NATO, consequently diminishing a possible Soviet menace of France, de Gaulle's other main concern remained Germany. He believed that to assure peace in Western Europe, avoid a possible German rearmament and guarantee France's security, a united Europe was essential and that Germans had to be included, as they remained economically powerful. As for the British, he believed that they were more attracted by their trans-Atlantic relationship with the USA. He considered that it was important that some day German and French people were to be brought together despite the difficult past.²⁵

With the start of the Korean War in 1950 and its potential extension to Europe, de Gaulle came to the conclusion that Europe could not be well defended by US air and sea powers only. As a result, he proposed that as far as defence was concerned, a defence Council composed of the USA, Britain and France was to be set up with a combined General

²² B Crozier: *De Gaulle, the Statesman*, pp. 423-424.

²³ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 129.

²⁴ Lord Gladwyn: *De Gaulle's Europe or Why the General says No*, p. 41.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Staff. France would appoint a Commander-in-Chief, just like her two partners. De Gaulle thought that the result of such a plan was to revitalize his proposed European integration. In the meantime, General de Gaulle admitted that Germany was, to some extent, to be responsible for her own defence. De Gaulle believed that NATO did not really protect Europe; on the contrary it suppressed its independence. De Gaulle continued to campaign for a European confederation where each member state would submit a part of its own sovereignty, especially for economic, defence and cultural matters. As far as Britain's participation was concerned, he considered she was not willing to incorporate herself in the continent due to her insularity, her relations with the Commonwealth and traditions. And, besides, Churchill had told him during WW II that if London had to choose between the USA and France, he would have chosen the USA. Yet, de Gaulle continued an intensive campaign for a Franco-German rapprochement which opposed the European Defence Community (EDC) and the idea of a European Army.²⁶

De Gaulle continued to oppose France's participation in the EDC in which Paris was always asked to compromise on important issues like Indochina, Germany and the European Army, and he gained the support of the French people, even among his political opponents. Furthermore, at the end of 1951 the Tories came back to power and they simply rejected any British participation in a European Army. Finally, during the course of 1954, the proposed EDC was called off and de Gaulle won his battle of keeping French defence matters independent from his allies.²⁷

Yet, regarding French foreign policy, from 1952 forwards most French people shared de Gaulle's belief of building France into a neutral power in the struggle between communist nations and the Western world. They did not want to commit towards the USA or, *a fortiori*, towards the Soviet Union.²⁸

De Gaulle's chief opposition to France's integration within a European body came from three important considerations. The crucial and most important one was on the political sphere. He wanted to maintain France's independence and restore her status as a world

²⁶ Lord Gladwyn: *De Gaulle's Europe or Why the General says No*, pp. 46-48.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁸ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, p. 58.

power by all possible means. The second reason was that he rejected the idea of supra-nationality or assimilation that could destroy the French identity as a nation. The third reason was that he was convinced that he played a leading role in all developments that occurred in France since the beginning of WW II and he was the only one capable of leading France towards great achievements.²⁹

For a period of about 12 years, de Gaulle was no longer a prominent political figure in France. In fact, after his attempt to come back to politics in the early 1950s failed, he announced his retirement from public life in 1955. From that time until his comeback to France's political stage in 1958, the governments of the Fourth Republic were dealing with difficult issues among which the Indochina conflict and above all the Algerian war for independence among other matters. Until March 1958, de Gaulle had doubts about his possible return to power as according to some opinion polls at the time, French people did not want him back as their leader. However, after the French army was defeated in Indochina, the successive governments of the Fourth Republic were determined not to lose Algeria. Though the conflict was contained until the mid-1950s, the weakness of the successive French governments of the Fourth Republic led the army in Algeria to become more brutal and involved in the administration of the territory.³⁰

From 1946 to 1958, the French political system quite successfully rejected de Gaulle's ideas on France's future and kept him aside. In fact, political leaders, the old parties such as communists and socialists, the media and the general tendency joined forces to isolate him and limit the effects of his charisma on France's constitution.³¹

The situation in Algeria brought on a conflict between political leaders in Paris and military commanders in Algeria. For the first time in French modern history the military did not obey the civil authority, leading to the struggle for control of France. As the situation persisted, all parties involved agreed that they needed a neutral arbiter to solve the military-political chaos that the country faced. By May 1958, de Gaulle was

²⁹ Lord Gladwyn: *De Gaulle's Europe or Why the General says No*, pp. 54-55.

³⁰ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, pp. 364-365.

³¹ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, p. 21.

persuaded that he was the solution to the political confusion. To save France once more, therefore, he should come back to power.³²

In the meantime, some of de Gaulle's most faithful companions had held private meetings for a year or so during which they discussed his possible return to power. Among them were Michel Debré, Jacques Soustelle, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, René Capitant, François Mauriac and Olivier Guichard. Yet, Chaban-Delmas, as the leader of the Gaullist Social Republicans, shaped from the old RPF, became Defence Minister in the Félix Gaillard government formed in November 1957. Chaban-Delmas was charged by the government to approach de Gaulle for his potential comeback to power.³³

The difficult relationship between the politicians in Paris and the army in Algiers continued to worsen throughout the first months of 1958. There were rumours about a possible military coup in Paris, codenamed Operation Resurrection, as a solution to the status quo of the political chaos of the Fourth Republic. By May 1958 the army was opposed to surrender in Algeria as the government did in Indochina in 1954. As a result, the army called for de Gaulle's return as Prime Minister despite communist and socialist's firm opposition.³⁴

The political stage continued to make efforts to secure de Gaulle's return to power during most of May 1958. Meanwhile, de Gaulle's comeback to politics was firmly opposed by socialist and communist MPs at the National Assembly. They wanted de Gaulle to secure a majority at the Assembly if he were to become Prime Minister. As the army's threat grew and the government authority remained by name only, President René Coty who had been meeting with de Gaulle in late May, agreed on the latter's terms to form a government. As a result, on 29 May 1958, it was announced that de Gaulle would return as Prime Minister with full power, no National Assembly interference for six months and a new constitution would be produced. From that time, de Gaulle started negotiating with socialist leaders and other political figures. Finally, on 31 May 1958, after gaining socialist support, de Gaulle was confirmed Prime Minister by the National Assembly

³² C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 365.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

with a majority of 320 votes against 224. Thus the military coup and a civil war were avoided in France.³⁵

In August 1958, 83 percent of the French population believed that de Gaulle would make the army obey, 70 percent of them trusted him to reform the constitution, 68 percent to settle the Algerian issue; 67 percent felt that he would improve France's international situation whereas 61 percent trusted him to reunite France and only 44 percent did not believe that General de Gaulle would be able to settle economic issues. De Gaulle's return to power was therefore characterised by a high degree of confidence within the French population, which believed in his ability to resolve France's major issues of that time. That degree of trust would soon be utilised when de Gaulle would call for reforms that were not always popular in the early 1960s.³⁶

It should be mentioned that from the Third Republic and during the Fourth Republic until the beginning of the Fifth Republic, France political arena was characterised by a multi-party structure in which the electoral muscle of the parties was disparate as no party obtained 30 percent of the ballots cast.³⁷

2.3. The birth of the Fifth Republic and de Gaulle's determination to restore France's place as a world power, 1958-1962.

De Gaulle now had the chance to apply his own ideas on the restoration of France's reputation as one of the world leading nations. There were two essential grounds on which he intended to achieve his goals: a quick economic recovery and most of all an independent defence force with the immediate goal of nuclear power for France. De Gaulle's new government was a government for national unity, as it comprised some of the Fourth Republic Ministers like Guy Mollet, Antoine Pinay (Finance), Pierre Pflimlin, former Prime Minister, and Maurice Couve de Murville who was given the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Not all of his friends were appointed in the new government. Thus, Jacques Soustelle, Gaston Palewski, Georges Catroux and Jacques Chaban-Delmas were

³⁵ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, pp. 376-378.

³⁶ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, pp. 51-52.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

left out while Michel Debré received the Justice Ministry portfolio and the chairmanship of the committee charged to prepare the new constitution. André Malraux and Edmond Michelet were also appointed to the new government. In addition, the portfolios of Defence, Interior and French Overseas Territories were under the leadership of three civil servants.³⁸

The French government had ratified the Treaties of Rome in 1957 and thus France's entry in the European Economic Community (EEC) alongside West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. . As he was satisfied with the way the previous government conducted negotiations over the EEC, de Gaulle followed in the path traced by the previous government over the European integration since, Britain was not part of the group and West Germany was brought closer.³⁹

Meanwhile, on constitutional reforms, de Gaulle was granted special powers by the National Assembly to deal with the Algerian conflict, as he was also Minister for Algeria. After some resistance from MPs, de Gaulle was finally given the go-ahead by both the National Assembly and the Council of the Republic, the second chamber of the French parliament, to revise the constitution. On the same occasion, both chambers were given a six months holiday, giving de Gaulle tremendous powers to govern France. His authority in Paris was by that time unchallenged.⁴⁰ De Gaulle was granted “emergency powers” through Article 16 of the constitution that would enable him to deal with the situation.⁴¹ The constitution of the Fifth Republic was drawn up between June and August 1958 in which the President held the supreme right of dissolution, the appointment of his Prime Minister and other Ministers, international treaties among other responsibilities.⁴²

³⁸ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 380.

³⁹ Lord Gladwyn: *De Gaulle's Europe or Why the General says No*, p. 56.

⁴⁰ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 381.

⁴¹ R S Conley: 'Presidential Republics and Divided Government: Lawmaking and Executive Politics in the United States and France' in *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 122, No. 2, 2007, p. 262.

⁴² A Werth: *De Gaulle, a Political Biography*, p. 243.

According to most people at the time, the electoral and political power of Gaullism came from the charisma of its founder and leader. In 1959, according to Raymond Aron, 'The Fifth Republic was the fruit of charismatic leadership'.⁴³

In his strategy to gain support of the army in Algeria, de Gaulle made a trip to Algiers at the beginning of July 1958. There, he intended to achieve definite support of the army as servants of France. Following Minister Malraux's growing unpopularity among the soldiers, de Gaulle appointed Jacques Soustelle as Information Minister on 7 July 1958. Yet, during the 14 July Bastille Day parade, de Gaulle paid particular attention to the army stationed in Algeria by bringing together all the military actors of France in a military parade alongside Moslem units.⁴⁴

The task of coming up with the new constitution according to de Gaulle's main ideas, explained at Bayeux in 1946, was delegated to Debré. While de Gaulle wanted a powerful presidency, Debré had always admired the British parliamentary institution. As a result, Debré came up with a kind of balanced constitution between de Gaulle's main features and his own ideas. Thus, though the President could not be removed from office by the National Assembly, the latter could still bring down the government that the President had appointed.⁴⁵

De Gaulle became campaigned for the new constitution throughout France and overseas territories. Communist and socialist leaders harshly criticized the new constitution. For de Gaulle, the new President was to be 'above political battles... a national arbiter... elected by the citizens... with the right to have alternative to the decision of the sovereign citizens... responsible for the integrity of France and the security of the republic'. Yet, among other tasks, the President would choose his Ministers and would chair the Council of Ministers. He would also select all civil and military officers and would be commander-in-chief of the French army. Though the National Assembly would control the budget, the President could still rule by decree if the budget were rejected. During a

⁴³ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, p. 43.

⁴⁴ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, pp. 385-386.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

national emergency, the President could suspend the constitution altogether. The new constitution was approved by a referendum scheduled on 28 September 1958.⁴⁶

Despite strong opposition led by the communists, the new constitution was approved by an overwhelming majority in metropolitan France claiming 80 percent positive votes as well as the rest of the French territories apart from Guinea. After securing the new constitution, the general election was to be held on 23 and possibly on 30 November in case there would be a second round between the two main candidates of the first round. By that time, the Gaullist camp under Soustelle leadership, had found a new party: l'Union pour la Nouvelle République (UNR). Still in the mood of the new constitution, on 23 October, de Gaulle called on the Algerian rebels, who, under the leadership of the Front de Libération Nationale (FNL) had set up a government in exile to open negotiations with the French government in France. But, de Gaulle's offer was turned down mostly because of the FNL military commanders' opposition.⁴⁷

Despite the failed attempt to bring peace to Algeria, the elections took place with disastrous results for the opposition. Only ten communists out of 138 were re-elected, 44 socialists out of 88 and 23 radicals out of 56 with most of their leaders losing their seats. The great victors were the UNR candidates who took 196 seats and the pro-Gaullist independents with 132. By that time, the way was paved for de Gaulle to become the first President of the Fifth Republic according to his old ideas. On 21 December 1958, de Gaulle was elected by an electoral college with 78.5 percent of the votes. De Gaulle had achieved his old dream of becoming an all-powerful President with the support of the French people. On 8 January 1959 he was installed as the first President of the Fifth Republic.⁴⁸

As soon as he had settled in office, de Gaulle embarked on changes in the French defence policy in line with his plan for France's reconstruction as one of the world's leading nations. Thus, on 3 November 1959, he addressed French officers and senior military academies by stating that for France, nothing was more important than defence. Yet, for

⁴⁶ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 388.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 390-391.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 391-392.

de Gaulle, the possession of nuclear arms was crucial for France's national security. He believed that the only way of commanding France's destiny was through the acquisition of her own nuclear arsenal.⁴⁹

The resolution to proceed with French nuclear power was taken by the Félix Gaillard government in 1957 and 1960 was set as a target date for the first atomic test. But, with de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 and the full support of the French people, the policy aims of the Force de Frappe were revised and received the highest priorities in terms of development. The French governments of the Fourth Republic saw nuclear power as a solution to boost France's military place within NATO. For de Gaulle, Force de Frappe would have a principally political task outside NATO in support of an autonomous foreign policy. De Gaulle believed that only a nation with a nuclear capability could be seen as a world leading state. He saw the development of Force de Frappe as an efficient means of reducing the opposition between the USA and the USSR since West Germany was denied nuclear technology research, thus reducing Bonn's potential leadership in Western Europe.⁵⁰

Yet in March 1958, just few months before de Gaulle's return to power, the French government concluded two accords with the governments of West Germany and Italy, which granted them the right to exchange information on nuclear research. As de Gaulle was opposed to German rearmament he warned Bonn and Rome, on 15 June 1958, that the March decisions would be cancelled.⁵¹ Yet, de Gaulle's prime foreign policy plan was to smash the US domination in the Western alliance.⁵²

Because the development of the French nuclear force was of the utmost urgency for de Gaulle and France's place in world politics, his difficult relationship with the Anglo-Saxons re-emerged when, on 17 September 1958, he proposed to the US President Dwight D Eisenhower and the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, the creation of a new three-authority directorate external to NATO which would deal with Western issues.

⁴⁹ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 279. See also B Crozier: *De Gaulle, the statesman*, p. 534.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

⁵¹ J Lacouture: *De Gaulle: the ruler, 1945-1970*, p. 212.

⁵² B Crozier: *De Gaulle, the statesman*, p. 520.

De Gaulle suggested that the USA, Britain and France could together deal with international and strategic affairs since the USA no longer had the monopoly of the nuclear arms in the West and France's Force de Frappe was well under way. De Gaulle criticized the geographical limitations of NATO in dealing with international affairs since France's main empire remained in Africa, a continent not covered by the Western alliance. Furthermore, there were complaints about American and British actions in the Far East, region where France retained some former colonies.⁵³

President Eisenhower rejected De Gaulle's request in his reply on 20 October. The American rejection was motivated by the fact that France was not yet a nuclear power. Eisenhower only promised that normal discussions on international issues between France and the USA would carry on at embassy levels. De Gaulle's request for the setting up of the tripartite body came a few days after he had secured West German cooperation in the EEC under France's leadership. In fact, on 14 September 1958, the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, on official visit to France, consented on France's terms to see the EEC advance on schedule on 1 January 1959. Adenauer agreed that West Germany would recognize its eastern frontiers, forget about a possible reunification and most importantly, his country would never be allowed to build up nuclear arms.⁵⁴

Soon after his return to power in 1958, de Gaulle sought American assistance in the nuclear field as the Force de Frappe programme had been experiencing delays and difficulties over the years. But, de Gaulle's request was rejected as it came at a time that Eisenhower had just signed the 1958 amendment to the US atomic energy legislation, known as the McMahon Act, which carried restrictions on nuclear support apart from nations that were significantly advanced in the field. One such advanced country was Britain.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, when the rapid growth of Soviet missile power by 1957 materialised in the launch of Sputnik, the security of Western Europe became a burden to Americans, as they feared that the US nuclear umbrella might fade and national claims for independent

⁵³ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal* pp. 280-281.

See also C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 397.

⁵⁴ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 397.

⁵⁵ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 282.

nuclear capabilities grow. As a result, in December 1957 Washington offered the deployment of intermediate range of ballistic missiles in Europe under American control. Britain, Italy and Turkey welcomed the proposal. As for France, de Gaulle refused the American offer as he argued that any nuclear arms on French soil must be under France's exclusive control. Other proposals on possible American nuclear assistance to France followed, but all of them were rejected by de Gaulle, as he believed in French nuclear independence.⁵⁶

As soon as August 1959, de Gaulle came up with a way of resolving the Algerian problem. The conflict extracted heavy political and economic costs and if not resolved rapidly, France would be the greatest loser. The only resolution, so it seemed, was to grant independence to Algeria. Thus, on 16 September he publicly announced to the French people that Algeria was to be given either total independence, incorporation with France or some form of alliance. The Algerian provisional government, formed in September 1958, opted for independence as the only way out.⁵⁷

Following his return to power in June 1958, de Gaulle's reputation increased but political circumstances were still fluid. Nevertheless in February 1960, immediately following the event of the 'barricades' in Algiers, 74 percent of the French population declared itself 'satisfied' with de Gaulle as their leader. The Algiers barricades was the name given to the week of uprising that French settlers led by French Generals in Algeria organised as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction with de Gaulle's decision to grant independence to Algeria whatever the cost.⁵⁸

The constitution of the French Fifth Republic was expressly designed to circumvent legislative stalemate, according particular lawmaking powers to the government, led by the Prime Minister. He was awarded exceptional means to avoid parliamentary paralysis. According to Article 38 of the constitution, the government could legislate by decree and avoid ordinary lawmaking processes if it had the blessing of the National Assembly and was counter-signed by the President. If the French President enjoyed a majority or

⁵⁶ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 283.

⁵⁷ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 400.

⁵⁸ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, p. 45.

majority coalition in the National Assembly, he could exercise a level of control of the parliamentary agenda due to the fact that he could plausibly threaten to discharge the Prime Minister. All of the Prime Minister's suggestions and his cabinet's programme were first deliberated in the Council of Ministers led by the President who maintained an 'effective veto' over the presentation of bill applications to the National Assembly. Due to such limitations, de Gaulle needed a majority at the National Assembly if he were to succeed in establishing France as one of the world's leading nations. Yet, the French President could dissolve the National Assembly if the need arose. Referenda were de Gaulle's secret tools in obtaining a majority in the National Assembly.⁵⁹

Soon after de Gaulle became President of the Fifth Republic in January 1959, his style of leadership was to progressively change in terms of decision-making processes. Thus, the government gradually started losing a sense of collective unity, which characterized his Premiership at Matignon during 1958. De Gaulle did not like to assign the resolution of issues to his Ministers, as he desired to be kept in touch at all times. For instance, he always insisted on reading the Paris newspapers wherever he was as a way of checking the general mood of the population. He would afterwards convey the grievances found in the newspapers to his office.⁶⁰

Consequently, the Elysée personnel became increasingly more powerful than the government. In his first Council of Ministers, there were 11 professional politicians out of 22 cabinet members. By the end of 1959, only two Ministers were civil servants or experts brought in from the civil society and the new cabinet members owned their political life totally at de Gaulle's indulgence as the latter could end their career at any time. Consequently, de Gaulle's clasp on his government was progressively strengthened, as Ministers would no longer disagree with his decisions.⁶¹

Indeed, with strong powers in his hands, de Gaulle progressively adopted an authoritarian style of government that would be criticised by all major political actors, even his government. One of the consequences of that growing denunciation would be the

⁵⁹ R S Conley: 'Presidential Republics and Divided Government: Lawmaking and Executive Politics in the United States and France' in *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 122, No. 2, 2007, pp. 260-262.

⁶⁰ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 410.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

resignation of most of the non-Gaullist Ministers by the end of 1959. Thus, in January 1960, Antoine Pinay, Finance Minister in the Debré government had to resign as he could no longer tolerate de Gaulle's authoritarian style of government as the President would be at the forefront of all major decisions taken, very often ignoring his Ministers' opinions.⁶²

In the meantime, on 13 February 1960, France became an atomic power after the first atomic device was successfully tested in the Saharan Desert in Algeria, as France did not adhere to the 1958 McMahon Act on atomic energy legislation proposed by the USA.⁶³

In March 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan visited de Gaulle in Paris to arrange the latter's state visit to Britain. In discussion, Macmillan asked de Gaulle about his frequent use of Anglo-Saxons terms in his memoirs as the British leader felt de Gaulle's growing critics about NATO's role in Europe and the ever increasing American interference in Europe's future. De Gaulle told his visitor that he believed in NATO but its structure was ill suited to the time and worldwide events. Indeed for Gaulle, the conditions under which NATO was formed in 1949 changed over time and new events dictated new approaches as far as world security problems were concerned. By 1960 the USA had no longer a monopoly on nuclear arms and France had entered the atomic club. Because the French army depended mostly on American military aid, he promised to give more explanation to Macmillan's question when the French army was set free from the Algerian conflict, as he owed his return to power to the chaotic situation in the North African territory in the late 1950s. The main part of the French army was involved in Algeria while the remaining fraction was at the disposal of NATO. Once the Algerian conflict would come to an end, his hands would be untied and he would manoeuvre freely, in particular as far as France's defence policy was concerned.⁶⁴

But, at that time he could not afford to lose American military aid. De Gaulle's criticisms of NATO were clear. For him, the US domination of the Western alliance had to be opposed, but relations were not to be broken as an ultimate safety measure. He believed that France had to develop relations with the USSR and the communist bloc. To achieve

⁶² C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, pp. 410-411.

⁶³ B Crozier: *De Gaulle, the statesman*, p. 535.

⁶⁴ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 412.

that, France had to become independent by attaining nuclear power. In the meantime, under the pretext of the still unresolved Algerian crisis, de Gaulle withdrew the French Mediterranean fleet from NATO command.⁶⁵

The Algerian conflict continued to make headlines throughout 1960. Despite the white settlers' opposition to independence, on 20 December 1960 de Gaulle announced to the French people that a referendum for Algerian independence was scheduled on 8 January 1961. As the referendum turned out to be a success, the French government and the Algerian provisional government jointly declared on 30 March 1961 that negotiations between Paris and Algiers would start at Evian on 7 April 1961.⁶⁶

Negotiations between the Paris government and the FNL finally started at Evian on 20 May 1961, despite the fact that those against the Algerian independence had made several unsuccessful attempts to kill de Gaulle. But, de Gaulle was convinced that the only solution was independence and he made this clear in his 1962 New Year speech. On 18 March 1962, the two governments had reached an agreement for independence at Evian and a day later a ceasefire came into effect. By May 1962, 300 000 white settlers had left Algeria. With the ratification of the Evian agreements, de Gaulle had succeeded in avoiding another humiliation for France after the defeat of her army in Indochina in 1954. Boosted by the positive outcome of the Algerian problem, de Gaulle would now concentrate on reshaping France's policies according to his own ideas as he had freed his hands.⁶⁷

In November 1961, opinion polls showed that 26 percent of the French population believed that France under the Fifth Republic was better ruled than she was under the previous regime. By September 1962, those satisfied almost doubled with 44 percent, whereas among the UNR electorate, the figure reached 80 percent of satisfied members. With these opinion polls in his favour, de Gaulle was certain to achieve his reforms through the referendum scheduled for the following month.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ C Williams: *The last Great Frenchman*, p. 412.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 405-406.

⁶⁸ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, p. 57.

In October 1962, a referendum to revise the constitution was held. De Gaulle wanted the French President to be elected by direct suffrage and not via parliament as it had been before. The referendum was a success and the only remaining problem was the November parliamentary elections, as de Gaulle wanted a firm majority to effectively rule the country. Once again de Gaulle obtained a clear majority and for the next five years there would be no possibility of any vote of censure on the de Gaulle cabinet. He also had the power to choose his Prime Minister. He was now in full control of France and ready to apply his ideas.⁶⁹ Michel Debré, Prime Minister between 1959 and 1962 was replaced by Georges Pompidou. According to the constitution, the President was chair of all defence councils. The Franco-South African military involvement was the responsibility of the Pompidou government during the 1960s.⁷⁰ But, how did de Gaulle succeed in obtaining constitutional changes just a few years after his unexpected return to power?

Following the 1 July 1962 referendum in Algeria, a total of 102 Algerian parliamentarians in Paris, MPs and Senators alike came to an end. This situation slightly reinforced the government majority in the National Assembly. However, tension between parliament and the government existed and on 16 July, the government escaped another censure motion by a narrow majority under the pretext of the National Assembly's opposition to the Force de Frappe policy.⁷¹

With the lasting tension between the executive and the parliament characterised by several censure motions, it became apparent for de Gaulle that the 1958 constitution did not grant enough foundation for that strong State which France required in particular. He believed that for the President to have maximum power, he had to be elected by the majority of the population. As the 1958 constitution did not provide a simple procedure to make such an important constitutional change, de Gaulle's wish encountered a strong and traditional anti-plebiscite stand in the National Assembly and the Senate.⁷²

⁶⁹ Lord Gladwyn: *De Gaulle's Europe or Why the General says No*, pp. 75-76.

⁷⁰ O Brachet *et al*: *La France militarisée*, p. 53.

⁷¹ A Werth: *De Gaulle, a Political Biography*, p. 291.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 292.

With numerous signs of parliamentary resistance to the constitutional change, de Gaulle kept a low profile on the issue until August 1962 when an unexpected event would help him to declare his intentions. On 22 August, de Gaulle escaped an assassination attempt orchestrated by the Organisation Armée Secrete (OAS) commando that included ex-soldiers who fought in Indochina, Korea and Algeria and other activists who were not happy with de Gaulle's anti-colonial stand. Helped by the popular sympathy that the assassination attempt brought all over France, de Gaulle declared on 12 September 1962 that he would propose a referendum approving his plan for having the President elected by universal suffrage. As expected, the proposal brought an important crisis between the traditional anti-Gaullist parties and the President.⁷³

Despite strong opposition from the traditional anti-Gaullist parties, the French population gave significant support to de Gaulle's constitutional changes during the October referendum and the November general election. With these victories, de Gaulle got the opportunity he always wanted to reinforce his Fifth Republic, with diplomatic and military policy firmly held by the President.⁷⁴

The November election almost gave de Gaulle a majority in the National Assembly with a total of 229 seats out of 465 whereas for the anti-Gaullist parties, it was a disaster, as most of their leaders were eliminated from parliament. For de Gaulle, the old Assembly was trouble in its challenge to his foreign and military policy, as the old parties were, mostly, 'European' and 'Atlantic' in attitude and highly critical of de Gaulle's Force de Frappe.⁷⁵

The most important international reaction to the Gaullist victory came from the USA, where it was felt that the crushing defeat of the anti-Gaullist parties would not help the Atlantic Alliance. They came to recognise that de Gaulle would now become the exclusive master of France's foreign policy, and might not prove to be an unproblematic collaborator. From that time, de Gaulle's foreign policy was, undeniably, to assume many roles in the course of the next few years. De Gaulle believed that the time of the two big

⁷³ A Werth: *De Gaulle, a Political Biography*, pp. 292-295.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 300-301.

blocs was coming to an end. He was to give France greater independence to manoeuvre vis-à-vis international politics than France had ever enjoyed since 1940 when the country's fate was in the hands of the Allies.⁷⁶

Having succeeded in keeping Britain out of the EEC after the Rambouillet discussions with British Prime Minister Macmillan failed in 1962, de Gaulle could now concentrate on the development of his Force de Frappe, independently from NATO command. Yet, in the same year, Britain agreed to the proposal of US President, J F Kennedy, for the use of Polaris missiles by British nuclear submarines as part of the NATO nuclear umbrella for Western Europe. The same facilities were offered to de Gaulle, who obviously refused, as by that time France did not possess any nuclear submarines. In January 1963, de Gaulle's France policy started to bear fruit, as he had succeeded in preventing London's entry in the Common Market while signing the Franco-German Treaty. By mid-December 1963, de Gaulle had freed his hands.⁷⁷

Throughout the 'Algerian' phase of Gaullism, between 1958 and April 1962, de Gaulle was perceived as the leader inculcating national unity and was frequently supported by six or seven French people out of ten with only two against his leadership.⁷⁸ Gaullism was in a better place than any other political force and all Gaullists had "a precise image of France' from the bottom to the top level of the party. By 1962, despite the loss of an empire after most colonies had achieved independence, Gaullism was able to revive a sense of pride among French people and a taste for French grandeur.⁷⁹

According to the 1958 constitution, the semi presidential constitutional arrangements gave the French President and his Prime Minister equal authority in their relevant spheres of influence. The President was perceived as the "arbiter of republican institutions" and played the main role in foreign affairs, whereas the Prime Minister was head of the government and in charge for guiding the lawmaking process. Despite the clear understanding of prerogatives of each of the two heads of the French executive, de Gaulle would use his official, constitutional powers and informal privileges to establish

⁷⁶ A Werth: *De Gaulle, a Political Biography* pp. 301-302.

⁷⁷ Lord Gladwyn: *De Gaulle's Europe or Why the General says No*, pp. 76-77.

⁷⁸ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, p. 45.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

significant precedents throughout his presidency. For instance, he controlled cabinet council agendas and dismissed Prime Ministers at will, despite having no official power to do so. He wanted to ensure presidential dominance over Prime Ministers.⁸⁰

During WW II, General de Gaulle had difficult relationships with his Western Allies namely Winston Churchill and F D Roosevelt who did not want to recognise him as the legitimate leader of the Free French. In fact, London and Washington kept strong relations with the Vichy government of Marshal Pétain until 1943 when it became clear that de Gaulle had become an essential ally for France and Europe. As a result, throughout the war years, de Gaulle had to deal with the Anglo-Saxon opposition to his ideas about France's role after the war. De Gaulle was not to forget the way he had been treated by the Anglo-Saxons when he would return to power in 1958. Nevertheless, at the liberation of Paris in 1944, de Gaulle became head of the Provisional French government, a position that he kept until January 1946 when he was forced to resign. His resignation was a result of a lack of political backing as he did not belong to a political party that could back him in reforms that he felt were crucial for France's recovery, nationally and internationally. Yet, during his first 18 months in power, communists and socialists were the main political figures in France and would remain so until 1958. On the world stage, de Gaulle was always left aside by London, Washington and the USSR who did not consider France as a winning power of WW II. As a result, decisions affecting France's future were mostly taken without consulting de Gaulle.

During de Gaulle's self-imposed political retirement, he attempted to build a new political movement known as the RPF, but it collapsed in the early 1950s. Yet, between 1955 and early 1958 the successive Fourth Republic governments failed to deal with the growing difficulty in Algeria where the army became politically involved as the conflict weakened French authority in Algeria and in France herself. By early 1958, the French army in Algeria threatened to take control of the country if the situation continued to deteriorate. By that time, all political and military figures agreed that there was only one person that could save France.

⁸⁰ R S Conley: 'Presidential Republics and Divided Government: Lawmaking and Executive Politics in the United States and France' in *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 122, No. 2, 2007, p. 258.

Between 1958 and 1962, de Gaulle achieved numerous successes among which were a new and strong constitution with a strong executive authority for France, the development of a nuclear Force de Frappe as a means to regain France's lost place as one of the main international powers, and a positive outcome of the Algerian War. De Gaulle's return to politics also coincided with the collapse of a communist-socialist domination of France's political stage. He was in a position to resist any Anglo-Saxon hegemony in Western Europe as he did not forget the treatment that he received from London and mainly Washington. This opposition to the Anglo-Saxon dominance was a way of assuring France's independence from either the West or the East. By the end of 1962, de Gaulle had secured France's sovereignty on the world stage. He was able to conduct France's international policy independently from his Western partners.

Indeed, de Gaulle had achieved significant successes with the first French successful Atomic bomb detonation, the outcome of the Algerian War and mostly the revision of the constitution that would grant him with indisputable power as he defeated his political opponents. Thus, de Gaulle rapidly demonstrated his ability to oppose American decisions over international issues, especially on France's foreign and military policy.

As the early successes of Force de Frappe were partly made possible through the supply of South African uranium, de Gaulle could not risk losing such a crucial partner at the time that France's nuclear programme was urgent. Consequently, as he was against a world democracy defined by Washington and London, de Gaulle was to make sure that French interests had to come first. Thus, South Africa's minerals, especially uranium and gold, would be perceived by de Gaulle as key elements that would enable him to follow his independent foreign policy vis-à-vis the big powers, especially the USA. In return, when Pretoria faced the first UN arms ban in 1963, France would simply decide not to follow the American-led decision against the apartheid government. On the contrary, he would develop relations with South Africa through French military supplies that would later offer huge trade opportunities for French firms throughout the Gaullist presidencies. Paris' decision to supply arms to South Africa could be seen as the first example of France's independent foreign policy vis-à-vis world issues and what was to come with de Gaulle's opposition to Anglo-Saxon world hegemony.

Chapter 3

France and South Africa's military capability, 1958-1974: The De Gaulle and the Pompidou presidencies.

This chapter focuses on the increasing development of the French military assistance to South Africa under General de Gaulle and his successor, Georges Pompidou. It also looks at the real motives that led the French government decide to supply South Africa with military material despite the international pressure that the country faced at the time. The chapter makes an inventory of the French military materials used by the South African Defence Force during the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s as well as France's role in the building of Pretoria's national defence industry from the 1960s.

3.1 The International pressures on South Africa leading to the first UN embargo of 1963.

During WW II, South Africa once more stood by Britain, the Allies, and its wartime Prime Minister J C Smuts was appointed a Field Marshall, a key advisor to Churchill throughout the difficult years of WW II, as he was firmly in the council of Allies.¹ In 1945, as President of the Commission of the General Assembly, Smuts played a major role in the creation of the United Nations. However, his main concern was international order and securing peace and it was in that light that he supported the special position for the Great Powers, even though he had reservations about the future of the superpowers (USA and USSR). Smuts expected that Britain would take the lead in building a third world power to stand between the USA and the USSR.²

In 1945, Britain still had a huge empire, along with a small, tightly knit Commonwealth in which full attachment was confined to five states ruled by whites (Australia, Canada,

¹ H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 8.

² J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 17.

New Zealand, South Africa and Britain itself). He saw the Commonwealth as a rock on which to build order.³

Yet, South Africa kept strong ties with Western countries, especially during World Wars I and II when South Africa played an essential role by providing raw materials, military facilities and fighting in the African theatre and Western Europe, especially in France. For instance, on 8 May 1942 the British troops led by South African officers arrived on Diego Suarez shores in order to prevent a possible Japanese military settlement in the then French colony of Madagascar. At the start of the Second World War, the colonial French administration of the island was not under the Allies control but under the Vichy government (pro-German). By invading Madagascar, the Allied troops restored the French administration of the island in 1943 and the British troops remained in Diego Suarez and Tuléar until 1946.⁴

During WW II, South Africa played a major role in the survival of Madagascar by providing fuel, coal, food, cigarettes, etc when France could no longer supply such products. The end of WW II in 1945 saw the return of France into Madagascar's economy as its major trading partner to the detriment of South Africa, which saw its trade position quickly lost by the end of 1949. The South African infiltration into Madagascar was for a short period of time, 1942-1949.⁵

France and South Africa maintained some connections after 1949 such as through the naval military exercises that took place annually in South Africa's waters as part of the Western nations military programme in Southern hemisphere. In 1954 France and South Africa signed an air agreement on 17 September 1954 as a result of good relations between both countries.⁶

³ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 17.

⁴ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, pp. 163-64.

⁵ Government publications, Pretoria, Council on Higher Education (South Africa). Exchange of notes amending the Air Agreement of 17 September 1954 between South Africa and France, 1963.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Furthermore, South Africa had a relationship with the Free French when it embraced the training of Free French pilots during WW II at air schools in South Africa as part of the Joint training Scheme of 33 347 of Allied aircrew.⁷

Although in the post-conflict years South Africa was admitted without difficulty into the Western economic structure, political/diplomatic relationships became hesitant. The Western nations did not lead the attacks against the Union but they were already disinclined to accept responsibility by association in protecting her racial politics.⁸ In fact by 1946, South Africa's race policies came under attack at the first meeting of the UN General Assembly, when India backed a motion reproving South African discrimination against its Indian population.⁹

In 1948, the National Party, led by Daniel Malan, won the general elections in South Africa and began to strengthen the apartheid policy. This elicited strong black reaction. The new administration sought to detachment itself from its predecessor in foreign as well as domestic policies. For the Malan government, South Africa had to come first.¹⁰ While there were indications of the West disconnecting itself diplomatically from South Africa as a result of her racial policy, economic ties were being strengthened. Between 1949 and 1959 the South African economy had an average yearly expansion rate of 5.4 percent based on a broad increase in the usual agriculture and mining sectors and continuing growth in manufacturing as the government was directly concerned with the economy by controlling large parts of it.¹¹

After the confrontation between Black protesters and police at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960, in which the police panicked and killed 69 people and wounded 180, Pretoria's defence expenditure was geared chiefly to the suppression of internal unrest and the intimidation of potential insurgent movements. That incident also gave a significant boost to international action to bring an end to apartheid, a mood that intensified against the

⁷ *Paratus*, March 1973, p. 19.

⁸ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 27.

⁹ R S Jaster: *The Defence of the White Power, South African Foreign Policy under Pressure*, p. 42.

¹⁰ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

backdrop of the rapid decolonization that influenced much of the rest of the African continent.¹²

The “winds of change” were gathering momentum and South Africa needed military forces sufficiently potent to dominate the Southern African region. In addition, a militarily strong South Africa could defy the United Nations over issues pertaining to the region, and in particular South West Africa. The Sharpeville incident acted as a catalyst for the outside world’s public boycott campaigns focusing on pressuring foreign governments for an arms embargo against South Africa. In fact, the first UN Resolution (Resolution 134) came on 1 April 1960 just after the Sharpeville massacre.¹³

The UN Security Council called on the South African authorities to cease violence towards its people and to take all measures to assure harmony between the races based on equality, ensuring that the Sharpeville situation does not repeat itself; and above all to abandon its apartheid policy based on race discrimination. France and the UK abstained during that vote.¹⁴

Gradually the spectre of armed resistance by exiled oppositional movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South-West African Peoples’ Organisation (SWAPO) grew. By means of their military wings’ guerrilla actions, those freedom movements caused certain unease in South Africa from the late 1950s onwards. Moreover, these movements enjoyed exterior support, chiefly in South Africa’s neighbouring countries.

The end of WW II brought a massive reduction in the strength of the armed forces and in the defence budgets.¹⁵ At the same time, within the new situation of the Cold War and internal uprising, the military equipment of the South African Defence Force became

¹² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria., File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 4, *L’apartheid et la France 1958-1973*, Congrès National Africain, p. 41. France: Relations with South Africa, 4.10.1972 – 5.9.1975.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *History of Umkhonto we Sizwe* at <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/mk-history.html> on 10 March 2006.

obsolete with the army suffering greatly, being reduced to an undersized 'Land Force' which was to remain reliant on WW II apparatus well into the 1970s.¹⁶

The South African government, worried about the intensification of the apartheid policy, did not want to pay attention to the international community's recommendations. To the apartheid government, South Africa was not facing any threat that would come from Western countries, despite the Afro-Asian block pressures on the global community to force Pretoria to stop its separate development policy. Inside the Commonwealth group for instance, India and some newly-independent Black African countries were virulent towards the South African attendance within international organisations like the UN and the Commonwealth from which Pretoria was forced to depart from in April 1961.¹⁷

By that time, Third World countries, and particularly the recently autonomous African states, led the crusade to isolate South Africa worldwide. Gradually the country was ejected from a number of important world bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Economic Commission for Africa and the World Health Organisation (WHO) among others.¹⁸

South Africa's riches and the Cape sea route were key assets to the Pretoria government to sustain the apartheid policy. The finding of important gold and diamond reserves on the Witwatersrand in the late Nineteenth century and Britain's victory over the Boer republics after the second Anglo-Boer war resulted in the establishment of numerous Western companies in South Africa. Those corporations operated generally in the mining sector of which major shares were held by British and American firms.¹⁹

Throughout the 1950s in its search for military alliances with the West, South Africa initiated two defence conferences, in 1951 in Nairobi and 1954 in Dakar, which were attended by Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium, Italy, and Southern Rhodesia while the USA sent observers in 1951. Pretoria failed to get commitment from Britain, France and

¹⁶ H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 8. After WW II, the two super powers, the USA and the Soviet Union, found themselves face to face in many occasions.

¹⁷ R S Jaster: *The Defence of the White Power, South African Foreign Policy under Pressure*, p. 43.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ R Ally: *Gold and Empire, the Bank of England and South Africa's Gold, 1886-1926*, pp. 12-13.

Portugal to the defence of the African continent through an African Defence Organisation (ADO) on the same basis as NATO.²⁰ South Africa was tightly linked to Britain through the Simon's Town naval agreement, signed in 1955 and allowing a joint use of the bases by the Royal Navy and the South African Navy as well as their allies.²¹

The Simon's Town Agreement could be seen as a consolation prize for Pretoria after South Africa failed to get military commitments and obligations of Western colonial powers for the defence of the African continent against the communist expansion. The growing guerilla threats from the Black movements at the end of the 1950s led the South African government to send its officers (among them the future Defence Minister Magnus Malan), to attend and observe guerrilla warfare in French Algeria during the war for independence.²²

In addition, Britain, representing the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was responsible for the security of the Cape sea route alongside South Africa. In that position and according to an agreement signed in Cape Town in October 1958 Britain had to provide military equipment to South Africa as well as securing and controlling the shipment of Western goods around the South Atlantic and Indian oceans, preventing communist intervention in those areas.²³

Thus, from 26 September to 26 November 1960, France participated to Operation CAPEX alongside South Africa, Britain, the USA, Portugal and Nigeria.²⁴

In May 1962, another joint naval operation codenamed 'CAPRICORN', and managed by the British and French Navies, was to monitor the movement of ships in time of war between the French naval Station in Dakar and the British Station in Simon's Town.²⁵

²⁰ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 57.

²¹ R Hyam & P Henshaw: *The Lion and the Springbok*, Britain and South Africa since the Boer War, p. 230.

²² D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 178.

²³ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, File No. 1, French-British naval exercises, French Embassy in South Africa, 11 March 1961, South Africa: 1960 – 1965.

²⁴ *Kommando*: February 1961, p. 22.

²⁵ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, File No. 1, French-British naval exercises, French Embassy in South Africa, 11 March 1961, South Africa: 1960 – 1965.

The following year, in 1963, Operation CAPEX resumed when South Africa, Britain, France, Portugal and the USA took part in naval exercises between Walvis Bay and East London. The operation was aimed at studying conditions for fleet navigation via the Cape sea route in time of war.²⁶

At the economic level, as mentioned before, apart from the mining industry in which western companies had huge interests in South Africa, the country was receiving substantial financial loans and assistance from Britain as a Commonwealth member state and Pretoria did not want to lose such an important financial input from British financial circles.²⁷ South Africa sold most of its fruit, wine, sugar and fish to Britain at preferential rates. For instance in 1958, £ 12 million resulted from the buying of South African fruit and similar products by Britain, making South Africa Britain's primary trade partner within the Commonwealth.²⁸

Pretoria faced a dilemma: become a republic within the British Commonwealth or leave the Commonwealth and run the risk of losing British economic mentorship and possibly trade. However, due to the growth of its financial system after 1945 economic relations were being strengthened. From 1949 to 1959 the South African economy had a yearly average growth rate of 5.4 percent under the government direct supervision.²⁹

Therefore, at that time a South African departure from the British club would not cause an economic depression in the country, as the USA and some European Common Market states, particularly France, were willing to assist South Africa after independence. France was one of the founding members of the European Common Market alongside West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.³⁰

²⁶ *South African Digest*, 29 August 1963, p. 2. See also *France-Afrique du Sud*, Bulletin d'Informations No. 2, October 1963, London.

²⁷ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, File No. 1, p. 4, *The Republic of South Africa and the Commonwealth: Financial and economic aspects*, from the report of French embassy to South Africa, Cape Town, 16 February 1960, South Africa: 1960-1965.

²⁸ *South African Digest*, 29 August 1963, pp. 2-3.

²⁹ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 49.

³⁰ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, File No. 1, p. 5, *The Republic of South Africa and the Commonwealth: Financial and economic aspects*,

At the end of WW II, the unstable centrist French governments of the Fourth Republic sought Allies in African defence as they feared for their position all over Africa, and were increasingly stretched militarily as their best units were sucked into the war in Indochina. Yet, South Africa and France were unconvinced by the British argument that the chief effort to protect Africa should be made in the Middle East as at the time the French government still believed that territories in Africa were crucial to the strength and prestige of France. As a result, the Malan government quickly expressed its desire to upgrade its mission in Paris to embassy level and wanted France to elevate its own legation in the Union.³¹

Apart from revealing a desire to strengthen relations with France, this was characteristic of Malan's determination to emphasize the sovereign independence of South Africa from the 'British' Commonwealth. The African specialists of the French Foreign Ministry were sensitive to Pretoria's proposal. Consequently, in March 1949 the Quai d'Orsay made the decision to elevate its legation in the Union to embassy level and in June Armand Gazel was appointed first ambassador of France to South Africa. In October of the same year, Harry Andrews became the first South African ambassador to France.³²

With the increasing condemnation of the apartheid policy worldwide, France adopted a neutral stand on South African questions at the UN and made sure that the Union was unable to give a 'political aspect' to technical cooperation in Africa. Nevertheless, Paris decided to promote cultural and economic relations with Pretoria and, because of the contribution which South Africa could make to the defence of Madagascar and the other French Indian Ocean territories in the event of war, contacts between military staff were to be encouraged.³³ Armand Gazel, French ambassador in South Africa, urged the Bureau d'Afrique of the French Ministry of Overseas to capitalize on the anti-British sentiments

from the report of French embassy to South Africa, Cape Town, 16 February 1960, South Africa: 1960-1965.

³¹ G R Berridge: *South Africa, Colonial Powers and 'African Defence', the rise and fall of the white entente 1948-60*, pp. 56-58.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

of Malan's cabinet in order to boost French influence in the Union. South Africa desired friends, said Gazel, and France was 'the only other African great power'.³⁴

Throughout the 1950s, France kept a low profile on South African domestic policies as the two countries tried, in vain; to bind the other European colonial powers, mainly Britain, to an African defence pact. Pretoria's determination to stand for its apartheid policy at all costs despite mounting international pressure forced the UN to take severe actions against the Nationalists in the early 1950s.³⁵ Indeed, the international community, through numerous actions, pressed Pretoria to abandon its apartheid policy and leave the territory of South West Africa/Namibia, but Pretoria refused.³⁶

In 1961, South Africa left the Commonwealth and became an independent republic. Despite the South African declaration of a republic in May 1961, the international community, particularly the Afro-Asian countries, persisted in urging South Africa to change its domestic policy. During 1963, at a meeting of the Security Council, the Liberian Foreign Affairs Minister accused South Africa of building up a strong military force for the purpose of attacking African states.³⁷

During a conference in Addis Ababa, the Algerian President, Ben Bella, said that Africans must be prepared to die a little for the liberation of the oppressed people in South Africa.³⁸ In response to those charges, the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eric Louw reported that African leaders were accusing South Africa of preparing to attack African states and that the apartheid government was endangering peace and security in Africa, which he denied.³⁹

Thus, in August 1963, an Afro-Asian bid called for a boycott by UN member states of all South African goods and a total embargo on the exportation of 'strategic materials of

³⁴ G R Berridge: *South Africa, Colonial Powers and 'African Defence', the rise and fall of the white entente 1948-60*, pp. 62-63.

³⁵ L H Gann and P Duignan: *Why South Africa Will Survive, A historical Analysis*, p. 270.

³⁶ At the Versailles's congress in 1919, Jan Smuts, the new Prime Minister after Louis Botha's death obtained from the League of Nations a South African mandatory on the German South West Africa territory that South Africa will leave after 75 years of occupation.

³⁷ *South African Digest*, 8 August 1963, p. 6: *S.A. can cope with military threat from north*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

direct military value' to South Africa. The Afro-Asian proposition was rejected by the UN Security Council as Britain, the United States, France, Norway, China and Brazil abstained.⁴⁰ During the same meeting, Sir Patrick Dean, the British delegate, said that the view of his delegation was that South Africa had the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter and requirements which might have arisen for the maintenance of global peace and security were to be borne in mind. He also said that despite his government's 'repugnance' for apartheid, it could not support any move to impose sanctions against South Africa.⁴¹

He added that Britain had exceptional ties with South Africa – ties of kin, history, and trade – and was also in charge for the administration of the three High Commission Territories (HCT) in Southern Africa - Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. Britain had worldwide responsibilities and South Africa's geographical location could not be disregarded. Britain and the USA did not want any UN sanctions against South Africa as they had enormous economic interests in the country albeit South Africa was now independent and under rising worldwide pressure.⁴²

The South African Minister of Finance, Dr. T E Dönges, declared in the House of Assembly in February 1963 that the high level of the Republic's foreign reserves had restored the assurance of overseas investors in South Africa. At the same time, the Director of Trust Bank of Africa Limited, J S Marais, stated that new British investments in South Africa increased from Rand (R) 7.9 million in 1961 to an estimated R 20 million in 1963. During the same year, the total British investments in the Republic amounted to R 1800 million as opposed to an investment of only R 1500 million from the United States. He also added that increasing amounts of investment capital were entering the country from the USA, France and Germany.⁴³

Western powers had such great interests in the South African economy that they tried to avoid global action against South Africa's internal policy as their economic interests were fulfilled. Yet Eric Louw could also add confidently at East London in August 1963 that

⁴⁰ *South African Digest*, 15 August 1963. *Security Council: Right of Self-Defence is upheld.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, *U.K against sanctions.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 21 February 1963: *New wave of Outside Investment.*

South Africa did not need to fear threats of trade and other boycotts, because its economic and financial positions were stronger and healthier than those of leading Western countries.⁴⁴

However, by leaving the Commonwealth group and becoming independent, South Africa knew that the country could face potential international isolation should the British Labour Party come to power since Harold Wilson had already indicated that he would recommend that a boycott, including an embargo on arms and oil, be imposed on South Africa because of the country's policy of discrimination.⁴⁵

South Africans were well aware that if any change were to occur in Downing Street, this would expose South Africa to the mercy of possible enemies, especially a communist threat as well as from Black African States. Nevertheless, the South African government did not fear possible military actions from African states due to the fact that in the early 1960s, most of them, newly independent, did not have the military capability to start a war against the republic, which was the most developed country in Africa according to 1956-57 statistics released by the UN in a report entitled 'Economic Survey of Africa since 1950'.⁴⁶

The most significant menace to South Africa was the emergence of communist states on the African continent, through which the Soviets increased their presence on the continent in a way that might threaten South Africa in the future. Thus, the South African government, desiring to play a key role within the overall Western defence as well as for its internal defence, built a task force in the early 1960s. The South African Defence Minister, J J Fouché in 1961, at a dinner of the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa said that the country's strongest ally for centuries, its geographical position, was not a safeguard for the country's defence as the successful missile launchings from Cape Canaveral by the Americans, proved that distance was no longer a factor in defence against intercontinental projectiles. "In fact, American missiles launched from Cape Canaveral could reach their target in a region a few hundred miles

⁴⁴ *Digest of South African Affairs*, 8 August 1963 p. 6: *S.A. can cope with military threat from north.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 March 1963 p. 2: *Eric Louw's reply.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Index to Volume 8, 1961. p. 16: *S.A. Leads Continent.*

off Cape Town (which gave an uneasy feeling that some day, some country, not so friendly towards the West, may aim an inter-continental ballistic missile southward)”, said the Minister.⁴⁷

The Department of Defence (DOD) was authorized by the South African government to investigate completely and report both on the technical aspects and financial implications of the creation of facilities for the manufacture of ammunition for small arms and artillery pieces in use; of automatic rifles, of high explosive war heads for the aircraft rocket of which the motor was already in production, and of armoured fighting vehicles, which were aimed at ensuring maximum mobility for South African soldiers. Therefore, the steel and engineering industries were called upon to undertake the manufacture of equipment hitherto not produced in South Africa said the Minister. He concluded that the ‘time had come to commence manufacturing and to continue developing a progressively larger percentage of parts until the goal of complete manufacture was reached’. During W II, an effort was made for domestic armament production for use by the South African troops on the Allied side mainly in North Africa.⁴⁸

In 1940, the delivery itinerary from Europe was interrupted and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) was established to plan, motivate and sponsor industrial development within the Union. The same year, an Advisory Committee on Defence Force Requirements was set up to handle all affairs pertaining to the acquisition of armaments.⁴⁹

Accordingly, six armaments plants were developed during the war years, where shells, cartridge cases and bombs were domestically produced as well as the assemblage of British design tanks and numerous kinds of infantry weapons. Under the British know-how, over 5000 armoured vehicles, howitzers, mortars, ammunition and other related products were manufactured during the conflict. After 1945, the bulk of the wartime factories were dismantled, except two: the Defence Ordnance Workshop (later to become Lyttelton Engineering Works) and the Pretoria Metal Press (PMP).³⁰³ Ammunition

⁴⁷ *Digest of South African Affairs*, p. 2: *Arms and Ammunition to be manufactured locally*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Index to Volume 8, 1961. Index to Volume 8, 1961, p. 2: *Arms and Ammunition to be manufactured locally*.

⁴⁹ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 37.

Factory, which remained in action as state-owned industrial units. The experience throughout the hostilities produced a foundation for a later weapons technology expansion, as did the exploration of new minerals, first of all uranium.⁵⁰

In March 1963, Commandant General P H Grobbelaar of the SADF said that South Africa could produce internally all the armaments required for domestic use. He was speaking ‘with regard to the attitude of certain nations overseas in connection with SA’s defence policy’ and the planned embargo on the trade of arms to South Africa. He said that South Africa did not have to import arms for its domestic protection; the country desired merely to secure its strategic geographical situation in the East-West struggle. The country had to, nevertheless, become self-sufficient in the manufacturing of all arms. Grobbelaar was part of the Defence Ministry team accountable for the suggestions on the building of local arms industry. For him, the threat to the country was from communists. Indeed, communism was described particularly largely to embrace ‘any policy or system which intended to bring about any political, industrial, social or economic transformation inside South Africa by the endorsement of anarchy, by criminal acts’ or ‘which intended at the support of sentiments of antagonism between the European and non-European races of the Republic’.⁵¹

In the case of a conflict between East and West, South Africa’s policy would be to support the West. Because of its geographical location, South Africa was of tremendous value to the West and was consequently a target for the East.⁵² As a result, between 1959 and 1963, South African officials had made several trips to Europe in order to look for potential military suppliers other than Britain. For instance, in July 1960 a South African military delegation went to France and West Germany with the aim of studying suitable helicopters and other military equipment in these countries.⁵³

In 1963, the United Nations adopted a military embargo against Pretoria. In fact, on 7 August 1963, the United Nations Security Council recognized South Africa as ‘a threat to

⁵⁰ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa’s Military Industry*, p. 38.

⁵¹ R S Jaster: *South Africa’s Narrowing security Options*, p. 5.

⁵² *South African Digest*, 12 March 1963, p. 2: *Defence Chief speaks...*

⁵³ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, *Programme of a South African delegation visiting France*, 13 July 1960, South Africa: 1960-1965.

the maintenance of international peace and security'. It called on all states 'to cease forthwith the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition and all types of military vehicles to South Africa'. Britain, West Germany, the USA and France were the principal military suppliers in armament of South Africa. The UN arms embargo called on 7 August 1963 under Resolution 181 against South Africa was voluntary and non-binding on member states, although this did not prevent the French and the Italians from stepping into the void left by UK's partial compliance with the embargo. In fact, Britain and France did abstain once again.⁵⁴

On 4 December 1963, under Resolution 182, the UN Security Council called again for a military embargo against South Africa, as Pretoria did not follow the UN's precedent recommendations. During that vote, all 11 member states agreed unanimously with the UN's call against apartheid.⁵⁵ However in June 1964, the French and British governments voted an amendment to the UN embargo according to which the only military material to fall under the embargo were anti-guerilla equipment for domestic defence and not the equipment needed for external defence and the protection of the Cape sea route which was highly important for the West.⁵⁶

By that time, South Africa was increasingly isolated in Southern Africa and the country was the object of the sabotage campaigns led by political liberation movements in the region. In fact between August 1961 and July 1963, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the ANC and its ally Poqo ('We Alone'), the PAC military branch, were held responsible for 193 acts of sabotage against the apartheid government.⁵⁷ The Rivonia trial resulted in sentencing its high command members such as Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu to life imprisonment. From 1961 to 1963, bombs and sabotage became common weapons of the Black Nationalist movements, ranging from such minor acts as placing burning matches in letter boxes to blowing up power lines and

⁵⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 4, *L'Apartheid et la France 1958-1973*, Congrès National Africain, p. 41. France: Relations with South Africa, 4.10.1972 – 5.9.1975.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ E Gerdan: *Dossier A... Comme Armes*, p. 152.

⁵⁷ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing security Options*, p. 10. See also *History of Umkhonto we Sizwe* at <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/mk-history.html> on 10 March 2006.

throwing bombs into houses.⁵⁸ However, by 1964 incidents of sabotage fell from about 100 a year to ten and in 1965 domestic confrontations were practically defeated.⁵⁹

The Pretoria government, which was determined to stick to its policy despite the worldwide pressure, looked for new military suppliers in Europe. In 1964, Britain turned against South Africa. As a result, France, under the leadership of General Charles de Gaulle, saw the chance of strengthening her ties with the South African republic even further.

What were French motives in supplying South Africa with military equipment within the general context of international isolation? What were France interests in that military cooperation during the Cold War period? In other words, why did the French government choose to be involved in such a sensitive issue when the international community by the means of the UN decided to isolate the Pretoria government from the rest of the world? What was the dynamism and nature of the military relationship between South African Defence Force and French arms industry?

During an interview with the South African Secretary for Defence on 25 October 1963 in Paris, Pierre Messmer, the then French Defence Minister, responded to the question whether the French government considered that the supply of arms to Pretoria would become more difficult after any particular date? Messmer said that, in his purely personal view, the time was opportune because of other African preoccupations of that time, such as the Algerian-Moroccan and the Egyptian-Yemeni disputes.⁶⁰ He also added that the resolutions or decisions of the United Nations were a lesser consideration: France would obviously have to take them into account, but France had never distinguished itself by its obedience to, or its high respect for, the resolutions of the United Nations. In broad terms, it would be French policy to supply any materials required by South Africa for its

⁵⁸ J Barber: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 72.

⁵⁹ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing security Options*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs and Information (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9, Vol. 1, *The leader: South African Delegation to the United Nations*, France: Relations with South Africa, 4.4.1963 – 26.8.1964. After the UN Resolutions against South Africa in 1963, the SA Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, accompanied by the Secretary of Defence, Mr. de Villiers had an interview with the French Minister of Defence regarding the official French position towards the supply of arms to Pretoria.

external defence, but not to supply materials required for the maintenance of internal order.⁶¹

3.2 The boost of the French military industry and their motives to supply South Africa with military equipment by 1958.

Relations between France and South Africa did not start in 1958 with de Gaulle coming back to politics. In fact, French Huguenots were part of the white South African population that came to the Cape in 1652, and French soldiers took part in the Second Anglo-Boer War alongside the Afrikaner community. The relationship between France and South Africa had, at all times been solid, if not intimate, as many South Africans did not forget the French contribution during the Second Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902).⁶²

During WW II, the French military industry was almost shutdown by the occupying German army which, however, allowed a small production of ammunition for its own use. At the end of the war, France was naturally behind other western arms manufacturing nations such as the USA and Britain. Nevertheless, France did have in hand some key assets for the development of its armament industry just after the end of WW II: an industrial infrastructure almost intact, an economic concentration resulting from the nationalization policy of 1936 and 1945 and the will to self-reliance of General de Gaulle's interim government for armament.⁶³

After the liberation, France reinitiated her basic industries in which an independent military industry would be built via a government policy of controlling most enterprises operating on French soil. In the meantime, the French army was equipped from the surplus of American military equipment from WW II through the Marshall plan of US President, Harry S. Truman for its defence and security purposes. As such, the French were thankful for the American weapons as they were heavily involved in colonial wars

⁶¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Information (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9, Vol. 1, *The leader: South African Delegation to the United Nations*, France: Relations with South Africa, 4.4.1963 – 26.8.1964. After the UN Resolutions against South Africa in 1963, the SA Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, accompanied by the Secretary of Defence, Mr. de Villiers had an interview with the French Minister of Defence regarding the official French position towards the supply of arms to Pretoria.

⁶² F Jacques: 'The decolonization of French-speaking territories in Africa as reflected in the South African press: A case study of Algeria and the Belgian Congo' in *Journal of European Studies*, 2006; 36; 31, p. 36.

⁶³ *Les trafics d'armes de la France, L'engrenage de la militarisation*, p. 25.

in Indochina for nine years just after WW II, and by 1954, in the Algerian War; conflicts which, during those years, absorbed three quarters of the French military budget.⁶⁴

The return of General de Gaulle to French politics in 1958 boosted the French military industry. In fact, when de Gaulle became President of the French Council in December 1958, he hoped to free France from its military dependence on her Allies, especially the USA. He was well aware of the necessity to provide France with a nuclear capability so that the country would be seen as a major military power by its counterparts. With his election to the French Council, de Gaulle also became French Defence Minister for some time and the Presidential order of January 1959 gave him exceptional powers on French defence matters. From that time, the French executive had the freedom to control all spheres of life in France regarding the defence of the country. All sectors and companies of the French economy were under government control and the government could decide on their use at any time for the protection of the country.⁶⁵

Yet, at this time, only the USA, the USSR and Britain had nuclear weapons. De Gaulle decided to reorganize the French production of armaments in such a way as to make France militarily independent of the West and enable her to play a major role in the arms race as well as in international politics within the new context of the Cold War and the emergence of an Afro-Asian bloc. For him, only a country with nuclear power could be a proper world power, having adequate independence of manoeuvre and suppleness with regard to a superpower albeit still associated with it. Nuclear power would make France the showpiece of a “European” Europe, and she could decrease the existing superpower duopoly.⁶⁶

Between 1959 and 1962, the supply of French armaments started to increase rapidly within the international market. From French Francs (FF) 450 million in 1959, they reached FF 1150 million in 1960 and in 1961-1962; French weapons generated an amount of FF 1700 million.⁶⁷ Thus, in 1961 de Gaulle’s government established the

⁶⁴ *Les trafics d’armes de la France, L’engrenage de la militarisation*, p. 26.

⁶⁵ O Brachet *et al* : *La France militarisée*, pp. 50-51.

⁶⁶ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed by): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 280.

⁶⁷ O Brachet *et al* : *La France militarisée*, pp. 50-51.

Délégation Ministérielle pour l'Armement (DMA) with the aim of coordinating the production and the sale of French military equipment.⁶⁸

The creation of the DMA was mainly the result of the lack of a previous French policy regarding their armed forces. In fact, the three components of the French defence force were separately dealing with suppliers regarding their respective military acquisitions and needs. The French state manufacturers, the semipublic sector as well private manufacturers, faced the same lack of coordination in terms of the production and sale of their products. The DMA was the solution to the coordination of production, sale and export of French weapons by 1961.⁶⁹

The fact that France had strong political and economical connections with its former colonies on the African continent created an important market for French military industries to sell their products as most of them became independent by 1960. However, throughout the 1960s South Africa was France's main purchaser of arms on the African continent. Before the setting-up of the DMA, French military supplies to South Africa were mostly made possible through l'Office Général d'Exportation de Matériel Aéronautique (OFEMA) created in 1936 by the French government of Front Populaire. In 1961, the OFEMA fell under the DMA's control and jurisdiction, as it was now the main organizer of French armament production and exports. Apart from South Africa, the OFEMA was also exporting military equipment to Israel, Australia and Latin America.⁷⁰

What were de Gaulle's motives in supplying South Africa with French weapons despite worldwide condemnation of the apartheid policy?

During the 1950s, most of the South African military equipment was provided by the UK and the USA as part of the Commonwealth family. The only French military equipment

⁶⁸ O Brachet *et al*: *La France militarisée*, p. 34. The Presidential Order of 5 April 1961 established the DMA under de Gaulle direct orders to boost the French armament industry.

⁶⁹ *Les trafics d'armes de la France*, p. 34.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

in use in the SADF during that period were the anti-tank missiles Entac that South Africa bought in 1955-56.⁷¹

By the early 1960s, French military equipment was in high demand on the world market, especially from the Third-World countries which did not want to depend only on the two super-powers, namely the USA and the USSR, for their military needs. In fact, the French involvement in the colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria gave the French army a certain experience with the guerilla warfare as well as the opportunity for French manufacturers to improve their products.⁷²

France helped to train SADF military intelligence officers from the early 1960s and permitted South African officers to be seconded to their forces in Algeria. For instance, General Magnus Malan, later Minister of Defence in South Africa, was attached to General André Beaufre's forces in Algeria during the independence war in the early 1960s and kept close intelligence ties during the 1970s and the 1980s.⁷³

During the 1960s, France became one of the main military suppliers of South Africa. That military assistance helped the South African army fight against sabotage led essentially by the MK and SWAPO and helped prevent a potential communist attack from the newly independent neighbouring countries. The creation of those military wings was a result of the banning of the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) by the South African authorities in 1961.⁷⁴

However, French involvement in South Africa contrasted rather sharply at first glance with that in Francophone Africa where Paris kept strong relations through military cooperation agreements with its former colonies, which could get French military backing at the demand of their governments. In the first instance, South Africa did not fit into the Francophone family of nations. Ethnic and cultural ties between France and

⁷¹ D C Bach, *La France et l'Apartheid, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 145.

⁷² French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, *Afrique-Levant*, UN series No. 8, Paris Visite du Ministre de la Défense, le Cap, 12 Juin 1961, p. 4. South Africa: 1960-1965.

⁷³ R Williams: *Beyond old borders: Challenges to Franco-South African security relations in the new millennium*, African Security Review, Institute of Security Studies, 1999 [at http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/8No4/Williams.html](http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/8No4/Williams.html) on 27 January 2005

⁷⁴ Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) created in 1961, meaning the spear of the Nation, was the military wing of the ANC responsible of some sabotage actions in South Africa.

South Africa were almost nil, the slim proportion of South Africans of French origin notwithstanding.⁷⁵

The mounting tension in South Africa during the later half of the 1950s, leading up to the shootings at Sharpeville in March 1960, did not have the same impact in France, as, for example, it did in the UK and the USA. The French rapprochement with South Africa dated from 1958 when de Gaulle again came to power.⁷⁶ Even before that period, South Africa and France already had official ties, for instance an Air Agreement was signed in Paris on the 17 September 1954 between the two countries, which was amended some years later.⁷⁷ The French decision to build up an independent nuclear force and the necessity to improve the economy and modernize the industrial infrastructure brought South Africa into the picture as a supplier of gold and uranium, and as a customer for French armaments and goods. South Africa produced free use uranium and France was desperately in need of such raw material to increase its nuclear power. In fact, in 1957, Canada refused to sell uranium to France as the USA and Britain were the only Western powers able to get free use uranium from the non-communist world. At the time, South Africa and the North American producers were producing respectively 15 percent and 76 percent of the West's uranium.⁷⁸

Yet, the demonstrated fact of French political independence from either the United States or the communist block might be the reason that Egyptians and Israelis, Black Africans and South Africans, East Europeans and West Germans did accept de Gaulle as a potential friend. Yet, during the United Nations meetings, French and South African delegations supported each other regarding the Algerian War and the apartheid policy. De

⁷⁵ W J Foltz and H S Bienen: *Arms and the African, Military Influences on Africa's International Relations*, pp. 61-62.

⁷⁶ With the return of General de Gaulle to power in 1958, France wanted to free herself from the military dependence on the Allies. In fact, De Gaulle wanted to build the French nuclear force. He saw the possibility to do so through South African uranium, an essential raw material in the nuclear industry.

⁷⁷ On 17 September 1954 an Agreement between the Union of South Africa and France with regard to Air services between their respective territories was signed in Paris by (Sgd.) A. PARODI, General Secretary of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and (Sgd.) P O SAUER, South African Minister of Transport. The same Air Agreement would be amended by both countries on 22 June 1963 in Cape Town.

⁷⁸ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 175.

Gaulle himself had, on many occasions, denied the right of the United Nations to intervene in internal politics of any member states of the organisation.⁷⁹

But the diplomatic drive was accompanied by commercial opportunism. Apart from trading and financial opportunities in the expanding South African economy, there were two particular politico-economic platforms which the French shared with South Africa: a belief in an increase in the price of gold as a solution to the shortage of liquidity in the world's monetary system and the contest of the dollar supremacy on the international market. South Africa saw a gold price increase as the coping stone to its campaign for economic invincibility - the move towards South African autarchy had grown apace; a higher gold price would have left South Africa with such a strong favourable trade balance that it would have become overnight the most powerful and inviolate capital-forming economy in the world.⁸⁰

In the early 1960s, there was an international concern about the parity of the US dollar and the gold exchange standard influencing the international monetary system. Western powers were buying gold at a premium in case the dollar should be devalued within the framework of a general devaluation of world currencies against gold, which would have meant raising the price of gold in terms of all currencies. If such action had to take place, South Africa would have benefited by about £ 20 million a year at parity of US \$ 35 an ounce.⁸¹ During the 1960s and according to the terms of the gold exchange standard, all trade transactions could be made in US dollars, in British pounds or in gold.⁸²

France was playing a more complicated game, but at least for that moment, both countries could espouse the same aim. French willingness to assist Pretoria on the military field was a French policy aiming at increasing the French gold reserves as an alternative solution to France's dependence on the US dollar and the United States. De Gaulle knew that South Africa was the world's largest gold producer and, a priori, had

⁷⁹ The white minority in power in South Africa that implemented the apartheid policy in order to keep the black majority out of the decision-making process in the country.

⁸⁰ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 175. South Africa was the world largest producer of gold needed in the international monetary system.

⁸¹ *Digest of South African Affairs*, Index to Volume 8, 1961.

⁸² D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 180.

the ability to destabilise the world monetary system in such a way that French dependence on the USA would have lessened. For instance, in 1965-66 France launched an international campaign against the US dollar by asking the US Federal Reserve Bank to convert a substantial proportion of dollars detained by the French central bank into gold. At the same time, France bought huge quantities of gold on the London market so that by 1966, the French central bank had an equivalent of US \$ 5, 3 billion representing the 1/8 of the monetary gold of the Western world.⁸³

General de Gaulle's strategy of stockpiling gold was aimed at creating guarantees for France against a depression, or revaluation, and improving France's position as a global financial power against Washington ascendancy. In fact, the US financial supremacy was characterised by the dollar's position as a reserve currency and American investments in European industry.⁸⁴

Yet, both France and South Africa were intensely concerned about Britain's new campaign to join the Common Market. Once again, French opposition came from complicated motives that led de Gaulle to withhold Britain's entry to the Common Market. In fact, in November 1962, the Rambouillet discussions between British Prime Minister Macmillan and de Gaulle failed, leading to the latter's press conference of January 1963 that put an end to Britain's negotiations for membership of the Common Market.⁸⁵ But South Africa, with its largely European and British linked trading patterns, would have been even more affected by British entry than France, as Pretoria had preferential trade links with London since the Ottawa's agreements in 1932.⁸⁶

From 1961 onwards, France had moved decisively into South Africa to take advantage of Pretoria's walk out from the Commonwealth. It was typical of President de Gaulle's diplomacy that relations with the Union were becoming close despite obvious political

⁸³ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, pp. 180-81.

⁸⁴ R O Paxton and N Wahl: *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 366.

⁸⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9, Sub Vol. 1, Visit to Paris of Mr. Harold Wilson, 9 April 1965, South African embassy in Paris, France: Relations with South Africa, 18.12.1964 – 30.7.65.

⁸⁶ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8 Paris, La République Sud Africaine et le Commonwealth: aspects économiques et financiers, le Cap, 16 Février 1960, p. 2. South Africa: 1960-1965.

disagreements over apartheid. On 11 September 1961, the South African Foreign Affairs Minister Louw met de Gaulle in Paris. During their meeting, de Gaulle told Minister Louw that France would not oppose South Africa's apartheid policy.⁸⁷ For de Gaulle, it was normal and understandable that the white minority population had the right to exist and live in South Africa because they were the 'creators' of the modern South Africa and there was no Western country where they could go if ever they had to leave the African continent.⁸⁸

Yet, as far as France's involvement in Algeria was concerned, in the early 1960s South African media paid tribute to General de Gaulle's strength of character in dealing with the situation. The South African press in general saw de Gaulle as a great leader in dealing with African related problems.⁸⁹ Yet, while the English-speaking press put the attention on the historical causes for the Algerian situation, the Afrikaner community concentrated on the potential impact that the Algerian independence would have on French settlers returning to their motherland. However, both groups were worried for the future of the state and hoped that the new republic would be in a better position to counter the challenges that awaited it.⁹⁰

The French government was happy to receive external financial assistance from Pretoria at the time when the country became more and more isolated as a result of the Anglo-American military embargo of 1963. France wanted to reduce the research and production costs of their independent armament industry and they could not refuse Pretoria's unexpected call for its military needs. Also, by 1962 the Algerian War came to an end, leaving France with a huge amount of military equipment that was no longer in use in the conflict.⁹¹

The spectacular development of economic relations with South Africa was illustrated by soaring exports: between 1961 and 1965. French exports to the republic had trebled to

⁸⁷ Entretien entre le Général de Gaulle et Monsieur Louw, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de la République d'Afrique du Sud le 11 Septembre 1961, de 17h 30 à 18h 30. South Africa: 1960-1965.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ F Jacques: 'The decolonization of French-speaking territories in Africa as reflected in the South African press: A case study of Algeria and the Belgian Congo' in *Journal of European Studies*, 2006; 36; 31, p. 36.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹¹ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud, Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 173.

reach FF 434 million. South Africa thereby became the biggest African market for French goods outside the Francophone former colonies in Africa. Under President de Gaulle, South Africa and France developed strong military ties, which led the SADF to become the strongest army of sub-Saharan Africa. In 1965, the upward trend was moderated, mainly because of the impact of Pretoria's anti-infiltration drive, which hit imports from whatever origin. Pretoria did not want to rely on a few particular countries for their needs.

As Soviet expansionism was increasing all over Southern Africa and it was known that South Africa's natural resources of gold, diamonds, and other raw materials of strategic value in the manufacturing of weapons did not pass invisibly by the USSR, the general in South Africa was that people needed a strong leader like de Gaulle.⁹²

3.3 French-South-African arms transactions under the General de Gaulle's Presidency, 1958-1969.

In July 1960, another South African military mission went to France in order to study the technical ability of the French Alouette II helicopter and its armament. The mission included Combat General B G Viljoen, the Air Chief of Staff, Major Geoff Tatham, helicopter chief-pilot and Captain Connor, mechanical engineer. They were accompanied by General Robbertze, who became the South African Military Attaché in Paris.⁹³

After that mission, the South African government decided to buy the French Alouette II helicopters to the detriment of the American Bell helicopter. The French helicopter was more reliable as it set a world altitude record, for all types of helicopters, of 26,932 feet in 1955. The French helicopters were bought as a result of a decision to expand the SAAF's helicopter squadron. A number of South African Air Force men were already trained in

⁹² F Jacques: 'The decolonization of French-speaking territories in Africa as reflected in the South African press: A case study of Algeria and the Belgian Congo' in *Journal of European Studies*, 2006; 36: 31, p. 38.

⁹³ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Programme de visite d'une mission Sud Africaine, 13 Juillet 1960. South Africa: 1960-1965.

France to fly and maintain them when the first four Alouette arrived in South Africa in 1961.⁹⁴

In July 1961, a South African mission led by Defence Minister J J Fouché went to France as part of a European tour that also took in Britain, Germany and Portugal. The Minister was accompanied by Commandant General Grobbelaar and J P de Villiers, Secretary for Defence.⁹⁵ In Paris, Fouché was to collect additional information regarding armament procurement and guerrilla warfare from the French military authorities. Minister Fouché announced his government's intention of buying another group of Alouette III helicopters as well as French Mirage III jet fighters.⁹⁶

During Fouché's mission in Paris, a third contract on helicopters was signed on 11 July as well as a contract for Brandt rockets. Thus, the first arms deals were finalized during 1961, including a number of production licences for small arms, and for the Panhard armoured cars that were to become the Eland. By 1961, France sold to South Africa a number of items of military equipment including 7 Alouette II helicopter, 33 Alouette III, 60 Brandt mortars with their ammunition, and 150 000 Brandt rockets.⁹⁷ In September 1961, negotiations with the French government on the Mirage jet fighter led the South African government to sign a contract for 16 jet fighters worth £ 7, 4 million.⁹⁸

The South African authorities informed the French government their intention of obtaining loans from French financial circles for further military contracts as the chairman of the French "Banque de l'Indochine" was keen for such an operation. Even though the financial situation of South Africa was quite good at the time of the request, Pretoria wanted such a loan just for the moral benefit resulting from a loan contracted overseas.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ *Digest of South African Affairs*, Index to Volume 8, 1961, p. 6: *Alouettes for S.A. Air Force*.

⁹⁵ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Visite du Ministre de la Défense, le Cap, 12 Juin 1961, p. 4, South Africa: 1960-1965.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Afrique du Sud, Paris 23 Août 1961. South Africa: 1960-1965

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Télégramme No. 103, Pretoria, le 19 Septembre 1961 Ambafrance.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Télégramme No. 104/105, Pretoria, le 19 Septembre 1961, Ambafrance.

The South African government wanted to make sure that they could count on French financial circles for future military purchases, as at the time, the country was only newly independent with a fragile economy. Unfortunately, France rejected such proposition but was keen to study the usual conditions of loan insurance under which they were selling their military equipment to South Africa.¹⁰⁰

As a result, military deals between South Africa and France were finalised through French financial circles, especially French banks. For example, the purchase by South Africa of 16 Mirage jet fighters and 600 Panhard armoured cars was made possible by the loan obtained from “la Banque de l'Indochine” by the South African authorities. In the meantime, several South African official missions in France in connection with military purchases were already taking place.¹⁰¹

The Algerian War (1954-1962), which was also taken up by the UN General Assembly resulted in the long-standing French policy of ‘preventing the United Nations from interfering in the internal affairs of a state using the pretext of safe guarding human rights’. On the basis of this thinking, France did not uphold the UN’s rights to deal with the apartheid policy of South Africa or the Namibian question. This anti-UN intervention trend continued up to the mid-1970s.¹⁰²

The French distinction between weapons for external defence and anti-guerrilla weapons was made before the 1963 embargo, in the Presidential circular of 10 September 1962. In the first article of the circular, the French President was the chairman of the defence councils. The Prime Minister had to make sure of the effective execution of the guidelines developed by the President of the Republic in defence council. Under the leadership of the Defence Minister, the Secretariat of Defence was the most important organ in charge of implementing the presidential directives as well as coordinating civil activities required for a dynamic defence policy in France. Therefore, to the detriment of

¹⁰⁰ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Télégramme No. 174, Paris, le 28 Septembre 1961, Ambafrance.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Télégramme No. 117 / 120, Pretoria, le 9 Octobre 1961,

¹⁰² *La France et l'O.N.U.*, p. 325.

the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister's attributions were increased due to the fact that French armed forces were under his command.¹⁰³

Thus, the French policy regarding the export of military equipment to South Africa was justified for two reasons: to prevent the supply of military equipment that could be used for its internal defence policy and to provide South Africa with the necessary equipment that it needed for its external defence. As such, the French government allowed the supply of spare parts, munitions or completion of arms already delivered as well as the supply of heavy and modern military equipment such as tanks, anti-tank artillery, heavy mortars, heavy artillery, jet air fighters with their armaments, reconnaissance and transport aircraft and naval equipment to South Africa.¹⁰⁴

Like the UK, France abstained from voting on the first UN resolution of 1963, but adhered to the 1964 resolution with the proviso that the voluntary embargo should cover only weapons for anti-guerrilla warfare; that were mortars, light machineguns, grenades and napalm bombs. Production under licence of all these had already begun in South Africa.¹⁰⁵ In June 1963, prior to the UN embargoes against Pretoria, the South African embassy in Paris received General Pierre Fay, the managing director of OFEMA, the French official organisation responsible for the sales and export of aviation material, who was going to South Africa for a short business visit.¹⁰⁶

The visit of the French official was to warn the South African ambassador about a possible French prohibition on the supply of all forms of military equipment with regard to the possibility of the UN sanctions against South Africa. General Fay said to the ambassador that it was generally felt in French circles that the nature of the prohibition imposed by the United Nations on the supply of arms might be of so severe to a degree that it would not be possible for France to evade or disregard these without herself

¹⁰³ O Brachet *et al*: *La France militarisée*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁴ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Ventes de matériels d'armement à l'Afrique du Sud, Paris, le 22 Mars 1965, South Africa: 1960 – 1965.

¹⁰⁵ *Digest of South African Affairs*, Index to Volume 7, 1960, p. 13, French armoured cars to be built in South Africa. The French armoured car Panhard will be built in South Africa under licence for the South African Defence Force according to Defence Minister, J J Fouché.

¹⁰⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9, Vol. 1, Military purchases from France, South African embassy, 28 June 1963, France: Relations with South Africa, 4.4.1963 – 26.8.1964.

incurring sanctions or censure. General Fay added that he had however received an assurance “ from the highest possible source” that France would carry out and complete any contracts to which the French government, or French manufacturers with the approval of the government, had committed themselves prior to the United Nations measures in question: “ what France has signed, France will honour”.¹⁰⁷

In these circumstances General Fay advised, as a matter of the utmost urgency and importance, that the South African government should sign with the French manufacturers a series of letters of intention covering all foreseeable military requirements for the next few years. For him, such letters of intention would have to contain a material consideration in order that they should have full contractual force; he said it would be necessary, for example, to specify quantities and types required and to provide for a smaller percentage of payment (one percent) on account General Fay emphasized that it was of essential importance to South Africa to make an overall assessment of its military requirements from France for the next few years, and to sign letters of intention before September 1963. He told the South African ambassador that he would repeat his proposals to the South African military authorities during his forthcoming visit in South Africa. As a result, South Africa had to place substantial orders and propose placing a considerable number of additional orders from France as requested by General Fay.¹⁰⁸

In fact, in completion of the intensive discussions conducted over the period 14 to 25 October by J P de Villiers, Secretary for Defence accompanied by J P Coetzee, Director of Defence Ordnance Production, with senior officials of the French Ministry of Defence and with the leading manufacturers of munitions in France, it was considered that the attitude of the French government regarding future purchases of armaments should be established at the highest authoritative level. Thus on 25 October 1963, de Villiers and

¹⁰⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9, Vol. 1, Military purchases from France, South African embassy, 28 June 1963, France: Relations with South Africa, 4.4.1963 – 26.8.1964.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Coetzee accompanied by the South African Chargé d’Affaires paid a visit to P Messmer, the French Defence Minister.¹⁰⁹

During the meeting, Messmer said that the French government was well disposed towards South Africa and would do everything possible to facilitate orders for military materials placed by South Africa. He also said that the French government was nevertheless obliged to take other considerations into account. The major consideration was its relation with the ex-French colonies of Africa. The resolutions of the United Nations were not a determining factor. French policy regarding military supplies to South Africa did not hinge on any particular date. Each order received, whatever date, would be considered on its merits in the light of prevailing circumstances.¹¹⁰

Broadly speaking, France would raise no objection whatsoever to supply at any time materials required for South Africa’s external defence. Orders of materials capable of being used for the maintenance of internal security would in each case be examined on their merits.¹¹¹ Consequently, the French ‘embargo’ explicitly did not cover weapons for conventional warfare, needed to defend the country against a foreign invasion, that were: aircraft, armoured cars and naval equipment, and it did not cover replacement parts and spare parts for orders concluded before 1964.¹¹²

Despite the French government’s disapproval of the apartheid policy, France did abstain during Resolutions 190 and 191 of the UN Security Council calling all states members for an embargo on arms supply to South Africa. The 1964 UN Security Council Resolutions were in connection with the arrest and condemnation to life imprisonment of ANC leaders by the South African government in 1963. As a result, no major internal

¹⁰⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9, Vol. 1, Armament purchases from France, South African embassy, Paris, 25 October 1963. France: Relations with South Africa, 4.4.1963 – 26.8.1964.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Journal Officiel*, 9 August 1969.

uprisings were noticed as the key figures of the Black liberation movements were arrested and imprisoned, forcing others to exile.¹¹³

However by the mid-1960s, the chief developing danger was seen to be guerrilla raids in the bordering states as Portuguese provinces and Southern Rhodesia started to face escalating guerrilla attacks and armed ANC operatives tried to infiltrate South Africa from Rhodesia.¹¹⁴ In the meantime, the growth of the South African economy and the mounting isolation of South Africa through the UN resolutions led the Pretoria government to increase its military budget over the years. Thus the South African military expenditures rose from R 40 million in the financial year 1959-1960 to R 210 million in 1964-1965, representing an increase of more than 500 percent between 1959 and 1965.¹¹⁵

The sudden increase of the military budget in the financial year 1964-1965, increased by R 52 million in comparison with the previous military expenditures, was largely intended for special equipment and reserve stocks, mechanical transport, army stores and the manufacture of munitions.¹¹⁶

In the meantime, Pretoria's military orders placed in France between 1 April 1961 and 11 August 1964 amounted to over R 77 million. The following table gives a detailed list of arms purchased in France over that period.

¹¹³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 4, L'apartheid et la France, 1958 – 1973, Congrès National Africain, p. 42, France: Relations with South Africa, 4.10.1972 – 5.9.1975.

¹¹⁴ R S Jaster: *The Defence of the White Power, South African Foreign Policy under Pressure*, pp. 45-6.

¹¹⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 4, L'apartheid et la France, 1958 – 1973, Congrès National Africain, p. 19, France: Relations with South Africa, 4.10.1972 – 5.9.1975.

¹¹⁶ *South African Digest*, 19 March 1964: *Higher Defence Spending*.

Table 3: South African military purchases in France between 1 April 1961 and 11 August 1964

Military purchases	Prices in Rand
100 Panhard Armoured cars	3 560 000
150 Turrets with 90 mm. cannons for the Panhards.	3 268 000
27 Mirages	42 061 000
46 Helicopters	6 525 000
Rockets 68 mm. and 37 mm. SNEB	4 465 000
Missiles AS 30. & ENTAC	9 092 000
90 mm. Ammunition for Panhards	1 900 000
60 mm. C. S. Mortars for Panhards (420)	350 000
Ammunition for 60 mm. Mortar	1 600 000
60 x 81 mm. Mortars and Ammunition	739 000
750 Panhard Engines	1 850 000
60 mm. Mortars	42 000
81 mm. Mortars (60 - IND. 101 & 24 – IND. 9922)	108 000
4th Line Tools & Spare parts for Mirage Engines	641 000
2 Extra Mirage Engines	340 000
R. D. X. / T. N. T. Explosives	275 750
Armour-plating (20 sets)	14 238
Bulk import of Panhard Spare Parts	570 000
Total	R 77 400 988

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs and Information, Secretary for Defence, Pretoria 3. 9. 1964, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 2. France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, 20. 1. 1964 – 1. 2. 1965.

Over a three-year period, France had already sold to South Africa all types of military material for conventional war. However, these materials did not include equipment for the South African Navy. In fact, during that time the South African Army (SA Army) and the South African Air Force (SAAF) were the major concerns of the South African government due to the threat of a military attack from the neighbouring states. All in all, the SAAF was the major winner of the purchase campaign to France as the SADF spent nearly R 50 million for military aircraft and related equipment.

As Britain and South Africa were responsible for the safeguarding of the Cape sea route, most of the SAN equipment was provided by the British under the Simon's Town agreement signed in 1955. Thus, during the 1950s and part of the 1960s, the SAN equipment was exclusively of British origin. Yet, with the rise of the armed struggle by Black political movements in the late 1950s, Pretoria had to improve significantly the equipment of the SA Army and the SAAF, which were obliged to deal with guerrilla actions. Nevertheless, the equipment of the SAN followed the programme set in 1955 when the Simon's Town agreement was signed between Britain and South Africa.

Accordingly, within the terms of the agreement, South Africa purchased five Ford class seaward defence boats, ten Ton class coastal minesweepers, the Type 12 anti-submarine frigates *President Kruger*, *President Steyn* and *President Pretorius* from the United Kingdom in 1955-1963. Apart from the three Type 12 frigates, the SAN also acquired one Type 15 frigate, namely SAS *Vrystaat*. The President class were principally remarkable as they were the first important warships ordered and built for the SAN. Due to increasing costs, just four frigates were acquired rather than the six initially considered, while the quantity of seaward defence vessels purchased was raised to five.¹¹⁷

Additionally to the new vessels, several of the older ships were also gradually restructured locally. SAS *Good Hope* was transformed into a despatch vessel; SAS Natal was changed into hydrographic survey boat, whereas SAS *Transvaal* and *Pietermaritzburg* became training ships. The W class destroyers were also refurbished as they became outdated owing to the fact that naval expertise expanded quickly during the 1950s.¹¹⁸

By the end of 1963, the South African economy was growing at an unprecedented rate. New companies were being created and new foreign capital was entering the South African economy despite the UN calls to isolate the country. Consequently, the country was able to initiate and secure important projects by 1964 such as new military purchases and the Orange River project due to the fact that the economic situation of the country

¹¹⁷ A Du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 175 & French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294, Report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, December 1963, January & February 1964.

¹¹⁸ A Du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 175.

was globally positive. It was expected that the provisional national budget for 1964, amounting £ 425 million, would be exceeded by £ 70 million.¹¹⁹ The Orange River project was aimed at building a huge hydroelectric barrage known as the Hendrik Verwoerd barrage in South Africa, ranked fifth in the world once finished. The project would not only produce electricity but irrigations systems that would help to improve the living standards of people situated along the river and boost agricultural productivity among other roles.¹²⁰

De Gaulle's motivation to combat American hegemony led him to play an active role in promoting a policy for scientific and technical information (STI) in France as soon as 1959. At that time the government started creating organizations and commissions placed under the authority of the General Delegation of Scientific and Technical Research (DGRST), later to be known as the French Research Ministry.¹²¹

In 1962, the DGRST made public a report on document processing which was of a key significance for beginning the database industry and then, the following year, the first major policy document intended at putting into operation a national STI programme in France appeared. It stressed the necessity for an autonomous national communication system and a consistent, international approach to STI decision-making. These developments followed an American refusal to supply Paris with a computer for its atomic bomb research. As a result, in 1963 de Gaulle launched the Plan Calcul and said that it was in France's national interest to invest in erecting a sovereign research structure.¹²²

A considerable reinforcement of trade links between South Africa and France was taking place as French investors were already diversifying beyond military deals. Thus, in January 1964 the French government obtained the right to establish a satellite tracking station near Pretoria. According to the agreement signed by the two governments, the

¹¹⁹ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, La prospérité de l'Afrique du Sud, Le Cap, le 11 Mars 1964, Ambafrance, South Africa: 1960 – 1965.

¹²⁰ *France-Afrique du Sud*, Bulletin d'Informations No. 35, 1 September 1966, London.

¹²¹ S Cacialy and Y-F le Coadic: 'Fifty years of scientific and technical information policy in France (1955-2005)' in *Journal of Information Science* 2007; 33; 377, pp. 377-378.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 378.

station was to be used for peaceful purposes only. The French station was initially staffed by French scientists and technicians, who were to be replaced gradually when trained South African personnel become available.¹²³ In September 1964, the French space agency offered to train South African space scientists as a result of the agreement on the establishment of the French tracking station in South Africa signed in January 1964.¹²⁴

By 1964, South Africa was able to resist outside coercion because of its tremendous economic boom, on a scale matching West Germany and Japan. The country had greater strength to resist outside demands than at any time since the NP came to power in 1948 according to Richard H Boyce, who represented the Scripps-Howard Newspapers (controlling 19 American newspapers). He said that the South African government was firmly in power and would remain so for the foreseeable future. For him, Pretoria's armed forces were tough, well-trained, well equipped and secured against subversion.¹²⁵

The country's terrain did not lend itself to guerrilla tactics, and Black South Africans and communists alike were disorganised. Therefore an internal uprising was considered unlikely in 1964. At the time South Africa produced 65 percent of the world's gold –a time when the West was worried over its own liquidity. Hence Dr. H F Verwoerd, the South African Prime Minister, did not expect serious economic sanctions. The economy was booming and the country was wealthy enough to finance 95 percent of her own capital requirements for an indefinite time; South Africa's Cape sea route was militarily strategic to the West, and South Africa was firmly anti-communist concluded Richard H. Boyce.¹²⁶

1964 also saw the strengthening of French-South African trade ties. South African and French industrialists and businessmen were intensifying contacts to promote trade and closer relations between the two countries. FA de Villiers, Counsellor at the South African embassy in Paris, said that their broad wish was to see new industrial links lead to closer cooperation in all fields. There was a good deal of discussion between private enterprises in both countries, added the South African official. A leading French

¹²³ *South African Digest*, 12 March 1964: *Large French Satellite Station near Pretoria*.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1964: *France offers to train S. A. space scientists*.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 17 April 1964: *Why S. A. can resist outside coercion*.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

industrialist, Jacques Segard, took the initiative to create a France-South Africa Association to promote trade and cultural relations. The first meeting of the new body took place in Paris in 1964. Between 1962 and 1963, trade between France and South Africa increased by 50 percent. Furthermore, stated de Villiers, French bankers and industrialists were interested in investing in South Africa and South Africans were seeking French technical know-how. France was South Africa's best customer for wool and a fairly big purchaser of South African coal. French industrial goods, including motorcars and fashions found a flourishing market in South Africa according to de Villiers.¹²⁷

Britain's adoption of the UN voluntary 1963 arms embargo against South Africa had dramatic effects on Pretoria. In 1965 the South Atlantic Station of the Royal Navy closed down, leading to the withdrawal of Britain's responsibility for the security of the Cape sea route. Britain and South Africa had been the two powers assuming the safe shipment of non-communist ships around South Africa's coastline. Between 1955 and 1965, the Simon's Town agreement was good for the SAN. South Africa received new vessels almost incessantly.¹²⁸

The closure of the Royal Navy's South Atlantic Station predicted less happy times for the SAN. However, the British Labour Party did agree to supply military materials to South Africa on the basis of the contracts signed under the previous government. Thus, Wilson Labour Party decided to supply 16 Buccaneer jet aircraft to South Africa under the cover of contracts signed under the Conservative Party but refused to supply another 14 aircraft as part of an option obtained in the first contract. Unfortunately, one Buccaneer crashed on its way to South Africa leaving the country with a total of 15 jet aircraft for the SAAF.¹²⁹

In order to make South Africa as far as practicable independent of foreign sources of supply, good progress was made with the domestic production of munitions. The expenditure for 1964-65 under this title was estimated at R 33 002 500 compared with the

¹²⁷ *South African Digest*, 17 April 1964: France: *S. A. seeks closer business ties*.

¹²⁸ H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 81.

¹²⁹ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Ventes de matériels d'armement à l'Afrique du Sud, le 22 Mars 1965, South Africa : 1960 – 1965.

spending of R 315 225 during the financial year 1960-61. Every effort was being made to launch a well-trained SADF within the physical and financial resources of the country, equipped with modern conventional weapons and supported as much as possible by locally produced arms and ammunition.¹³⁰

As a result, South Africa decided to build a national defence industry by creating an Explosive and Ammunition Company in Cape Town as well as an Aircraft Industry near Johannesburg aiming at building under licence 200 Macchi aircraft and to maintain all types of aircraft in use in the SAAF. That decision followed the decision of South Africa's traditional military suppliers to cut off their supplies by the end of 1963. As a result, a South African mission was sent to France in February 1964 in order to examine military equipment that the South African government intended to finance over several years. The South African mission was particularly interested in Daphne class submarines, Bréguet Atlantique aircraft and air-to-ground Masurca missiles.¹³¹

Because the Bréguet Atlantique was a NATO aircraft, the USA imposed their veto on the supply of the aircraft to South Africa. In fact, when Minister Fouché paid a courtesy call to the French Defence Minister on 17 June 1964, the latter mentioned that he and the French Foreign Minister had posed the question a few days previously to the Americans. The reply was "no", and the Americans clearly indicated that they were not prepared to change their policy with respect to an arms embargo on South Africa. The attitude of the United States government was formally communicated during a meeting of the relevant NATO Committee on 8 July 1965.¹³²

In terms of the external defence policy, South Africa faced a growing military threat as the Southern African region was targeted by rebellious movements with some help from communist countries. The reinforcement of the Chinese presence in Tanzania, the persistent troubles in Malawi and above all the deterioration of the politico-military

¹³⁰ White Paper on Defence, 1964-65, p. 4.

¹³¹ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Ventes de matériels d'armement à l'Afrique du Sud, le 22 Mars 1965, South Africa: 1960 – 1965. See also H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 81.

¹³² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9, Sub. Vol. 1, Bréguet-Atlantique, Pretoria, 21.7.65, France: Relations with South Africa, 18.12.64 – 30.7.65.

situation in Mozambique attracted Pretoria's special attention. Even though South Africa was not directly threatened by the trouble in Mozambique, Pretoria did not want to let the situation deteriorate dangerously in the Portuguese province, which was situated only 300 km away. Moreover, at the beginning of troubles in the early 1960s in Mozambique and elsewhere in the region, military authorities were well aware of the potential danger that the country faced. For instance, it was reported that Tanzania was receiving huge military supplies from communist countries. The South African defence policy took into account such threats.¹³³

Concurrently, the military activity of Mozambican rebels intensified, leading to heavy clashes between the Portuguese troops and the rebels and Portugal had to recognise that the situation was becoming uncontrollable.

In terms of its internal defence policy for which the Police were responsible, South Africa was already producing small arms and munitions through licences obtained via European countries like Belgium since WW II. In that regard, Defence Minister Fouché decided in 1963 to establish a programme aiming at locally producing 92 types of munitions and expanding the existing small local military industry. At the same time the instruction of officers and non-commissioned officers continued at a high pace. For the year 1962 alone, 500 officers and non-commissioned officers went overseas for their instruction.¹³⁴ Generally speaking, the technical level of the SADF was maintained at the level that was fixed in 1961 through several visits, connections and special missions as well as exchanging Military Attachés with foreign countries.¹³⁵

Between 1961 and 1965 the South African government obtained licences for the production of French Panhard armoured car and its 90 mm guns, the 60 and 81 mm mortars, explosives for 37 rockets and 60 and 90 mortar shells. In April 1965, Defence Minister Fouché said that as far as military matters were concerned, South Africa was not

¹³³ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, March 1965.

¹³⁴ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Exposé au Parlement du Ministre de la Défense, Le Cap, le 28 Mars 1963, South Africa : 1960 – 1965.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

segregated from the rest of the world and added that at that time the country had 120 licences to manufacture various modern weapons locally and had already received the blueprints to produce these arms.¹³⁶ In June of the same year, Fouché went to Paris to attend an air show sponsored by the OFEMA, the Union Syndicate of Aeronautical and Space Industries of France as their guest. Fouché was accompanied by Commandant General Grobbelaar, Admiral Bierman from the SAN and de Villiers, Secretary for Defence.¹³⁷

In terms of the French military technical assistance to South Africa, three agreements were signed between the two countries. The first one was between the French company Sud-Aviation and Bonuskor Development Corporation Ltd for the establishment of an aeronautic industry in South Africa. The South African government was interested in such an industry since the SAAF would become an important client of it. In fact, Dr. Diederichs, the South African Minister of Economic Affairs said that certain problems experienced with the maintenance services of aircraft and aircraft equipment of the SAAF could be solved by the industry. He also added that apart from the manufacturing and maintenance services which the industry would undertake for the government, it would also enter allied manufacturing fields to strengthen its financial position and reduce its cost structure, including the cost of its services to the government, so that it should be able, in the course of time, to reduce the charge for these services.¹³⁸

The second agreement concerned the training in France of South African technicians in the field of operational military research. The last agreement was between the South African government and the French company Thomson-Houston for the training of South African technician-engineers in the field of research, test and production of rocket launchers.¹³⁹

In January 1965, South Africa ordered 164 Matra R530s for the Mirage and the Buccaneer jet fighters. In March of the same year South Africa ordered another 8 Mirage

¹³⁶ *South African Digest*, 16 April 1965: *Cordial Relations help South Africa to Buy Modern Arms*.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 18 June 1965: *Minister Leaves for Paris*.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5 March 1965: *Details of Aircraft Industry Disclosed*.

¹³⁹ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Ventes de matériels d'armement à l'Afrique du Sud, le 22 Mars 1965, South Africa : 1960 – 1965.

III E and 4 Mirage III R amounting over FF 140 million as well as spare parts and accessories of over FF 30 million. South Africa placed also a buying option for another 16 Mirages before the end of 1965.¹⁴⁰

Table 4 gives a detailed list of arms purchased in France over that period.

Table 4: South African purchases and commands of military equipment from France between 1 January and 30 September 1965.

Military Purchases or ordered	Prices (In French Francs)
12 Mirages III E and III R	140 236 920
3 Mystère 20 Aircraft	18 505 665
164 Matra R 530 Missiles	63 735 710
AS 30 Nord-Aviation	34 188 000
Accessories and Spare parts	
GAMD and SNECMA	19 086 595
Sud-Aviation	1 928 917
Nord-Aviation	436 310
Matra	858 256
Contract Thomson-Houston for the development of air-to-ground missiles	140 000 000
Total	FF 418 976 373

Source: Report of the Military Attaché in Pretoria, Annexe K, Imports from France from 1 January to 30 September 1965. Ministère des Armées, Archives Historiques, Box No. 14 S 294, Paris, France.

During 1965, South Africa made major purchases and orders from France including 3 Daphne class submarines for the SAN. It was the first time that South Africa ordered such military naval equipment from a country other than Britain. The purchase of new aircraft and helicopters continued with the acquisition of Transall troop transports and Super Frelons which were the biggest helicopters in use at that time on the world market.

¹⁴⁰ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294, Report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, January, March 1965.

However, due to some financial difficulties faced by the SADF at the time, the firm order for the three Daphne class submarines was postponed. In fact, the funds available at the time could only finance one submarine while the other two were conditioned by possible loan facilities from the French companies in charge of building the vessels.¹⁴¹

The year 1966 brought a change at the South African Defence Ministry. A cabinet reshuffle took place in the South Africa government with the appointment of P W Botha as the new Defence Minister. Botha was Minister of Coloured Affairs and Community Development in the previous cabinet. The same year, Hendrik Verwoerd was killed and replaced by Balthazar Johannes Vorster as the new South African Prime Minister. The South African government faced three major concerns regarding its regional defence policy. The renewed rebel activity in Mozambique, the possible crisis in Rhodesia and the South West African problem were main concerns of the South African military circles.

Regarding the South West African issue, the UN withdrew her tutelage mandate on South West Africa from South Africa. But Pretoria did not acknowledge that decision at all.¹⁴² In terms of new military acquisitions, South Africa ordered four coastal radars from the French company Thomson-Houston for the SAN. The four coastal radars were to be installed at Simon's Town, Strand, Vredenburg and East London.¹⁴³ The official purchase of the 16 Super Frelon helicopters from the French government was only made public by Pretoria on 30 September 1966 by an official spokesman. He also reported that about 20 South African officers and technicians were already training in France for the use of the Super Frelon helicopter for a three-month period.¹⁴⁴

In March 1966, de Gaulle announced that he intended to remove all French armed forces from NATO commands and obliged the removal from French land all NATO bases and installations including its command center, which was situated just out of Paris. De

¹⁴¹ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Annexe K, Imports from France, September 1965.

¹⁴² *Le Monde*, 6 November 1969.

¹⁴³ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Imports from France, March 1966.

¹⁴⁴ *Le Monde*, 1 October 1966. See also *France-Afrique du Sud*, Bulletin d'Informations No. 38, 1 December, London.

Gaulle's decision to shed military commitments with his NATO allies and to press on with his campaign of ridding Europe of American leadership was the culmination of the French-American controversies over nuclear policy and the role of NATO.¹⁴⁵

In April 1967, P W Botha accompanied by SADF Commandant General R C Hiemstra and Vice-admiral H H Bierman made a trip to France in order to finalize the acquisition of the three Daphne class submarines as well as the Cactus project. The contract for the supply of the three Daphne submarines was signed on 22 May 1967 by Commandant General Hiemstra representing South Africa and Dubigeon-Normandie Ltd, the French company in charge of building the submarines. The contract took into account the agreement entered into by the South African Defence Minister and his French counterpart. The purchase of the submarines was a result of several reports of unknown submarine activities along the South African coast. Apart from the acquisition of these submarines, the South African government also signed another contract with France on the supply of their spare parts as requested by Pretoria.¹⁴⁶

Meanwhile within South Africa, the most important organizational innovations in the 1960s concerned the setting up of new institutions to direct armaments production. In 1964, under the Armaments Act, the Armament Production Board was established. The setting up of the Armaments Board could be seen as a sign of the seriousness with which the UN embargo of 1963 was met in South Africa. Its first task was to co-ordinate the arms acquisition activities of all parties involved: the Government, the SADF, private industry and the few state factories.¹⁴⁷

In 1968, its name was changed to the Armaments Board and it was complemented by the setting up of a special production unit, the Armaments Development and Production Corporation (Arm Scor), under the Development and Production Act No. 57, of the same year. Arm Scor played a central role in the highest military decision-making body, the Defence Council. In Act No. 57, amending the Armaments Act of 1964, the tasks of Arm Scor were listed as follows: first, to take over all manufacturing facilities previously

¹⁴⁵ R O Paxton and N Wahl (Ed by): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 288.

¹⁴⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and Information (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 5, Contract for the supply of three "Daphne" type submarines, France: Relations with South Africa, 22.5.67 – 22.5.67.

¹⁴⁷ *Statutes of South Africa*, Act No. 57 (Government Printer: Pretoria, 1968), pp. 420-21.

handled by the Armaments Board; to expand such facilities and set up new industries; and to handle all arms exports and imports. According to paragraph four of the Act, the corporation was also to ‘carefully review all matters relating to raw materials necessary for the development or production of armaments, to the labour supply available for such development or production, to the rates of wages proposed to be paid and to the armaments required for export...’.¹⁴⁸

In June 1968, Professor H J Samuels, chairman of the Armament Board, representing South Africa, signed the project Cactus contract with representatives of Thomson-Houston. The Cactus was an all weather defence system against low-flying attacking aircraft developed by the French Thomson-CSF electrical engineering concern under mandate of the South African government with common South African and French funding. In December 1968, a contract for the acquisition of 20 SA 330 (Puma) and 12 Alouette helicopters was signed.¹⁴⁹

On 18 March 1969, the first South African submarine, the SAS *Maria Van Riebeeck*, was launched in France by Mrs. Elise Botha, wife of the South African Defence Minister who attended the launching ceremony as well as Mrs. Hiemstra as guests of the shipbuilding company. The ceremony was marked by the presence of Defence Minister P W Botha, Commandant General R C Hiemstra and Admiral H H Bierman of the South African side. The French Defence Minister, P Messmer was among the distinguished audience at the ceremony in Nantes.¹⁵⁰ Just few days after this launch in France, the UN Security Council once again called on South Africa to withdraw its administration of the South West African territory. In fact in 1966, the UN General Assembly had put an end to the South African mandate over the territory. During the vote, France and Britain abstained.¹⁵¹

In April 1969, de Gaulle surprisingly retired from French politics and in June, Georges Pompidou, his long serving Prime Minister was elected new French President. Indeed,

¹⁴⁸ *Statutes of South Africa*, Act No. 57 (Government Printer: Pretoria, 1968), pp. 420-21.

¹⁴⁹ French Defence Ministry; Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Imports from France, December 1968.

¹⁵⁰ *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 March 1969: *South Africa's first sub is launched*.

¹⁵¹ *Le Monde*, 22 March 1969.

Pompidou served as Prime Minister between April 1962 and July 1968 and was well aware of the arms deals between South Africa and France. His election to the French presidency came as a relief for Pretoria on defence matters as his rival to the presidency; interim President Alain Poher made it clear that if he were elected, he would halt all arms sales to South Africa.¹⁵² In any case, France was so desperately in need of foreign exchange earnings that she could hardly bear the loss of South African arms contracts estimated at a total of more than R 170 million for aircraft, submarines and defence systems. De Gaulle died a year after retiring from French public life.¹⁵³

3.4 French-South African arm deals under the Pompidou Presidency, 1969-1974.

With the arrival of G Pompidou to the French Presidency, South Africa could see a brighter future in arms trade with France. Pompidou was a member of the Union des Démocrates pour la République (UDR), de Gaulle's political party after the party's name was changed twice. Indeed, the UNR kept its name between 1958 and 1968 when the name was changed to the Union pour la Défense de la République until 1971 when the name was changed again to Union des Démocrates pour la République. Jacques Chaban-Delmas was appointed Prime Minister while Michel Debré became the new Defence Minister. These two Ministers were de Gaulle's loyal companions. During a parliamentary debate in August 1969, Debré made it clear that France would keep supplying arms to South Africa when a communist MP asked for arms deliveries to South Africa to be banned. Debré reminded the French parliament that arms deliveries were regulated by a circular from the Prime Minister in 1962, which determined the criteria for such exports. He added that on the practical side, the inter-ministerial commission that studied exportation of war material was competent to examine the permissible character of exports with regard to the 1962 instruction. The new French government followed thus de Gaulle's politics regarding South Africa with a lesser prestige, as by that time many

¹⁵² *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 June 1969: *Pompidou likely to stand by arms deals.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

Afro-Asian countries started to put more pressure on France regarding the apartheid government.¹⁵⁴

As the new French government was keen to keep military relations with Pretoria, in November 1969 a Ministerial approval was obtained by the SADF Commandant General for some members of the SA Army to undergo training as instructors in France for the operational application and further local training of members of the SADF in connection with the Cactus weapon system. In fact 5 members of the SA Army and their families had to stay in France from January 1970 to April 1971 for training purposes on the Cactus.¹⁵⁵ Even before the arrival of Pompidou into office, it was reported that France sold nine Transall transport aircraft to South Africa and P W Botha on the eve of his departure for Paris stated that South Africa had bought the French aircraft.¹⁵⁶

In January 1970, two technical French missions came to South Africa in order to present military equipment to military authorities. The first mission led by the managing director of Thomson-CSF came to South Africa to present the vehicle used to transport the Cactus defence system and also to ask the South African authorities about their precise needs for the Cactus project. The second mission came on 25 January to attend a meeting with Defence Minister Botha in Cape Town who was assisted by Commandant General Hiemstra, Admiral Bierman and Professor Samuels, chairman of Armscor. This mission came to present the defence authorities their Martel-CSF sea-to-sea missile project. It was reported that the SAN was interested in such project.¹⁵⁷ In April 1970, the French company Thomson CSF signed a contract with Fuchs Electronics Ltd of South Africa over the supply of HF radio transmitter-receivers for the SA Army.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 August 1969: *France will keep up arms supply to S.A.* See also <http://www.pluriel.free.fr/UMP.html> on 29 August 2008.

¹⁵⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 1, Project Cactus: Training of Team in France, France: Relations with South Africa, 1.5.65. – 25.7.72.

¹⁵⁶ *Le Monde*, 5 June 1969.

¹⁵⁷ French Defence Ministry; Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 295, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Imports from France, January 1970.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

The South African Prime Minister John Vorster made a private trip to Europe in June 1970 and met his French counterpart, Jacques Chaban-Delmas in Paris.¹⁵⁹ In July 1970, P W Botha talked publicly about the need for South Africa and Britain to revise the Simon's Town agreement. He spoke about the eventuality of any British government to interpret on its own the terms of the agreement. Therefore, some adjustments over the agreement were necessary. During the same interview, P W Botha was grateful to the French government for agreeing to sell to South Africa some modern military aircraft and equipment amounting to US \$ 140 million over the late 1960s.¹⁶⁰

Regarding the British arms embargo on South Africa, Sir Alec Douglas-Home Foreign Secretary in the government led by Edward Heath leader of the Conservative Party, back in power in 1970, said during a speech at the British parliament that it was his government's intention of again supplying South Africa with military equipment needed for the protection of the Cape sea route. Sir Alec Douglas-Home added that his government's decision to supply South Africa with such military equipment resulted from the Simon's Town agreement that the two countries signed in 1955. He also indicated that Britain was ready to impose its veto if ever the UN tried to make the arms embargo on South Africa mandatory. This was a clear indication of British willingness to come back into the lucrative South African military market where French industrials were making huge profits.¹⁶¹

However, as Paris faced growing pressure from Third-World countries over apartheid, in August 1970, under the auspices of the African delegates from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), France did publicly say that she would reexamine her policy on arms supplies to South Africa. The announcement followed several demands from African countries asking France to stop supplying Pretoria with military equipment.¹⁶² Thus, during a meeting between President Pompidou and his Zambian counterpart Kenneth Kaunda in Paris in October 1970, he promised that France would no longer supply helicopters to South Africa. Kaunda was an envoy of the African organization to

¹⁵⁹ *Le Monde*, 12 June 1970.

¹⁶⁰ *Le Figaro*, 12/13 July 1970.

¹⁶¹ *Le Monde*, 22 July 1970.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 28 August 1970.

meet and discuss the French military supplies to South Africa with President Pompidou.¹⁶³

In April 1971, a French mission led by an engineer of Armament Martinage (DTAT) and a certain Du Bouche (of the C I I with 6 technicians of the SETT) arrived on 13 April with 3, 6 tons of military equipment to present the defence system ATAC to the South African military authorities. And on 21 April, the presentation of the system took place before a huge audience and representatives of the SAAF, the SA Army and the Armament Board.¹⁶⁴

During the same month of April, a close collaborator of Serge Dassault, Chairman of Electronique Marcel Dassault (EMD), made two consecutive trips to South Africa where he stayed for several weeks. As a result, the French company EMD took the decision to build under licence its Mirage IIIB and F1 jet fighter aircraft in South Africa.¹⁶⁵

The decision was confirmed by Professor Samuels, chairman of Armscor, during an interview on 27 June 1971.¹⁶⁶ South Africa was to become the third country in the world to build the Mirage jet fighters under licence after Switzerland and Australia. Still in 1971, South Africa was able to receive the last two Daphne class submarines, namely SAS *Emily Hobhouse* and SAS *Johanna van der Merwe* and for the first time, a South African officer was able to command combined naval exercises with the Royal Navy.¹⁶⁷ In December 1971, South Africa finally received its first Cactus missiles from the French company Thomson-Matra. The Cactus project was financed by the South African government at about 85 percent of the total cost and the rest by France.¹⁶⁸

In 1972, no major French military equipment was supplied to South Africa as a result of the mounting international pressure on the French government, leading France to cancel a new helicopter contract with South Africa. South African authorities had to turn to

¹⁶³ *Le Monde*, 23 October 1970.

¹⁶⁴ French Defence Ministry; Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 295, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Imports from France, April 1971.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Le Monde*, 29 June 1971.

¹⁶⁷ H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 81.

¹⁶⁸ *Le Monde*, 28 December 1971.

Augusta Bell in Italy for the supply of helicopters in case France had to abide by her commitment of not supplying any new helicopters.¹⁶⁹

During 1973, Armscor did not pass any major orders for military equipments to French companies. From 29 September to 6 October, the chief of the SAN was invited by his French counterpart to be a guest of the French Navy.¹⁷⁰ South Africa wanted to buy patrol vessels and new submarines at the time. And in December 1973, it was reported that the French company Matra signed a contract with Pretoria for the supply of 50 Matra 550 air-to-air missiles called “Magic”. The same report added that Ballif of the French company SNIAS and Harel of the OFEMA came to Pretoria to sign a contract over the supply of 1500 Milan missiles.¹⁷¹

Despite the 1963 embargo, South Africa continued to lobby for formal military cooperation with NATO for the formation of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO), citing the need to protect the Cape sea route and Southern Africa as a source of strategic minerals to the West. Though it was never formally recognized by western powers, Pretoria succeeded in getting NATO’s cooperation through Project Advocatt, a sophisticated military surveillance center to monitor ship and air traffic built underground at Silvermine near Cape Town and said to be able to withstand atomic attack.¹⁷²

Silvermine opened in 1973, with radar communications and computer equipment supplied by West German, British, American, French, Danish and Dutch companies. The NATO codification system for this equipment was provided to Pretoria. Silvermine was reported to be able to monitor ship and air traffic south of the Tropic of Cancer (the southern limit of NATO’s area), in the Indian Ocean as far as Bangladesh, south to the Antarctic, and across the South Atlantic to South America. The centre was reportedly

¹⁶⁹ French Defence Ministry; Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 295, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Imports from France, December 1972.

¹⁷⁰ *Le Monde*, 3 October 1973.

¹⁷¹ French Defence Ministry; Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 295, Monthly report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Imports from France, November 1973. Report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, November 1973.

¹⁷² R Leonard: *South Africa at War*, p. 134.

linked to the Royal Navy in Britain, to the US Naval Base in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and also to Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.¹⁷³

With the mounting international criticism of Franco-South African relations, the South African embassy in Paris held several discussions with a number of influential French figures, among them Antoine Pinay, between November 1973 and January 1974, mainly on economic grounds. It was reported that the French people wished to establish some sort of multi-national European groups that would participate in South African development, an idea close to Pinay's heart. Pinay had very close personal contact with the Shah of Iran and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and, was, consequently, able to intercede directly on South Africa's behalf if requested. The French businessman had also strong ties with African Presidents like Houphouet-Boigny from Ivory Coast and he was at South Africa's disposal to talk either with President Pompidou or promote Pretoria's interests wherever the occasion occurred.¹⁷⁴

At the end of Pompidou's presidency, South Africa had already received most of the French military expertise through the delivery of modern equipment and cession of licences that were to help Pretoria face the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo with a certain confidence.

Under the de Gaulle and Pompidou presidencies, South Africa received most of its military equipment, which led Pretoria to build one of the strongest armies in Africa. De Gaulle's personal prestige played an important role in the building of strong military ties between South Africa and France during his presidency.

Throughout the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, the French either supplied or jointly developed (the latter on the basis of licensing agreements with French companies) with the South African Government jet fighter aircraft (Mirage F1 and Mirage III), transport aircraft (Transall C-160), helicopters (Allouette, Puma and Super Frelon), reconnaissance vehicles (Panhard AML-90), mortars and mortar ammunition (60mm and 81mm), rocket

¹⁷³ R Leonard: *South Africa at War*, p. 134.

¹⁷⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, Attempted Improvement of Relations between Europe and South Africa, France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962–15.12.1965.

launchers (68mm SARPAC RL), artillery and ammunition (90mm anti-tank guns), tactical radios, submarines (Daphne class) and ground-to-air missiles (Cactus/Crotale). Indeed, between 1960 and 1973 French companies were the largest suppliers of military equipment to the South African government, leading the Swedish International Peace Research Institute to estimate that, during the 1960s, some 44 percent of South African arms imports came from France.¹⁷⁵

During the 1970s, this increased to more than 50 percent of the total, and during the 1980s (the period of the government's dramatic isolation), these imports hovered in the region of thirty percent of South African's total acquisitions.¹⁷⁶ Between 1960 and 1968, South Africa became, for example, the third largest customer of the French aerospace industry (after Israel and the USA), with orders worth a total of FF 1571 million. In fact, the continuous supply of military equipment from French companies to South Africa did help Pretoria start building and strengthening a national defence industry, which would be able to take over when its suppliers were asked to stop assisting the apartheid government.¹⁷⁷

In May 1974, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, leader of the *Républicains Indépendants* (RI) and a long-time ally of the UDR was elected new French President. During his inaugural speech before the French parliament, he said that France would stop supplying military material to South Africa.¹⁷⁸ With the arrival of Giscard d'Estaing in power in France, the long lasting military friendship initiated by de Gaulle and carried on by Pompidou would have a new approach, as the Gaullists were no longer in power.

¹⁷⁵ R Williams: *Beyond old borders, Challenges to Franco-South African security relations in the new millennium*, African Security Review, Institute for Security Studies, 1999 [at http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/8No4/Williams.html](http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/8No4/Williams.html) on 27.01.2005

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Le Monde*, 3 April 1971.

¹⁷⁸ *La France et l'Apartheid*, p. 160.

Chapter 4

France and South Africa: military, trade connections from 1974 and the United Nations mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.

This chapter focuses on Franco-South African military relations under President Giscard d'Estaing at a time that the French government was more and more under international pressure, especially from Third-World countries.

It also looks at the French assistance to the South African nuclear programme with special attention to the Koeberg nuclear deal. The chapter wishes to show the importance of South Africa's raw materials for the French industry at the time that France decided to increase her stockpile programme.

4.1 French-South African military supplies under Giscard d'Estaing's Presidency, 1974-1981.

With the arrival of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in the French Presidency in May 1974, the Franco-South African military ties faced difficulties, as the new French head of State made it clear that his government would stop supplying military equipment to South Africa. In fact, since the start of French military support for South Africa in the early 1960s, it was the first time that France announced publicly her intention to cease all arm supplies to South Africa.¹

Another reason was that Giscard d'Estaing was the leader of a pro-Gaullist party, the RI and Minister in the precedent governments. Thus, Giscard d'Estaing served as Finance and Economic Minister until 1966 under de Gaulle's presidency. After being left out of the Cabinet in 1966, he was re-appointed by President Pompidou in the same capacity in 1969.²

¹ *La France et l'Apartheid*, p. 160.

² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 2, Curriculum Vitae of Valéry Giscard D'Estaing, France: Relations with South Africa, 5.6.1969 – 29.7.1970.

The RI was officially registered on 3 June 1966 by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing; two days after their headquarters were opened in Paris in front of 300 guests, Prime Minister Georges Pompidou among them. The RI were Gaullist allies since the November 1962 general election, and after de Gaulle's 1965 reelection, they started to call for a full integration of the Gaullist camp. They were aware that they represented the future as the 'younger generation' of the majority and they knew that some day they would become the most influential group in the majority.³

The RI claimed to be a party of notables, powerfully fixed in domestic political life, and it took party officials from among the social elite of the nation. Thus, the organization of the RI progressed with the liberal and elitist image of French people and political life in France. Yet, the RI launch included groups such as the Jeunes Républicains Indépendants, and the Commission Féminine. Those intermediary circles connected the masses with the leaders. After the social events of May 1968, the RI grew in number with the enrollment of more young people from all the specialized groups of the party.⁴ By February 1969, the RI had 16 federations across the 21 regions of France.⁵

With the growing support that the RI enjoyed over the years, Giscard d'Estaing announced in 1972 that he would run for the Presidency, as his party would no longer guarantee its support for the Gaullists. As a result, the RI started to detach itself from the broad majority led by the Gaullist party, which, after the departure of General de Gaulle from power, was losing credit with the French people. Thus, after the sudden death of Georges Pompidou in 1974, Giscard d'Estaing ran for the Presidency, as he was the only pro-Gaullist candidate who had a chance of victory against the Left.⁶

Giscard d'Estaing won the French general elections against the socialist candidate, François Mitterrand. Pretoria was quite relieved that Mitterrand did not win as by that time the Asia-African countries and other UN member states started to publicly criticize French-South African relations. In fact, during the French presidential campaign, South African politicians and businessmen displayed their sympathy for Giscard d'Estaing

³ J Charlot: *The Gaullist Phenomenon, the Gaullist Movement in the Fifth Republic*, pp. 10-11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

rather than the socialist candidate, Mitterrand. They were anxious not to lose a precious friend like France at a time when Britain had already elected a socialist government and Israel was about to elect a socialist candidate as well. Britain, France, Israel and Chile were at the time considered as South Africa's main allies.⁷

Despite strong Afro-Asian pressure against the French military support for South Africa during the Pompidou presidency, Paris did not stop its lucrative trade with Pretoria. In fact, having sold the necessary military licences and equipments to South Africa during the de Gaulle presidency, the French military sales to South Africa started to change their figures as the international community started to press Paris to cut its ties with Pretoria. When Giscard d'Estaing came to power, South Africa was already in possession of major equipment and licences that the country needed for its defence and military industry. The most important French-South African deal of the early 1970s was the licence agreement signed between South Africa, Dassault and Société Nationale d'Etudes et de Construction de Moteurs d'Aviation (SNECMA) on 27 June 1971, to build Mirage jet fighters in Johannesburg. The deal also ensured French industrial and technical cooperation and training of South African staff in France. The licence provided for the manufacture of the entire F-1 aircraft, including the SNECMA engine and electrical equipment. Pretoria also had the option of deciding what percentage of French-made parts to use as production experience progressed.⁸

On 8 February 1974, Robert Calley, French Minister of Armed Forces under Pompidou's government, in a circular, asked the Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces and the Chief of the Ministerial Delegation for Armament, to remind their personnel as well as all industrialists involved in the French armament industry that all issues concerning the sale of French military equipment had to be considered as extremely secret and that no information should be released on the matter.⁹

As far as the French military supplies to South Africa were concerned, 1974 saw the French firm Mahurhin sign a contract with South Africa worth over FF 40 million for the

⁷ *Le Monde*, 27 August 1974. See also Deon Geldenhuys, *Isolated States: a Comparative Analysis*, pp. 463-64.

⁸ *La France et l'Apartheid*, p. 151.

⁹ *Le Canard Enchaîné*, 6 March 1974.

delivery of 12 machines for the manufacture of ammunition calibers 7, 62 and 5, 56 for the Pretoria Metal Pressings Company. The same contract secured the supply of 100 000 cartridges of 20 mm as well as 500 000 cases caliber 20 mm HS 820 for South Africa through its Swiss subsidiary.¹⁰ In May 1974, France supplied South Africa with electronic equipment, mostly radar detectors and jamming transmitters, for the SAAF as well as hand grenades for the SA Army.¹¹ In June 1974, Michel Féron, Production Manager of Electricité de France (EDF), the equivalent of the Electric Supply Commission of South Africa (ESCOM), said that France would supply South Africa with a nuclear power station as the French consortium «Framatome-Alsthom-Société de Production de l'Industrie Electrique» was given the contract by the South African government.¹²

In September 1974, South Africa ordered 4 container ships from France worth more than FF 1500 million. Two ships were to be built by France-Dunkerque Company, one by les Chantiers de l'Atlantique and the last one by les Chantiers de la Ciotat. Each ship had to carry 2450 containers and was to be used between South Africa and Europe.¹³ And during the defence vote in parliament on 10 September 1974, it was revealed by the Defence Minister P W Botha that the SAN submarine capability was to be extended with the acquisition of supplementary submarines.¹⁴

South Africa's orders were made possible through the French Banque de l'Indochine, which gave a loan to Safmarine worth FF 1100 million to make it possible.¹⁵ In December 1974, a French banking consortium, with *La Banque de l'Indochine* as the leader, awarded a loan worth FF 160 million to ESCOM to finance the participation of the French company Alsthom in the construction of a power station in the east of Transvaal, which was supposed to start functioning in 1981.¹⁶

¹⁰ *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1976: *Que serait aujourd'hui l'Afrique du Sud sans la France* by Claude Bourdet.

¹¹ *Le Monde*, 18 May 1974.

¹² *Ibid.*, 25 June 1974.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7 September 1974.

¹⁴ A Du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 288.

¹⁵ *Le Monde*, 13 December 1974.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

In April 1975, Norbert Ségard, French Minister for Foreign Trade paid a week long visit to South Africa and was accompanied by an Airbus official among his delegation. It was reported that South Africa was willing to buy 2 to 3 Airbus A-300s that could be transformed into supply aircraft for the SADF jet fighters. During Ségard's visit, Vorster invited French industrial participation in the development of the country's railways, ports as well as the civil aviation.¹⁷ Subsequently, on 27 May 1975 the SAN ordered two Agosta class submarines of 1200 tons worth FF 135 million each as part of the modernization plan of the Navy and the order was officially announced on 7 June 1975.¹⁸

The construction of the two high-speed conventional patrol submarines of the new Agosta class was to be executed by the French yard of Dubigeon-Normandie with expected delivery in 1978.¹⁹ The acquisition of two new submarines by South Africa was part of the second phase of the five year-plan for the SAN, started in 1970 and fitting into the overall five year- plan for the SADF, and was supposed to be achieved by 1975.²⁰

However, despite the willingness of French industrialists and South African authorities to carry on with military supplies as well as other businesses, the French government was about to take some drastic decisions.

Thus, during his visit to Zaire in August 1975, the French President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing announced that France would cease the supply of continental and air defence military equipment to South Africa as a result of the mounting worldwide pressure that Paris faced since the death of General de Gaulle and throughout Pompidou's presidency on the one hand and the RI decision to break the alliance with the Gaullist majority in 1972, especially with regard to the pro-South African policy adopted by Paris throughout the Gaullist presidency.²¹

Yet, as a result of the ever growing international pressure on Paris, Giscard d'Estaing and his party chose to change the French policy towards southern Africa when they took

¹⁷ *Le Monde*, 17 April 1975.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7 June 1975.

¹⁹ A Du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 288.

²⁰ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Box No. 14 S 295, Paris, France. Report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, April 1969.

²¹ *Le Monde*, 12 August 1975.

power. While the Gaullists based their southern African policy on South Africa as a major partner if not the only partner, the *Républicains Indépendants* opted to broaden their partners in the region. Thus, with the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa, Paris saw the unexpected opportunity to get involved in the exploitation of southern African raw materials in general and the Angolan minerals in particular as the country was the only oil producer in the region and had huge mineral reserves. Therefore, Giscard d'Estaing's decision to end arms sales to South Africa came at the time that the latter had already received all arms and production licenses of French origin. Yet, South Africa alone could not guarantee mineral supplies for the French stockpile programme that started the same year. The solution was to diversify business partners for mineral supplies needed by the French industry throughout the world and Angola was one of them.

But naval equipment continued to be supplied to Pretoria as it was important for the defence of the Cape sea route and could not be used for a continental defence system. Giscard d'Estaing's decision to cease all supplies of continental and air defence equipment was a result of anti-apartheid pressures that French governments faced since the late 1960s with the Afro-Asian block as well as other UN member states and non-governmental organizations. The French decision to observe an arms embargo against Pretoria made the South African government take some serious decisions regarding arms supplies from France.²²

Thus, a Defence Ministerial directive regarding military relationship with France was set up by the Defence Ministry in January 1976. The continued supply of armament to the RSA was been seriously jeopardized by significant political pressures being brought to bear on the French government. Until early 1976, it had been possible to avert having a public declaration made by the French authorities on the implementation of an official arms embargo on South Africa.²³

The situation regarding South African contacts with France remained very delicate, and it was necessary that extreme care be exercised so as to ensure that the working relationship

²² *Le Monde*, 12 August 1975.

²³ SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. Ministerial Directive: relationship with France, File No. AMI / DBB / 1 / 3. Vol. 1, period from 31 January 1977.

was not further disturbed. In order not to prejudice the understanding at that time, the South African Defence Minister had directed that a low profile be maintained in all future contacts with French authorities, and that the SADF and Armscor were to maintain close liaison and absolute synchronization of their activities in arms deals.²⁴

The ministerial directive stated that all procurement action was to be conducted by Armscor alone, whereas military aspects were to be dealt with by the Military Attachés. In future, visits by Armscor and SADF personnel were to be strictly controlled, and only those visits of personnel vitally concerned would be considered. Furthermore, the Armscor Commercial Attaché, who was to be posted to Paris in the near future, had to be accommodated at the embassy with the Armed Forces Attaché. This would enable the necessary close cooperation between Armscor and military sections to be established, and also to ensure improved security and use of communications concluded the ministerial directive.²⁵

In February 1976, South Africa ordered two Avisos type A 69 of 1200 tons from France for the SAN. The two ships were to carry 75 seamen each and to be used for anti-submarine purposes for the surveillance of the South African coastline as well as for instruction purposes.²⁶ Thus, in May 1976 four SAN officers were sent to France where one of them, Admiral P Keene attended the French Navy School at St Mandrier (Lorient) specializing in submarine detection systems and weapons for the Agosta class submarine. The remaining officers namely Lieutenants Piet Potgieter, Ernst Lochner and Desmond Oswald (an engineer) also attended the same course but joined the A69 corvettes project, also codenamed Project PICNIC.²⁷

However, on 16 June 1976, a demonstration of secondary-school pupils at Orlando West turned into violence when the police fired and killed 23 demonstrators according to the official death toll while others put it as high as 200. The students retreated, but then

²⁴ SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. Ministerial Directive: relationship with France, File No. AMI / DBB / 1 / 3. Vol. 1, period from 31 January 1977.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Le Monde*, 18 February 1976.

²⁷ Interviews with Admirals P Potgieter on 25 April 2008 (telephone) and P Keene: 28 April-06 May 2008 (electronically).

dispersed across Soweto. It was the first outbreak of rioting and associated violence in urban townships since the early 1960s. Within days it spread to schools across the country, and to some universities.²⁸

Schools that had closed were officially reopened on 26 July, but a second wave hit. School boycotts were still in effect, and by that time learners also organized complaint rallies outside the townships. A third wave followed later as students carried out campaigns favouring social severity. Numerous cases of disruption took place. Schools reopened afterward, and the educational system attempted to recover, but between 16 June 1976 and 28 February 1977, about 6 000 people were arrested or in custody.²⁹

The demonstrations, known as the Soweto riots, were a result of black students' refusal to use Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Thus, between 16 June and 21 June, 140 people were killed and 1128 wounded according to Jimmy Kruger, South African interior minister, in his speech before parliament in Cape Town.³⁰ In Johannesburg and Cape Town, between June and December 1976, 499 people were killed.³¹ It was reported that killings also took place in Durban, Mafeking, Port Elizabeth, in other towns and Bantustans across South Africa. Between 16 June and January 1977, an estimated one thousand people died as a result of Soweto riots.³²

As a result, Giscard d'Estaing while visiting Britain from 22 to 25 June 1976, made some comments regarding the French sale of arms to South Africa. He said that France would accept no new military contracts and that the only deliveries were to complete existing contracts, and those were limited to naval arms. Thus, he declared that no supplies for South African land or air forces would take place as France rejected and condemned apartheid as it was practised in South Africa.³³

²⁸ *Le Monde*, 18 June 1976. See also <http://www.africanhistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa060801b.htm>

²⁹ A Seegers: *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*, pp. 148-149.

³⁰ *Le Monde*, 23 June 1976.

³¹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 31 December 1976.

³² *La France et l'Apartheid*, p. 28.

³³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. The Chief of the SADF, Visit of the French President to the United Kingdom. France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, No. 9/56/9 Vol. 3, Relevant files: 19.11.1971 – 23.2.1977. See also electronic interview with Admiral P Keene: 28 April-06 May 2008.

The French decision to consider the selling of two Agosta class submarines to South Africa came less than two months after France and South Africa concluded the nuclear deal in which the French consortium «Framatome-S.P.I.E.-Batignolles-Alsthom» was awarded a US \$ 1 billion contract by ESCOM for the construction of two nuclear power stations near Cape Town.³⁴

The French military embargo on air and ground defence equipment to Pretoria included the cancellation of previous military contracts, especially the delivery of 45 Mirage jet fighter interceptors. Yet, in 1976, France was still the main supplier of military equipment to South Africa despite Giscard d'Estaing's partial embargo of 1975.³⁵

In other respects, most of French ground and air military equipment such as Mirage III, helicopters, Transall transports, Panhard AML, Cactus missiles in use in the SADF; were already produced in South Africa under French licences that Pretoria acquired before the 1975 French military embargo.³⁶ The sale of nuclear reactors to South Africa in May 1976, the start of the Soweto riots in June 1976 followed by the French decision to sell two destroyer escorts to the SAN in July 1976 put France under increasing international pressure, especially from Black African states and other Third World countries. The *Times of Zambia* launched an unbridled attack on France for her alleged agreement to supply two destroyer escorts to the SAN.³⁷

The official French position towards the Soweto riots was made known on 19 June 1976 by France's participation in the consensus on Resolution 392 in which the Security Council condemned Pretoria for the repression that followed the events in Soweto and invited South Africa to put an end to the apartheid policy. As emphasized by its representative to the Council, the French government wanted thus to show their disapproval to the apartheid system.³⁸

³⁴ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud*, p. 200.

³⁵ *Le Monde*, 21 August 1976.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Times of Zambia*, 12 August 1976.

³⁸ *Journal Officiel*, 4 September 1976.

The position taken by France in the Security Council was in accordance with her consistent attitude towards apartheid. In fact, the French government had several times openly condemned apartheid. In August 1976, the Colombo declaration took place when 86 countries of the Non-Aligned Movement threatened to observe an oil embargo towards countries supplying South Africa with military equipment, especially France.³⁹ At the conference, the non-aligned countries blamed Western powers that continued to collaborate with the minority racist regimes. And, in relation to the Soweto riots, they called for all efforts to be made to effectively support the liberation struggle at a critical period in the struggle of the oppressed people in South Africa. Parallel to those efforts, they asked for a campaign for the total isolation of the apartheid government.⁴⁰

Responding to a written question asked by a socialist Member of Parliament (MP) in the French National Assembly, concerning action taken by the French government to ensure that “human rights were to be respected in South Africa”, the French Foreign Affairs Minister replied that France openly condemned apartheid and had always supported UN resolutions condemning South Africa unless the resolutions were regarded as contrary to the Charter of the UN. He added that France had contributed to UN funds for legal assistance and education for South Africans. He reiterated that France had restricted and had decided to prohibit sales of arms to South Africa.⁴¹

Apart from their military and nuclear cooperation, France and South Africa were also under an international spotlight for their actions in Namibia. The twenty-first UN General Assembly in its Resolution 2145 of 27 October 1966 terminated the South African mandate over Namibia and assumed direct responsibility for the Territory until its independence. In its Resolution 2248 (S-V) of 19 May 1967, the UN General Assembly established the UN Council for Namibia.⁴²

³⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs(DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 3, Interview of Mr. Sauvagnargues, French Minister of Foreign Affairs by a group of journalists, Paris, 20 August 1976. France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, March 1968, 19.11.1971 – 23.2.1977.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 5, Human Rights in South Africa, France: relations with South Africa, 13.10.1975 – 29.4.1977.

⁴² *Ibid.*, United Nations Resolutions: South West Africa 1976. Draft Resolution VI (A/C. 4/31/L. 35), United Nations Fund for Namibia.

However, Pretoria chose to ignore the UN Resolutions by pursuing the occupation of the territory, implementing apartheid there by creating the Bantustans for the Black population and increasing its military presence by the early 1970s.

The twenty-eighth UN General Assembly in its Resolution 3111 of 12 December 1973 recognised the South West Africa Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) as the authentic representative of the Namibian people. From that time, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the non-aligned countries had recognized and invited SWAPO to their meetings in an observer capacity. As a result, the UN General Assembly granted an observer status to SWAPO calling the organisation to participate in their meetings, sessions and work as well as in sessions and work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.⁴³

Furthermore, the UN General Assembly considered that SWAPO was entitled to participate as an observer in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of other organs of the United Nations calling the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps for the implementation of Resolution VII (A/C.4/31/L.36) and to accord all the facilities as may be requested.⁴⁴

During Assembly debates on 13 October 1976, Louis Odru, a communist MP of the French National Assembly drew the attention of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs on the activity of French firms in Namibia, a territory occupied by South Africa. He said that the decisions of the UN and the International Court of Justice in The Hague had emphasized that foreign firms working in Namibia disregarded international law by doing so. He said to the Minister that SWAPO, which the UN had acknowledged as the rightful representative of the Namibian people, had requested that the operations of such firms be stopped.⁴⁵

⁴³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 5, United Nations Resolutions: South West Africa 1976. Draft Resolution VI (A/C.4/31/L.35), United Nations Fund for Namibia. France: relations with South Africa, 13.10.1975 – 29.4.1977.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Namibia: Continued activities of French firms in Namibia in contravention of International law, Journal Officiel, 26 February 1977.

On the subject, the French government stated that they were taking all the necessary steps for French firms that worked in Namibia to end their activities until the country became independent. Odru said to the Minister that, far from withdrawing, French groups, in particular the Compagnie Française des Pétroles (CFP) regrouping Total, Minatome, Imétal (Penarroya, Le Nickel), and Péciney-Ugine-Kuhlman were increasing their activities in Namibia. Odru asked what steps the French government planned to take in order to put an end to such a situation, which was detrimental to the French interests near and future.⁴⁶

The Minister responded by saying that the French government considered that South Africa should cease its occupation of Namibia and enable the territory to become independent as soon as possible. He said that as long as the situation was not settled in Namibia, the French government would not sponsor in any way the activities of French firms operating there. Thus, COFACE (French National Company insuring overseas trade) would refuse to insure operations in Namibia and all applications for authorisation to invest in the territory would be refused. The Minister indicated that several firms among the ones quoted by the honourable MP had already ceased all activities in Namibia and the government had reminded the firms which had not done so yet that it was in their interest to take the necessary steps as soon as possible so as to free themselves from their commitments.⁴⁷

On 14 February 1977 during a reception in Mali, Giscard d'Estaing declared that all steps had been taken by France, not only to ban any new supply of ground or air equipment of a military character to South Africa, but also to ensure that no delivery could take place. The French President stated that France and Mali shared the same ideals of human freedom and cooperation between nations. That was why they had identical positions on big African problems, whether it was about the application of majority rule in Rhodesia or Namibia's accession to independence which, he hoped, would be reached within a few

⁴⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 5, Namibia: Continued activities of French firms in Namibia in contravention of International law, Journal Officiel, 26 February 1977. France: relations with South Africa, 13.10.1975 – 29.4.1977.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

months on the basis of self determination, or the condemnation of the policy of apartheid, which outraged human dignity.⁴⁸

Subsequently, concerning arms sales to South Africa, Maujoüan du Gasset an RI MP, asked the French Minister of Foreign Affairs whether the government was going to renege on its undertakings to sell two submarines to South Africa. Du Gasset explained to the Minister that Giscard d'Estaing, during his visit to Bamako (Mali) gave directives so that no delivery of arms could be made to South Africa, and that arrangements were made to halt further deliveries. He added that South Africa was about to receive two submarines ordered from Dubigeon-Normandie shipyards in Nantes. He asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs whether it should be concluded from Giscard d'Estaing's statement that France would cancel all previous contracts against her clear undertakings.⁴⁹

In the same way, during an interview published by a French anti-apartheid newspaper *Apartheid-Non*, Lionel Jospin, Secretary for International and Third-World Affairs of the French socialist Party, warned that the Left, once in power, would no longer deliver arms to South Africa. He said that the concrete means to have such a decision applied would exist: in fact it was the national dockyards that were building ships for South Africa; Dassault would be nationalised; as for minor firms, banking and financial control was an efficient arm.⁵⁰

Jospin said that indirect manoeuvres would be put into operation and the government and well-informed public opinion would have to end those indirect manoeuvres. He also said that unfortunately, the governments of the Right had taught Pretoria how to make French arms, and there was nothing much the socialists could do about it. As for nuclear plants, he said that it was out of the question that a Left-wing government would continue the policy of nuclear cooperation of Giscard d'Estaing government with South Africa.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Le Monde*, 16 February 1977.

⁴⁹ *Journal Officiel*, 26 February 1977.

⁵⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 5, *Apartheid-Non*, 15 February to 15 March 1977, France: relations with South Africa, 13.10.1975 – 29.4.1977.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

On 9 August 1977, France declared a total arms embargo on South Africa but said it would honour contracts already signed. Those contracts were for the delivery of two attack submarines of the 1200-ton Agosta class, and the 1200-ton D'Estienne D'Orves destroyer escort class said the French officials. That was the first time French officials had been able to state clearly that France's arms ban was all-embracing.⁵²

Prior to the French parliamentary elections scheduled for March 1978, François Mitterrand (the socialist candidate during the French general elections in 1974) said in August 1977 that "the socialists might be called upon in a few months to form the government of France". He said that they undertook to put an end to all arms transactions to South Africa until the apartheid government disappeared. He added that they considered it crucial to study, in conjunction with the Southern African liberation groups, all the modalities for the re-direction of French economic relations with South Africa. France could make that choice, provided she had the political motivation to do so. Mitterrand's declaration on South Africa came to corroborate those of Jospin. The South African government was well informed about the risks of the French socialist Party winning the parliamentary elections scheduled for 1978.⁵³

On 24 October, during a meeting of the UN Security Council on the South African question, African member states of the Security Council announced their intention to submit four project resolutions on South Africa to the Council. Those project resolutions were to call the UN Security Council to invoke Chapter seven of the Charter (applied when international peace and security are threatened) and to vote economic and military sanctions against South Africa.⁵⁴

On 27 October 1977, US President Jimmy Carter gave his approval for energetic military sanctions against South Africa as a result of Pretoria's decision to ban press freedom in South Africa for black newspapers and some moderate white mass media as well as the repression of black leaders.⁵⁵ In the meantime, the French Defence Minister, Yvon Bourges said on 27 October 1977 during a press conference in Paris that France had not

⁵² *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 August 1977

⁵³ *Le Monde*, 25 August 1977.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 October 1977.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 29 November 1977.

signed any military contract with Pretoria since August 1975 except naval contracts on the delivery of submarines Agosta class and two Type A69 Avisos being built at Saint-Nazaire and Lorient.⁵⁶

The persistence of the Soweto riots and the strengthening of apartheid measures in South Africa and Namibia led the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to make an important statement in the UN Security Council on 31 October 1977 when he announced that the French government had decided to vote in favour of a mandatory embargo on arms shipments to South Africa.⁵⁷ On 2 November 1977, African and Western countries via the UN reached a compromise on the proposed military and economical embargo against South Africa when they agreed to vote for a military embargo against Pretoria.⁵⁸ Moreover, Washington decided to recall its Naval and Commercial Attachés in South Africa as a result of consensus on the adoption of the military embargo against Pretoria.⁵⁹

As a result of the compromise reached on 2 November between African and Western countries, the UN Security Council, referring to Chapter seven of the Charter, voted unanimously for a military embargo against South Africa by adopting Resolution 418 on 4 November 1977. The Security Council decided in terms of Resolution 418, paragraph two, “that all states shall immediately cease all supplies of arms and ancillary material to South Africa of all types, including the sale and transfer of arms and ammunition, of military vehicles and material, of Para-military police equipment and spare parts for the above-mentioned articles; and that they shall likewise cease the supply of all types of equipment and granting of licences for the manufacture and maintenance of the said articles”.⁶⁰

The UN Security Council called all member states to cease the shipment of arms and equivalent equipment to South Africa. Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the UN, said that the vote was a historic event, while Jacques Leprette, French representative to the

⁵⁶ *Le Monde*, 29 November 1977.

⁵⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 4, Statement by France in Security Council: 31 October 1977. France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, 6.6.1974 – 7.2.1984.

⁵⁸ *Le Monde*, 4 November 1977.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6/7 November 1977.

Security Council, said that Paris would take all necessary measures for the application of the embargo.⁶¹ The French decision to observe the UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa was followed by Paris' resolution not to deliver the two Agosta class submarines and the two Type A69 Avisos to South Africa.⁶²

On 16 November, the French Foreign Ministry addressed a letter to the South African embassy in Paris in connection with the 4 November UN Security Council mandatory embargo on Pretoria, by stating that, in pursuance of the obligation contained in Article 25 of the Charter, the French government would apply the decision of the Security Council, adopted in conformity with the Charter and more particularly Chapter seven.⁶³

In consequence, all supplies falling within the above-mentioned paragraph of Resolution 418 of the Security Council were prohibited from the date of the adoption of the resolution in question. This prohibition applied particularly to warships ordered by the Republic of South Africa from the French shipyards. The French government proposed that discussions be held between its representatives and those of the South African government on various aspects relating to the consequences that the decision of the Security Council had on contracts involving material that could no longer be supplied by France.⁶⁴

On 17 November 1977, the South African embassy in Paris received formal notification from the French government regarding the prohibition on the supply of the four warships to South Africa in terms of Security Council Resolution 418 (1977) by drawing once again attention to the fact that the resolution was adopted under Chapter seven and based its decision on the obligation placed upon it in terms of Article 25 of the Charter dealing with the Functions and Powers of the Security Council and which read "The members of

⁶¹ *Le Monde*, 6/7 November 1977.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 9 November 1977.

⁶³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 4, Ministry of French Foreign Affairs, Division of African and Madagascan Affairs, France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, 6.6.1974 – 7.2.1984.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, France: Formal Notification from French government re prohibition on the supply of four warships to South Africa in terms of Security Council resolution 418 (1977).

the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter".⁶⁵

As a result of the UN Security Council military embargo on South Africa, which France decided to apply without restrictions, the South African government decided to cancel temporarily the October 1977 contract with the French firm CIT-Alcatel for the supply of electronic equipment for the South African telecommunication network. The Telecom official said that the decision to cancel such a contract was due to the fact that in time of international boycott against South Africa it was not wise for them to equip their telecommunication network with electronic devices if they had no assurance about the continuity of supplies. In response to the Telecom decision, the French firm said that South Africa took such decision not for technical reasons but for political ones.⁶⁶

On 30 November, Gaston Girard, a Gaullist MP asked the French Minister of Foreign Affairs about the delivery of the two Avisos and two submarines to South Africa. He stated that unilateral breach of contract of this nature would tend to harm the credibility of the French government in future undertakings. The Minister replied that the Security Council decision was binding on France, all deliveries of arms had had to cease, and no distinction could be drawn between material under construction and new material ordered.⁶⁷ As a result of the United Nations-instituted arms embargo against South Africa, France cancelled the deal on 8 November 1977 and to sell them to Pakistan.⁶⁸

The Minister also indicated that there would be difficulties for the shipbuilders, but as with firms affected by the decision to impose sanctions on Rhodesia, those difficulties could be overcome. The difficulties were in any case under examination said the Minister before adding that other countries had shown an interest in the material that was destined

⁶⁵ *Le Monde*, 29 November 1977.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 27/28 November 1977.

⁶⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 4, Arms Embargo: question in National Assembly, France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence. 6.6.1974 – 7.2.1984.

⁶⁸ A Du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 288.

for South Africa.⁶⁹ During its session on 9 December 1977 the UN Security Council set up a committee to follow the application of the military embargo against South Africa. The committee was composed of 15 members of the Security Council and was formed to study means to make the embargo more efficient and had the right to ask any country to provide it with information concerning the embargo.⁷⁰

On 20 December 1977, P W Botha, South African Defence Minister, announced that South African military personnel would be progressively repatriated to South Africa as a result of the French government's decision to halt delivery of the four warships to South Africa because of the November 1977 UN mandatory embargo against Pretoria.⁷¹

On 13 January 1978, a meeting between French representatives and Armscor officials took place in Paris in connection with the four warships ordered by South Africa. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss in principle the cancellation of the agreements for the acquisition of two Avisos type corvettes and two Agosta type submarines as well as related agreements in order to adhere to Resolution 418 of the Security Council. Both parties agreed that a formal notification had to be signed and addressed to all relevant contractors and in which the decision to substitute Armscor with the French government was declared. It was foreseen that that action would be accepted by all concerned against the background of the decision of the French government to adhere to the decision of the Security Council.⁷²

As far as the Namibian question was concerned, Prime Minister Vorster stated in the South African parliament on 30 January that in case talks between the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha and his counterparts of the Contact Group (France, USA, Britain, Federal Republic of Germany and Canada) of the Security Council mandated by the UN for the independence process of Namibia were not to reach an

⁶⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol.4, Arms Embargo: question in National Assembly, France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence. 6.6.1974 – 7.2.1984.

⁷⁰ *Le Monde*, 11/12 December 1977.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 21 December 1977. See also electronic interview with Admiral P Keene: 28 April-06 May 2008.

⁷² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 4, Agreements for the Acquisition of 2 Avisos type corvettes and 2 Agosta type submarines, France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, 6.6.1974 – 7.2.1984.

agreement, his government would choose its own way for the Namibian independence without SWAPO nationalists. He also added that the elections date was behind schedule and his government did not want to hamper discussions between the concerned parties. However, he warned that they could not wait any longer and that it was out of the question that his government representatives had talks with SWAPO. He also said that he was not prepared to totally withdraw South African troops before the territory became independent.⁷³

Virgile Barel, a French communist MP, told Pik Botha of his surprise that after the statement made by President Giscard d'Estaing on the embargo of arms to South Africa, there were still two Avisos under construction in the shipyards of Lorient: the "Good Hope", the first tests of which were already made with South African crew and flag, and the Transvaal. Since the Security Council of the UN decided in November 1977 on a complete embargo of all arms to South Africa, Barel asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs whether the French government had decided to put into effect the vote of the Security Council of the UN, and consequently not to deliver those Avisos to South Africa.⁷⁴

The Minister replied that as soon as the Security Council of the UN adopted its Resolution 418 of 4 November 1977, which declared the mandatory embargo of arms delivered to South Africa, the French government officially made it clear that they intended to apply that resolution. Therefore, the South African authorities were informed that various ships under construction in France, particularly the two Avisos indicated in the honourable MP's question, would not be delivered.⁷⁵

He added that the South African authorities proceeded to repatriate the staff that they had appointed to France for the implementation of the contracts. He concluded that the building of the ships had continued; both for employment requirements and for industrial purposes, and that could never be considered as derogating from the decision to apply the

⁷³ *Le Monde*, 1 February 1978.

⁷⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), File No. 9/56/9, Vol. 4, South Africa (embargo on the delivery of two Avisos to this country), Journal Officiel 4.3.1978. France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, 6.6.1974 – 7.2.1984.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

embargo. The Avisos would definitely not be delivered to South Africa, but other potential purchasers might be interested; if not, their use in the French Navy could be envisaged.⁷⁶

In March 1978, while the French parliamentary elections were taking place, Prime Minister Vorster stated that whether or not a socialist government were to win the elections it was unlikely that they would cancel the execution of the nuclear contract signed in 1976 between Framatome and ESCOM.⁷⁷

The outcome of the March 1978 parliamentary elections was that the socialist-communist alliance did not win the parliamentary elections and South African newspapers expressing the sentiment of many white South Africans, were delighted that socialists and communists were not to form the French cabinet. The South African government did not make any comment on the subject as many pro-governmental newspapers had already expressed their wishes. For instance, the *Rand Daily Mail* wrote in its publication on 21 March 1978 that ‘South Africa would breathe easily because a victory of the Left would have certainly affected subtle relations between Paris and Pretoria. The military trade would have been dangerously affected in case of the socialists’ victory and that Pretoria would have lost a precious friend on the international stage’.⁷⁸ At least, Pretoria could still count on the Giscard d’Estaing government for some years before the French presidential elections of 1981. Indeed, the Daphné contract imposed South Africa to acquire spare parts from France for a period of about ten years and South Africans were trained to maintain the submarines, their equipment and weapons to depot level. Prior to the 1977 mandatory embargo, Pretoria had also acquired large stock of spares from France.⁷⁹

On 3 May 1978, a special session of the UN General Assembly on the Namibian issue adopted two texts on the declaration plan for the self-determination and independence of

⁷⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), File No. 9/56/9, Vol. 4, South Africa (embargo on the delivery of two Avisos to this country), Journal Officiel 4.3.1978. France: Purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, 6.6.1974 – 7.2.1984.

⁷⁷ *Le Monde*, 11 March 1978.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 March 1978.

⁷⁹ Electronic interview with Admiral P Keene: 28 April-06 May 2008.

Namibia. The two texts did not mention the Western plan proposed by the Contact Group and accepted by Pretoria in late April. The UN plan for Namibia called for the Security Council to implement economic sanctions such as an oil embargo against South Africa. As far as the declaration was concerned, it recommended the strengthening of SWAPO as the only and authentic representative of Namibian people and proclaimed Walvis-Bay as part of the Namibian territory. The vote was approved by 119 countries against 21 abstentions amongst which were the Contact Group nations.⁸⁰

With the independence of Angola and Mozambique as well as the persistence of the Rhodesian problem, Pretoria developed a new defence policy in Southern Africa. The SADF were conducting military raids into neighbouring countries, especially Angola, from 1975 onwards. The South African government justified such actions by saying that Angola and other countries served as military bases for SWAPO and ANC military wings. During one of the SAAF raids in Angola in May 1978, France received complaints from the Angolan government citing reports from Luanda that Pretoria forces used French Mirage jet fighters and Puma troop-carrying helicopters. As a result, France issued a cold statement through a Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman criticizing the raid. And the French ambassador in Pretoria was ordered to convey France's displeasure over the raid to the South African government, while the French Minister of Foreign Affairs gave the same note to the South African embassy in Paris.⁸¹

The South African raid into Angola came at an inopportune time for France because its air force planes were already involved in the bombings of rebels in Mauritania and French troops fought rebels in Chad. France kept a low profile on its military intervention in Mauritania and Chad. Paris was greatly embarrassed by the statement made by the Angolan Defence Minister, Ike Carreiro, in Luanda, that the South African raid was backed by French-made aircraft.⁸²

On 16 September 1978 the South African Defence Minister, P W Botha, confirmed that France had refunded the money that South Africa had already paid for the four warships

⁸⁰ *Le Monde*, 5 May 1978.

⁸¹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 8 May 1978.

⁸² *Ibid.*

that Paris refused to supply to Pretoria according to the November 1977 UN mandatory embargo on arms against the South African government.⁸³ Still in September 1978, Vorster was implicated in a scandal forcing him to leave his position as Prime Minister and was replaced by Pieter Willem Botha. P W Botha also kept the portfolio of defence until 1980 when General Magnus Malan was appointed Defence Minister.⁸⁴

Despite the French decision to abide by the 1977 UN military embargo against Pretoria and the South African decision to suspend the contract signed on October 1977 with the French firm CIT-Alcatel for the supply of electronic equipment E-10 for the South African telecommunication network, Pretoria finally announced its decision on 1 November to definitely allocate the contract to the French firm alongside a German firm. The South African decision to offer the French firm the contract resulted from assurances that they obtained from Paris about the non-application of the UN embargo for technology transfer as well as the sale of licences of such items to South Africa.⁸⁵

On 17 November 1978, a memorandum concerning the setting up of a South African lobby in Paris was sent to the South African ambassador in Paris, Louis Pienaar. It was said that in order to be efficient, such a lobby should gather few people at the top but very influential and prominent ones. Thus, ambassador Pienaar and former French Minister Jacques Soustelle were to be Presidents of the Joint Committee. Members were to be influential businessmen as well as bankers and industrialists having huge interests in the French-South African trade links.⁸⁶

The main aim of the Committee was to spread the word in the business community that on a competitive basis, the French firms would be always given the preference for South African tenders. In return, the French firms and members of such a committee would

⁸³ *Le Monde*, 20 August 1978.

⁸⁴ M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, p. 245.

⁸⁵ *Le Monde*, 3 November 1978.

⁸⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, Memorandum concerning the setting up of a South African Lobby in Paris, France: Relations with the RSA, 2.8.1978– 4.4.1979.

have to support South Africa in France when the superior interests of Pretoria were menaced by interferences from the Quai d'Orsay.⁸⁷

The interest of such an operation was obvious: the more French interests and capitals linked to South Africa and the more “kept in hands” those interests would be by an active joint-committee, the more eager they would be to support South Africa and protest collectively in the Quai d'Orsay or the French Presidency. The efficiency of such a committee was to repose upon two facts: an improvement of Franco-South African joint ventures involving a maximum of French firms in South Africa and French and South African firms in common ventures abroad in external markets. The committee had to work on a permanent basis with regular meetings. The committee maintained that any project or investments involving more than R 1 million in South Africa had to be debated in the committee, and firms were invited to join and support the committee.⁸⁸

The setting up of a South African lobby in Paris was initiated by French industrialists and businessmen. They feared that the military embargo declared by the UN in November 1977 might dangerously affect their interests in the lucrative and prosperous South African market. Apart from the military equipment, South Africa was a very good customer for French civil goods. On 12 November 1978, at the initiative of one anti-apartheid movement, Committee anti-Outspan, a congress was held at Massy (France) with the intention to act against the involvement of French banks in the South African market. Representatives from SWAPO, ANC and the UN special Committee against apartheid took part in the discussions.⁸⁹

As a result of the setting up of a South African lobby in Paris in November, a French Chamber of Commerce was created in Johannesburg on 28 November 1978. The aim of the French Chamber was to promote exchanges between Paris and Pretoria. Most French firms operating in South Africa were behind the initiative, which was private, at a

⁸⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, Memorandum concerning the setting up of a South African Lobby in Paris, France: Relations with the RSA, 2.8.1978– 4.4.1979.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Le Monde*, 14 November 1978.

moment when Franco-South African trade was growing and becoming more favourable to South Africa.⁹⁰

In December 1978, without UN approval, the South Africa government held elections in Namibia in connection with the independence of the territory. SWAPO did not participate, as Pretoria did not recognise the Nationalist movement as the sole representative of the Namibian people. As expected, the UN did not approve of the elections as they were supposed to take place in the course of 1979 and under international control.⁹¹

During the year 1979, no direct arms deals between France and South Africa took place. However, Pretoria was under an international spotlight for its continuous occupation of Namibia as well as its military raids into the Angolan territory. SWAPO was launching military attacks against South African troops from the Angolan territory, and South Africa responded by strengthening its military raids into Angola. Thus, in March 1979, South Africa made several raids into Angola leading the French representative to the UN, Jacques Leprette, to condemn such attacks in the region. He also said that South Africa was deliberately violating the territorial integrity of Angola and such actions could lead to the aggravation of security in Southern Africa.⁹²

In May 1979, the South African government took the decision to transform the Namibian Constituent Assembly into a National Assembly by allowing it to enlarge its members from fifty to sixty-five under the leadership of Dirk Mudge of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), a multi-ethnic party backed by the South African government. Pretoria justified its decision by saying that the Namibian people were becoming more and more impatient due to the slowness of negotiations with the UN. Pretoria also continued to resist certain points of the UN independence plan for Namibia. For example, the UN plan for Namibia called for Pretoria to allow SWAPO to establish its camps in Namibia and wanted to supervise guerrilla bases in neighbouring countries.⁹³

⁹⁰ *Le Monde*, 30 November 1978.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 8 December 1978.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 30 March 1979.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 11 May 1979.

In connection with the South African permanent presence in Namibia, during debates at the French National Assembly on 26 June 1979 Jacques Medecin, a French MP, asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to be so kind as to let him know whether the rumours about the support given by the French government to SWAPO were founded. He also asked the Minister to tell him what attitude the French government intended to adopt towards countries to which South Africa granted independence, such as the Transkei, and whether Paris envisaged recognizing them as sovereign states.⁹⁴

The French Minister of Foreign Affairs replied by saying that France was actively taking part for the past two years in the diplomatic efforts of the Contact Group in order to find an internationally acceptable solution of the Namibian problem. Therefore, France was led to have relations with SWAPO, an organisation that the UN General Assembly considered to be representative of the aspiration of the Namibian people for independence. However, the French contacts with SWAPO could in no way enable one to state that the French government had granted any particular support to SWAPO, said the Minister.⁹⁵

France's attitude towards the Black "Bantustans" in South Africa was the logical consequence of the condemnation of the apartheid regime installed by the South African government and that France did not recognize the fictitious independence which was granted by the South African government to the Transkei and to Bophuthatswana which were not recognized by any country.⁹⁶

In September 1979, the French government banned the South African rugby tour in France by refusing to grant them the visa entries.⁹⁷ The South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, met his French counterpart François Poncet (who replaced de Guiringaud) to discuss the situation in Namibia, as France was part of the Western Contact Group mandated by the UN to discuss the independence of the territory, as well as the refusal of the French government to authorise the Springboks to tour France with at least two non-

⁹⁴ *Journal Officiel* No. 71 A.N. 1 September 1979. *External policy (South Africa and Rhodesia)*, 26 June 1979.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Le Monde*, 12 September 1979.

white players. For the French government, Pretoria was not willing to change its apartheid policy and the incorporation of two non-white players was only an advertising trick made by the South African government towards the international community.⁹⁸

In October 1979, Johannes van Dalsen was appointed South African ambassador to Paris. He was to replace Louis Pienaar who spent four years in France and was recalled to Pretoria.⁹⁹ At the end of October 1979, South Africa once again raided Angola, leading the Angolan government to lodge a complaint against Pretoria at the UN Security Council for the aggression. In reaction to the Angolan complaint, Pik Botha said that the main reasons of such raids into Angola were the attacks and kidnappings that SWAPO terrorists launched against Namibia from Angola.¹⁰⁰

In 1979, official South African approaches towards the West, predominantly the USA, toughened unexpectedly. In the spring of 1979 American Military Attachés in Pretoria were evicted for a supposed intelligence work and the South African Military Attaché in Washington was recalled by his government.¹⁰¹ Since 1978, the US Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) had been prevented from maintaining exports to the South African government or its agencies.¹⁰² And in 1979 Norway and Britain banned the sale of North Sea oil to South Africa and the US Congress passed legislation codifying the prohibition of Eximbank loans to South Africa government firms, as well as US firms that did not adhere to the Sullivan code.¹⁰³

In January 1980, a French parliamentary mission went to South Africa to investigate the apartheid policy in sports. Bernard Marie, a Gaullist MP close to Giscard d'Estaing, led the mission. It arrived in Johannesburg on 10 January, composed of eight

⁹⁸ *Le Monde*, 9/10 September 1979.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1979.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2 November 1979.

¹⁰¹ R S Jaster: *South Africa's Narrowing Security Options*, p. 32.

¹⁰² D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a comparative analysis*, p. 337.

¹⁰³ British ban of North Sea oil to South Africa in 1979 at <http://www.iie.com/research/topics/sanctions/southafrica.cfm> on 07 September 2007.

parliamentarians and six representatives of sport federations. However, socialist and communist parliamentarians refused to be part of the mission.¹⁰⁴

On 29 February, Bernard Marie gave his report on the mission. He called for the revival of relations between French federations and South African federations that were already incorporating non-white players in their teams. Marie said that due to the fact that sport was very popular in urban areas, it could be seen as an important means of pressure on the government and an efficient weapon against apartheid. He also said that by restarting relations with federations sufficiently integrated such as those of football, athletics and boxing; it would incite other federations such as rugby to do the same, as the opened federations would benefit from international experience while the closed ones risked vanishing.¹⁰⁵

The South African ambassador in Paris in his annual report made some observations regarding relations between South Africa and France. He said that relations between South Africa and France continued to be plagued by a politico-economic dichotomy. The French government might be more encouraging to the private sector in its efforts to develop bilateral trade, but its perception of how its actions were seen in Africa, acted as a brake. He continued by saying that France had decided that Black Africa offered better prospects than “white” Africa.¹⁰⁶

The French dependence on South African minerals for its energy needs and the widening balance of trade in South Africa’s favour had its galling side, which had been made more acute both by South Africa’s obvious economic recovery in 1979 and the steps taken towards improving its race relations image abroad.¹⁰⁷

The hardening French line was already implicit in the French President’s “Africa for the Africans” speech in his New Year greetings. It became more evident as he developed his theme of the EEC/OAU/Arab League axis from which South Africa would effectively be

¹⁰⁴ *Le Monde*, 12 January 1980.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2/3 February 1980.

¹⁰⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 11, South African relations with France. France: Relations with the RSA, 15.12.1979– 20.6.1980.

¹⁰⁷ *Le Monde*, 2/3 February 1980.

excluded. The French President proposed this development on the eve of the annual Francophone summit in Kigali as a counterweight to the two superpowers (USA and USSR). For the French President, Europe needed oil and raw materials but had technology, the Middle East had oil but needed technology and raw materials, Africa had raw materials but needed oil and technology. A trilateral relationship between the three areas would ensure maximum benefit for all.¹⁰⁸

The South African embassy was also warned that it had to expect increasing difficulties in obtaining weapons from France, although it could still rely on acquiring spares. The ambassador said that in early 1980, it was made clear that South Africa was not considered a safer investment than any other African state. The execution of Solomon Mahlangu, an ANC activist, and its timing damaged considerably South Africa's image and contributed to the cancellation of the Transvaal rugby tour in France.¹⁰⁹

The victory of Robert Mugabe in the Rhodesian general elections in March 1980 increased tensions in South African politics, as the National Party faced an internal crisis. Indeed, within the party there were some huge differences between conservatives led by Treurnicht, the champion of the strictest segregation and some moderates led by Prime Minister Botha who believed that they had to make reforms of the apartheid system in order to achieve the existence of a white South Africa surrounded by a constellation of Black states.¹¹⁰

However, Botha tried to avoid a party split in the face of the open rebellion of one of his Ministers, namely A Treurnicht. The rival groups were careful to keep their clashes within bounds because the Churches were as deeply divided on the issue as the governing party itself. The outcome of the Rhodesian crisis with the election of Robert Mugabe brought a dramatic change in the region. South Africa remained the only country ruled by a white minority within the Southern African region. The international community was

¹⁰⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 11, South African relations with France. France: Relations with the RSA, 15.12.1979– 20.6.1980.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

about to put more pressure on South Africa over the Namibian problem at a time when the Rhodesian independence process was backed by Britain.¹¹¹

On 13 June, Dirk Mudge, President of the DTA was elected President with executive powers of a Ministerial Council that Pretoria created some time before to rule the Namibian territory. The council was formed by 12 Ministers and was under the authority of the South African General Administrator of the territory, Gerrit Viljoen. By doing so, Pretoria's aim was to give the DTA enough powers to face SWAPO in future elections.¹¹²

On 23 June 1980, J P Cot, a French socialist MP asked the French Minister of Foreign Affairs about the steps taken by the French government to apply the EEC "code of conduct" agreed upon in 1977 to French firms in South Africa in an attempt to eliminate racial discrimination from working premises. The Minister assured Cot that the French government had taken action to ensure that French firms applied this code. Encouraging results were noted and the Minister was confident that these future efforts would help to suppress racial discrimination in South Africa.¹¹³

On 27 June 1980, the UN Security Council condemned South African attacks into Angola, asked Pretoria to withdraw its troops and warned the South African government of possible commercial and diplomatic boycotts that they faced if such attacks were to continue. The resolution was adopted by twelve member states while France, the USA and Britain abstained.¹¹⁴

An international conference in solidarity with the struggle of the people of Namibia took place in Paris between 11 and 13 September 1980. The conference was organized on the initiative of SWAPO and with the support of the United Nations Council for Namibia, the legal administering authority of the international territory of Namibia. The conference called for a mobilization for final victory and support for the liberation of the people of Namibia and South Africa now that Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe were

¹¹¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 11, South African relations with France. France: Relations with the RSA, 15.12.1979– 20.6.1980.

¹¹² *Le Monde*, 15/16 June 1980.

¹¹³ *Journal Officiel* No. 30, 28 July 1980.

¹¹⁴ *Le Monde*, 29/30 June 1980.

independent. The conference stated that the racist regime of South Africa resorted to desperate acts and devious manoeuvres to continue its occupation of Namibia, to consolidate its illegitimate rule over the great majority of the people of South Africa and to reverse the march of freedom in Africa.¹¹⁵

The conference denounced the fact that South Africa had armed itself to the teeth and sought to acquire nuclear capability with the collaboration or complicity of powerful governments such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, France and the Federal Republic of Germany and their transnational corporations, in order to intimidate and blackmail the governments and people of Southern Africa.¹¹⁶ Sam Nujoma, president of SWAPO participating in the conference debates, declared that the French government could play an important role in the decolonisation process of Southern Africa, especially Namibia. Nujoma said that France had to play a major role in forcing South Africans to withdraw from Namibia because South Africa was still reliant on France for its military supplies.¹¹⁷

In September 1980, Jacques Chirac, leader of the Gaullist Party the Rassemblement Pour la République (RPR); became France's second most powerful political figure after his party won the most seats during the Senate elections of 28 September; put South Africa in the limelight of the French presidential elections of April 1981. He said that he had a plan that would easily solve South Africa's problems. France could end South Africa's isolation and bring her into international society. Basically, France would bring about a settlement in South Africa by giving a guarantee to look after its interests. In return, the South African regime would have to abolish apartheid and to sign a nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as to release all political prisoners to improve the international climate.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Annexure jacket 1980, Declaration of the International Conference in Solidarity with the Struggle of the people of Namibia. UNESCO House, Paris 11-13 September 1980. France: relations with the RSA.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Le Monde*, 13 September 1980.

¹¹⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 September 1980. See also

http://www.quid.fr/2007/Institutions_Françaises/Elections_Senatoriales/1 on 29 August 2008

Chirac said that the answer to South Africa's problems was a confederation of states, one of which would be white. He also called for a conference in Paris to bring about an independence settlement for the Namibian territory so that South Africa could withdraw. The conference would be held under France's auspices. It was known that President Giscard d'Estaing welcomed a Namibian settlement in which he would play a major role. Jacques Chirac was the Gaullist candidate for the French presidential elections to be held in 1981.¹¹⁹

During debates in the French Senate, the French government's complicity with Pretoria over the Namibian question was highlighted. It was said that French communist MPs had often denounced the French companies operating in Namibia. For instance, Ferdinand Martin, a communist MP said that "for France, Namibia had become a huge reserve of uranium, and two weekly flights of the UTA Airline brought (into France) cargoes of uranium, with complete impunity and against decree of the UN Council for the Protection of Natural resources of Namibia". Through the taxes paid to the South African treasury, the activities of French companies constituted a form of direct aid to South Africa and contributed to the reinforcement of apartheid.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, in November 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President of the USA and announced a change of the US policy towards Southern Africa by declaring that South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia was conditional upon the Cuban withdrawal from Angola. In the course of November, a meeting between Pik Botha and his French counterpart took place in Paris. The two Foreign Affairs Ministers were to discuss problems affecting the Southern African region and Namibia in particular. It was also reported that Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State in the Carter administration was to meet Pik Botha in Paris for the same reasons.¹²¹

In April 1981 French presidential elections took place and Giscard d'Estaing lost against François Mitterrand. He left the Elysée Palace without finding a solution for the Namibian problem or the apartheid policy that South Africa was deliberately pursuing

¹¹⁹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 September 1980.

¹²⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Annexure jacket 1980, focus on France by Serge Bouchery, Senator of Paris, French Communist Party (PCF). France: Relations with the RSA.

¹²¹ *Le Monde*, 15 January 1980.

despite international pressures in which France was at the forefront as member state of the Contact Group mandated by the UN.

During President Giscard d'Estaing's term, France adopted two military arms embargoes against South Africa as a result of international pressures that his government faced. In August 1975, Giscard d'Estaing publicly announced an arms embargo against Pretoria for the supply of air and ground weapons. That decision was mostly made due to pressures that the Afro-Asian block of countries was exercising towards France since the late 1960s. And in November 1977, France, alongside the International community, decided to observe the UN mandatory arms embargo against Pretoria as a result of Pretoria's policy of violence in Southern Africa and its decision to abide by the apartheid policy. The unresolved situation in Southern Africa was to fall under Mitterrand's socialist Party rule.

4.2 The French-South African nuclear cooperation leading to the Koeberg deal.

In 1949, the South Africa Institute for Atomic Energy was set-up by the South African government, functioning with American technical assistance. In 1957, the South African government officially created the South African Atomic Energy Board (AEB). The set-up of the AEB by Pretoria was a result of the enormous resources of uranium and the need for the USA and Britain to control it. Thus South Africa became a major supplier of uranium at the time that western powers such as the USA were already stockpiling Atomic bombs, leading other nations in a race for procuring uranium, needed to build nuclear weapons.

The French involvement in the South African Nuclear programme started in the late 1950s. In fact, the first contacts started in 1957 and 1961, with France participating in the construction of Pretoria's experimental nuclear reactor.¹²² In January 1963, de Gaulle refused an American offer of Polaris missiles for his armed forces in order to keep France's defence independence from the USA and continue the French nuclear programme. The same year, when the Cuban crisis intervened between the USA and the

¹²² *African development: How France and S. Africa did the nuclear deal* by Howard Schissel, Vol. 10, No. 8, pp. 784-85.

USSR leading to the signature of the treaty on the ban on atomic testing in the atmosphere, France refused to be part of the treaty. In fact, unlike the USA and the USSR which were the only powers able to make underground atomic tests, the progress accomplished by French in the building of their force de frappe did not allow them to follow the new treaty.¹²³

Dr. Bertrand Goldschmidt, director of the division of external relations and planning of the French Atomic Energy Commission, toured South Africa in March 1963 as guest of the South African Atomic Energy Board.¹²⁴ His visit was part of a general programme to improve liaison between South Africa and European countries in the field of atomic energy. During his visit, Goldschmidt declared that full details of the French Atomic Energy programme in civilian and military fields would be disclosed to the South African Atomic Energy Board. He added that regular contacts between France and South Africa in the atomic energy matters had already been taking place for number of years and that South African mines were producing, at the time, the cheapest uranium in the world.¹²⁵

During Goldschmidt's visit, South Africa was building its first nuclear reactor at Pelindaba for its National Nuclear Research Centre (NRC) under the American supervision and controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Americans were providing South Africans with the enriched uranium needed to run the reactor and the first South African students and technicians in the nuclear field were trained in the USA and the UK. At the time of the visit of the French official to the Pelindaba nuclear site, his South African counterparts told him that the South African government would be able to supply the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) with the free-use uranium that they needed to pursue the development of their nuclear programme at the time that the USA and the UK were the only western nuclear powers able to get access to free-use uranium in the non-communist world. One should mention

¹²³ D C Bach : *La France et l'Afrique du Sud*, p. 176.

¹²⁴ *South African Digest*, March 1963: *Two important visitors here on Visit from France*.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

that South Africans and the North Americans were, in the early 1960s, the main producers of uranium in the free world with respectively 15 percent and 76 percent.¹²⁶

The decision to supply the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) with free use uranium needed for the development of their nuclear programme was not without American dissatisfaction, as France was the only nuclear power affected by non use of uranium in the military field. Thus, a contract valid for a number of years was signed between South Africa and France in supplying the French CEA with the needed uranium.¹²⁷ The South African decision was highly appreciated by General de Gaulle as he wanted to provide France with nuclear power, codenamed force de frappe, in order to give Paris an international voice in world politics and free the country from its military dependence on its allies, especially the USA.¹²⁸

In the early 1960s, France was already supplying South Africa with military equipment, and by 1964 a long military connection between Paris and Pretoria was under way after London and Washington decided to observe the 1963 UN voluntary military embargo against Pretoria. Good relations between France and South Africa were of the utmost importance to the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) as the responsible authority in South Africa in connection with defence research.¹²⁹

Several attempts were made to obtain training facilities in Britain for South African scientists in certain fields of very great importance to Pretoria but failed owing to the political climate that prevailed prior to the British general election in 1964. Steps were consequently taken by South Africa in December 1963 to explore the possibility of obtaining the training of South African scientists in France. With de Gaulle's approval, an agreement was reached between the South African CSIR and a certain French firm, which, within a few months, made arrangements for sixteen South African scientists to be

¹²⁶ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud*, p. 175

¹²⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, Office of the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Relations between France and South Africa, 1 October 1965, France: Relations with South Africa, 18.5.1962 – 15.12.1965.

¹²⁸ R O Paxton & N Wahl (Ed): *De Gaulle and the United States, a Centennial Reappraisal*, p. 280.

¹²⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, Office of the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Relations between France and South Africa, 1 October 1965, France: Relations with South Africa, 18.5.1962 – 15.12.1965.

trained in France. A contract between the CSIR and the French firm was entered into and which probably ran for a period extending up to 1968.¹³⁰

For S Meiring Naudé, president of the CSIR, it was vital that relations between South Africa and France should be fostered to the utmost so that the arrangements for the essential training of South African scientists should not be disturbed in any way. He also said that the French were the only people who were willing to assist South Africa in the important field of training and who had shown that they were determined to resist any interference from other western powers who had objected to the training of South Africans in the field of defence research matters. He strongly recommended that the French were to be approached for tenders for every government project or order which was contemplated in those instances where they were supplying suitable equipment in order not only to strengthen political ties with France but also to open doors to South African defence scientists which were still closed. Despite the strict application of the UN arms embargo and mounting international pressure against the apartheid government, the French-South African nuclear connection was expanding.¹³¹

In March 1966, Sir John Wrightson, chairman and worldwide head of the Wrightson Group, and a leading figure in the British economy at the time, said that South Africa was perfectly right to plan ahead for nuclear power. He said that it would enable the country to train highly-qualified staff needed to run a nuclear station, to build one, and to process uranium, of which South Africa was one of the world's largest producers.¹³²

In November 1966, the South African Atomic Energy Board (AEB) received three prominent members of the French Atomic Energy Commission as guests of the Board for a short period. The object of the visit was to hold discussions on matters of mutual interest in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Robert Hirsch, administrator general, Dr. Bertrand Goldschmidt, director of external relations and programmes, and Jacques Mabile, director of production, had the opportunity of seeing South Africa's progress in

¹³⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, Office of the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Relations between France and South Africa, 1 October 1965, France: Relations with South Africa, 18.5.1962 – 15.12.1965.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *South African Digest*, 18 March 1966: "S.A. right to plan for nuclear power".

the scientific and industrial fields. Besides visiting Pelindaba, the centre of South Africa's atomic research, they were to visit the gold and uranium industry as well as SASOL, South Africa's petrol-from-coal plant. During their visit in South Africa, Dr. Goldschmidt delivered a public lecture in Pretoria on "The development and political aspects of atomic energy".¹³³

Towards the end of 1966, despite strong American pressure, a four-man mission of the French Atomic Energy Commission secured the renewal of the secret "revolving" contract for South African natural uranium. Despite large uranium ore supplies in metropolitan France and in Gabon, the French government was very keen to purchase uranium in South Africa due to its low price. At the same time, the buying of South African uranium was a rebuff to Washington for the latter's veto on Canadian deliveries to France, which jeopardized the contract concluded by the French CEA with Dennison Mines of Canada. Furthermore, South Africa unlike Canada was not tied to the international agreement under which uranium supplies were controlled to make sure that they were used for peaceful purposes only.¹³⁴

In 1967, Washington hesitated till the last minute to renew the 10 years contract of supplying Pretoria with enriched uranium needed to run SAFARI I as a sign of protest against South Africa's decision of 1964 to supply France with free use uranium. As a result, France expressed its willingness to replace the USA as South Africa's supplier of enriched uranium needed to run the reactor.¹³⁵

The energy crisis of 1967 due to the Middle-East war had accelerated this process and Senator Owen Horwood, later to become South African Finance Minister (1975-1984) while visiting Paris, declared that there was an axis between Paris, Teheran and Pretoria - particularly in the field of nuclear energy. France supplied the technology, Iran the petrol and South Africa the uranium. Yet, in 1967 a second South African nuclear reactor in Pelindaba, called SAFARI II started functioning under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in spite of protests from the Americans who were afraid,

¹³³ *South African Digest*, 2 December 1966: *French atomic scientist visiting S. Africa*.

¹³⁴ *Africa Confidential* No. 2, 20 January 1967, *France and South Africa: L'Entente cordiale*, pp. 6-8.

¹³⁵ *African Development*, Vol. 10, No. 8, pp. 784-785: *How France and S. Africa did the nuclear deal* by Howard Schissel, pp. 784-85.

like the international community, of Pretoria using the enriched uranium for military purposes.¹³⁶

However, toward the end of the 1960s, French purchases of South African uranium declined, as France's autonomy in uranium supplies increased with the booming of Gabon and Niger's productions (two former French colonies) as well as local French production leading the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) to become a supplier of uranium on the world market by 1971. Nevertheless, France continued to buy South African uranium because of its low price and the supply guarantees offered by Pretoria. In return, France continued to train South African students and trainees in the field of nuclear research.¹³⁷

In July 1970, Vorster announced in Parliament that South Africa was ready to produce enriched uranium via a new method set up by the Atomic Energy Board and that a pilot plant in Valindaba for its production was being built. He added that such a plant existed only in the USA, Britain and France as far as the Western world was concerned.¹³⁸

During the same speech, Vorster said that Pretoria would examine its adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was opened to signatures in 1968, on the conditions that no limitation should be imposed to his country over the use of the nuclear power, no details about the new method of producing enriched uranium should be revealed during the control operations and that inspections should not interfere with the operation of the plant.¹³⁹

The same year, Pretoria and Paris refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. As a result, Washington refused to supply Pretoria with the enriched uranium leading to the ending of American-British nuclear assistance to South Africa. During the first half of

¹³⁶ Dossier GRIP No. 94-95, *La puissance militaire de l'Afrique du Sud* by Georges Berghezan, February 1986, p. 31.

¹³⁷ D. C. Bach, *La France et l'Afrique du Sud*, p. 176.

¹³⁸ *Le Monde*, 22 July 1970.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

the 1970s, collaboration between Paris and Pretoria in the nuclear field extended as this arena became increasingly militarised.¹⁴⁰

The Valindaba pilot plant was built with the assistance of the USA, France and mostly West Germany. In fact, a close cooperation linked the West German Institute for Nuclear Research of Karlsruhe and South African scientists in the nuclear field. Moreover, the West German firm Steinkohlen-Elektrizitätswerke AG (STEAG), controlled by the West German government, supplied South Africa with the funds and human and industrial know-how needed to build the Valindaba pilot plant. However, the West German nuclear assistance to South Africa for the production of enriched uranium ended in 1976 due to differences over conditions of funding and share of risks between the two countries; but the production of enriched uranium had already started.¹⁴¹

In 1975, three French companies out of five international firms were short-listed for the final contract for the Koeberg nuclear project that was to be decided in February 1976.¹⁴² Until a few days before the official South African announcement over the Koeberg project, it was considered a certainty that the consortium headed by America's General Electric would receive the sought-after contract. Speaking before the American Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee, Myron Kratzer, Under-Secretary of State for Scientific Affairs, had indicated that Washington had given the green light for the sale of the nuclear reactors to South Africa. He declared that it was "natural" that "South Africa figured among the countries with which cooperation should be established in this field".¹⁴³

It was felt that the American decision was partly motivated by the desire to reward South Africa for its sale of uranium to Washington during the time of a relative scarcity between 1953 and 1961 and ensure free access to South Africa's mineral resources

¹⁴⁰ *African Development*, Vol. 10, No. 8: *How France and S. Africa did the nuclear deal* by Howard Schissel, pp. 784-85.

¹⁴¹ Dossier GRIP No. 94-95, *La puissance militaire de l'Afrique du Sud* by Georges Berghezan, February 1986, pp. 31-32.

¹⁴² *Le Monde*, 17 April 1975.

¹⁴³ *African Development*, Vol. 10, No. 8: *How France and S. Africa did the nuclear deal* by Howard Schissel, pp. 784-85.

during the coming decades. The American government had proposed favourable financial support for the nuclear complex through the Export-Import Bank.¹⁴⁴

Negotiations between ESCOM and the consortium headed by General Electric lasted three years until 24 May 1976 when they were suspended by the South Africans. In fact, protest campaigns, especially in the American congress, claimed that the nuclear sale would undermine the announced American policy of supporting majority rule in Southern Africa. In Holland, a major political crisis was narrowly avoided as left-wing parties in the governmental coalition strongly protested against Dutch participation in the deal. ESCOM judged that it was safer to pass the order to the French consortium because of the favourable attitude of the French government and the lack of effective protest against deepening involvement of France in South Africa.¹⁴⁵

High ranking South African officials made no secret of the fact that Pretoria's decision was motivated by the weak link in the consortium headed by General Electric – the Dutch government's inability to provide the necessary guarantees and assurance. South Africa was also dissatisfied with American policy after the revelations of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's part in the Angolan fiasco. Indeed, Kissinger publicly denounced Pretoria's military intervention in Angola after South Africa claimed to have received Washington go-ahead for such operation.¹⁴⁶

Despite President Giscard d'Estaing's "policy change" halting arms to Pretoria announced in August 1975, his decision did not affect arms sales agreements already concluded with France nor licence agreements for the making of French arms in South Africa.

On 19 May 1976, South Africa notified the French consortium that its negotiations with General Electric were stalled, and things went very quickly. On 23 May, the French consortium received a letter of intent with a request for certain political assurances. When the French government provided the necessary guarantees on 26 May, South Africa's

¹⁴⁴ *African Development*, Vol. 10, No. 8: *How France and S. Africa did the nuclear deal* by Howard Schissel, pp. 784-85.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Le Monde*, 1 June 1976.

Electric Supply Commission (ESCOM) awarded on 28 May a US \$ 1 billion contract to the French consortium of Framatome-SPIE-Batignolles-Alstom for the construction of South Africa's first nuclear power plants. The \$1 billion power plants were to be built at Koeberg, about 25 miles north of Cape Town. The contract between ESCOM and Framatome specified that reprocessing of fuels from the two plants must be done in France and that the plutonium will not be sent back to South Africa.¹⁴⁷

Prior to Pretoria's decision to give the contract to the French consortium led by Framatome, ESCOM had entered a supply contract with the American Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) for uranium enrichment, which was necessary to produce the fuel elements for the plant. According to the contract, the American enriched uranium would go to France, where the fuel elements had to be manufactured. Yet, according to a second contract assigned to Framatome, South Africa had to provide the ERDA with the uranium hexafluoride that would after go to France. However, by 1978 this process would stop due to the adoption of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Act by the Carter administration, which backdated the contract between ESCOM and ERDA signed 2 years before. The result was that South Africa was prohibited from supplying uranium to the ERDA, unless Pretoria adhered to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which Pretoria refused to sign.¹⁴⁸

Framatome was created in 1958 to manufacture nuclear reactors under licence from the American firm Westinghouse. Transformed in 1971, the company's capital was divided mainly among the French group, Creusot-Loire 51 percent and Westinghouse 45 percent. Granted a monopoly in the manufacture of reactors in 1975, the French Atomic Energy Commission took a 30 percent share, thus reducing Westinghouse to 15 percent.¹⁴⁹

The quick turnabout by the South African government, which had already indicated its intention to buy the nuclear power plants from the American-Dutch-Swiss consortium of General Electric-Verolme-Brown-Boveri, revealed the extent of competition among

¹⁴⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 7, France's foreign policy, Interview of Louis de Sauvagnargues, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, broadcast over France-Inter radio, Paris, 22 August 1977. France: relations with South Africa, 9.9.1977 – 31.10. 1977.

¹⁴⁸ B Fourie: *Brandpunte: agter die skerms met Suid-Africa se berkenste diplomaat*, p. 101.

¹⁴⁹ *Le Monde*, 1 June 1976.

major western industrial nations for a larger share of the lucrative South African market. The sale came at an opportune moment for the French nuclear industry, which was in serious economic difficulties. The Americans, although not having the lion's share, came in for a substantial part of the business through the powerful Westinghouse group.¹⁵⁰

The French nuclear assistance could be seen as recognition of the supply of free use uranium needed to continue its nuclear military programme from 1964 onwards. In 1974, with the explosion of the Indian bomb, a big loophole appeared in the Non-Proliferation Treaty of Nuclear Arms (NPT). 1976 was the year when another public protest was organized at the immediate danger represented by the "spread" –probably unavoidable in the long term - of the supreme weapon. Thus, in January 1976, at the instigation of the USA, the representatives of the seven major countries exporting nuclear know-how, who had been meeting in London since mid-1975, succeeded in signing an agreement harmonising sales and extending the requested safeguards to purchasing countries. In the middle of 1976, seven other countries joined what was now called the "Club of London". The 14 countries were Canada, France, the USA, Great Britain, Japan, USSR, the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, the Democratic Republic of Germany, Sweden and Czechoslovakia.¹⁵¹

In September 1976, President Giscard d'Estaing informed his government about the creation of a Commission to guide and control nuclear exports. The Commission, presided over by the President, consisted of the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance, Industry, External Trade, as well as the Administrator of the Atomic Energy Commission. The creation of that Commission meant that in future the negotiation of contracts and sales of nuclear installations would not be left entirely in the hands of the exporters or the economists, but would be subject to political consideration.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ *African Development*, Vol. 10, No. 8: *How France and S. Africa did the nuclear deal* by Howard Schissel, pp. 784-85.

¹⁵¹ *Le Monde*, 18 December 1976.

¹⁵² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 5, Creation of Commission for Examination of export of Nuclear Installations, France: Relations with South Africa, 13.10.1975 – 29.4.1977.

The presence on the panel of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was to be noted in that regard. It was apparent that the sale of French nuclear plants to countries like South Africa, Brazil and Pakistan had been followed by intensive criticism. Although the full functions of the Commission were not yet known, one could assume that the political considerations would be thoroughly examined before a nuclear contract was signed.¹⁵³

As the French government was facing more and more internal and international pressures with regard to its supply of arms and nuclear reactors to Pretoria as well as its attitude towards the violence resulting from the Soweto riots, Louis de Guiringaud, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, held a press conference on 3 November 1976. He declared that France's external nuclear policy was "parallel" to that of the USA. He said that France would not export "sensitive nuclear equipment, fuel or technology which could lead to the construction of nuclear weapons". On 9 November 1976, the French Secretary of State said that France would sell no more nuclear power stations to South Africa after the two reactors already ordered.¹⁵⁴

The French Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs, Pierre-Christian Taittinger, told the French Senate in reply to questions, that the two 922-megawatt stations ordered by South Africa could only be used for peaceful purposes. Taittinger's statement followed a reappraisal of the French nuclear exports policy ordered by President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.¹⁵⁵

On 16 December, at the end of the meeting of the Council for External Nuclear Policy, Jean Philippe Lecat, spokesman of the Elysée Palace, read the following communiqué: "in the pursuance of her peaceful and humanitarian tradition, France intended not to contribute to the terrible threat of the proliferation of nuclear arms. In application of the principles defined on 11 October 1976 by the Council for External Nuclear Policy, the French government had decided not to authorize, until further notice, the signing of bilateral contracts on the sale to third countries of industrial plants for re-processing fuel.

¹⁵³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 5, Creation of Commission for Examination of export of Nuclear Installations, France: Relations with South Africa, 13.10.1975 – 29.4.1977.

¹⁵⁴ *Le Monde*, 4 November 1976.

¹⁵⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 November 1976.

It was reiterated, under the terms of the government's statement of 11 October, that, since nuclear energy represented for a number of countries a competitive source of energy necessary for their development, France remained ready to contribute to the implementation of its peaceful use according to the principles which she had laid down".¹⁵⁶

Nonetheless, in July 1977, France and South Africa signed a contract for the supply of 1000 tons of natural uranium at US \$ 27 an ounce by 1980. The deal was concluded between the French firm COGEMA, controlled by the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), and the South African group Randfontein Estates. France was to finance the equipment of the South African company through a loan without interest of US \$ 103 million between January 1977 and July 1978 in three phases. The repayment of the loan would take place by 1983.¹⁵⁷

In March 1981, few months after the Reagan administration took office, Brand Fourie (South African ambassador to Washington), Dr Wynard de Villiers (President of the Atomic Energy Board), Sanel du Plessis (Director General of the Department of Minerals and Energy), Jan Smit (ESCOM representative) and Dereck Auret went to Paris for discussions with American representatives, H Marshall and A Friedman. During the discussions, the South African delegation proposed that if the USA could no longer deliver the needed enriched uranium, they should at least, allow France "to supply the two initial fuel loads and two reloads for the Koeberg power station" in order to avoid the project to become a "white elephant". The South African delegation also suggested that any further negotiations regarding the contract be postponed. Despite Pretoria's refusal to adhere to the NPT, Washington was prepared to look at the contractual obligations signed under the Carter administration. As a result, the Reagan administration would not object the delivery of the two initial cores and first reloads. In the meantime, according to the ESCOM contract with the American Department of Energy (DOE) formally known as ERDA, South Africa would deliver uranium to the USA. The payment of the uranium

¹⁵⁶ *Le Monde*, 18 December 1976.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 July 1977.

enrichment would only take place after the export permit had been obtained from Washington.¹⁵⁸

As a result, in May 1981, Brand Fourie and Pik Botha went to the USA where they discussed the Koeberg situation. However, before departing from South Africa, the government's intentions about the NPT were cleared up. Indeed, on 14 May, Pik Botha issued a document which stated that: "As in the past, South Africa will continue to conduct and administer its nuclear affairs in a manner which is in line with the spirit, principles and goal of the NPT". After this declaration, Washington endorsed the Paris' proposition, as the purchase deal would be handled by a French broker who had already visited South Africa a year before and consulted with du Plessis, Dr de Villiers and Smit. It would be a normal legal transaction subject to full guarantees. At that stage, the supply of enriched uranium exceeded the demand on the international market; therefore Pretoria did not see any problem in obtaining the product. That was how the threat of the Koeberg plant becoming a "white elephant" disappeared.¹⁵⁹

However, ESCOM still faced another problem in adhering to the contract's terms with the DOE with regard to the delivery of the feed material because of important yearly expenditures. Furthermore, the cost of producing uranium would be very expensive whereas the contract for enriched uranium from the DOE would not be cancelled and the product would be difficult to sell on the international market. There were also uncertainties about when and if the American export-permit for the enriched uranium would be granted to South Africa. Consequently, a high ranked South African delegation led by Fourie, in close cooperation with Dr de Villiers and the Department of Foreign Affairs conducted the negotiations with the Americans. After several meetings between Fourie and American ambassador Richard Kennedy, representing Washington, Pretoria once again reiterated its position regarding the nuclear field by stating that "the South African government would conduct and administer its nuclear affairs in a manner which is in line with the spirit, principles and goal of the NPT". After this statement, the DOE informed ESCOM that: "Based upon discussions between the US and SA governments, it

¹⁵⁸ B Fourie: *Brandpunte: agter die skerms met Suid-Africa se berkenste diplomaat*, p. 102.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

is agreed to be in the best interest of the parties to suspend the subjects contracts of sale of uranium enriching services” until both governments resolve their differences. The suspension of these contracts for an indefinite period of time could be seen as the end of ESCOM obligations towards the DOE.¹⁶⁰

The Koeberg contract between France and South Africa was mostly a result of French refusal to observe international recommendations against Pretoria for the maintenance of its apartheid policy.

4.3 South Africa’s importance in supplying France with strategic raw materials in the mid-1970s.

In Western Europe, France was more favourably endowed with mineral deposits than most others, and the French mining and metallurgical industry had been based to a large extent, like the United Kingdom, on ore deposits developed in overseas territories that were formerly part of the colonial empire. Over the years, France had maintained its traditional mining links with its former colonies and had expanded its mining interests to Canada, Australia, South America, the Middle East and African countries. Two thirds of France’s mineral imports came from Africa and South America. Thus, African countries supplied more than 40 percent of France’s non-energy mineral requirements, for instance manganese from Gabon and South Africa, phosphates from Togo and Senegal, chromites from South Africa and Madagascar, copper from Zaire and Zambia, and iron ore from Liberia. South American countries supplied more than 20 percent of France’s non-energy mineral requirements, mainly iron ore from Brazil and copper from Chile.¹⁶¹

In August 1975, the French government decided to build a stockpile of minerals and allocated FF 250 million for this. The original aim was to build a two-month supply of non-energy minerals. The stockpile formed part of the five-year mining plan. Other objectives of the plan were to build up domestic non-energy mineral production from 15

¹⁶⁰ B Fourie: *Brandpunte: agter die skerms met Suid-Africa se berkendste diplomaat*, pp. 103-104.

¹⁶¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/2, Annexure Jacket 1979, Department of Mines, Minerals Bureau, Internal Report No. 45 of 30 April 1979, The dependence of France on foreign mineral supplies, France: Economic and Financial situation.

percent of requirements in 1975 to 20 percent in 1980, to diversify sources of supply, and to improve relations with the producers and potential producers.¹⁶²

Within the European Community, France was the largest producer of some strategic minerals such as iron ore, coal and bauxite. However, these minerals were of low grade. Due to the competition from high-grade imported iron ore, coal and bauxite production had dropped between 1960 and 1977. The drop of the local production of selected minerals is presented in Table 5. Iron ore dropped from 67 million tons in 1960 to 36, 6 million tons in 1977 and would have probably stabilized at 30 million tons per year. Coal reserves were fairly large but the remaining deposits were deep and heavily faulted.¹⁶³

The production of French coal dropped from 58, 2 million tons in 1960 to 24, 4 million tons in 1977 and would have probably stabilized at 10 million tons by 1985. Just over 2000 tons of uranium a year were produced and reserves amounted to 51 800 tons but France was still a large net importer. Bauxite production dropped from 3 million tons in 1970 to 2 million tons in 1977 and the mine was due to close in 1995.

Table 5: Drop of France production of selected minerals 1960-1977

(In million tons).

Years	Selected minerals		
	Iron ore	Coal	Bauxite
1960	67	58.2	-
1970	-	-	3
1977	36.6	24.4	2

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, French Stockpile plans, France: Relations with the RSA, 2.8.1978 – 4.4.1979.

As French local production of minerals was dropping down in the early 1970s, France drew up four degrees of vulnerability of its mineral supplies based on the origin of the

¹⁶² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, French Stockpile plans, France: relations with the RSA, 2.8.1978 – 4.4.1979.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

supplies, possibility of diversifying, degree of independence, nature of the market and the effect on the economy in the case of reduced supplies. The following minerals were considered as of the highest importance: Silver, platinum, diamonds, phosphates, zirconium, titanium, cobalt, and vanadium. Of high importance were antimony, copper, manganese, molybdenum, tungsten and asbestos. The medium importance group was constituted by bauxite, chrome and tin, while iron, nickel, lead, zinc and potash were considered less important.¹⁶⁴

Mineral exports from South Africa to France were growing rapidly and increased from FF 1007 million in 1976 to FF 1856 million in 1977, constituting 75,14 percent of Pretoria's total exports to France. However, the statistics badly underrated South Africa's importance as a supplier to France, as large quantities of Pretoria's minerals such as platinum and diamonds were imported via third countries. The stability of South Africa could be regarded as important to Paris. Indeed, Pretoria was a major producer of platinum, diamonds, vanadium, antimony, manganese and chrome. South Africans were also suppliers of phosphates, zirconium, titanium, copper, asbestos, tin, iron, lead and zinc. The country was also a minor supplier of silver and cobalt. In addition, South Africa was France's major supplier of uranium and steam coal.¹⁶⁵

The following table shows South Africa's importance in the supply of strategic raw materials to France between 1975 and 1978.

¹⁶⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, French Stockpile plans, France: relations with the RSA, 2.8.1978 – 4.4.1979.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Table 6: Rank of South Africa as a mineral supplier to France (1975-1978).

Commodity	1975	1976	1977	1978
Antimony (Concentrate)	4	1	3	4
Asbestos	3	3	3	3
Chrome ore	3	3	1	2
Coal (Anthracite)	4	3	3	3
Coal (Bituminous)	-	4	2	1
Ferrochrome	1	1	1	1
Gold	2	2	3	2
Granite	1	1	1	1
Lithium Minerals	1	1	1	-
Manganese ore	1	1	1	1
Manganese metal	1	1	1	1
Nickel	6	5	5	2
Platinum group metals	3	2	4	2
Vanadium pentoxide	2	3	3	4
Vermiculite	2	2	2	2

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/2, Annexure Jacket 1979, Department of Mines, Minerals Bureau, Internal Report No. 45 of 30 April 1979, The dependence of France on foreign mineral supplies, France: Economic and Financial situation.

Table 6 shows the importance of South Africa's raw materials in French industry between 1975 and 1978. Thus, South Africa played a major role in supplying France with the vulnerable raw materials that its industry lacked. This table represents the first phase (1975-1979) of the French stockpile programme initiated in August 1975 by the French government in order to decrease the vulnerability of its mineral supplies. South Africa played a role of first importance in the supply of France with strategic raw materials for a period of four years. In most cases, Pretoria came first or second among France's suppliers of minerals with a particular input for ferrochrome, granite, lithium minerals, manganese, vermiculite and gold, where Pretoria came first, second and once third (1977). With such a dependence on South Africa's minerals, the French government was

not in a position to cut its ties with Pretoria despite its embargo on supplying Pretoria with ground and air defence equipment that Giscard d'Estaing decided in August 1975.¹⁶⁶

Table 7: The relative share of selected South Africa's minerals in French minerals imports 1975-1978 (in percentage).

Commodity	1975	1976	1977	1978
Antimony (concentrate)	11	26	14	7
Asbestos	12	10	9	8
Chrome Ore	15	20	32	24
Coal (Anthracite)	13	16	18	27
Coal (Bituminous)	2	9	22	38
Ferrochrome	36	46	44	37
Gold	9	9	7	16
Granite	40	44	45	41
Lithium Minerals	42	54	44	-
Manganese Ore	47	49	25	41
Manganese Metal	80	54	41	54
Platinum group Metals	14	15	12	17
Vanadium Pentoxide	30	25	18	20
Vermiculite	27	38	16	19

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/2, Annexure Jacket 1979, Department of Mines, Minerals Bureau, Internal Report No. 45 of 30 April 1979, The dependence of France on foreign mineral supplies, France: Economic and Financial situation.

Table 7 shows the share of South African raw materials in terms of percentage in the overall French imports. South Africa was a major economic partner for France by supplying more than 30 percent of France's total imports of vulnerable raw materials

¹⁶⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/2, Annexure Jacket 1979, Department of Mines, Minerals Bureau, Internal Report No. 45 of 30 April 1979, The dependence of France on foreign mineral supplies, Table 6. France: Economic and Financial situation.

between 1975 and 1978. Certain commodities such as manganese, granite, lithium minerals and ferrochrome were the most in demand as the figure itself shows. Once again, in this position South Africa was a huge market for French industrialists in their stockpile programme supplies. If arms deals between the two countries were facing some difficulties due to the French partial military embargo of 1975 as well as the mandatory UN military embargo of 1977, which France decided to observe, the South African mineral exports to France played a major role in assisting Paris in its programme of diversifying its sources of supply of vulnerable materials.¹⁶⁷

South Africa's role in supplying France with a variety of vital minerals directly or through other countries, did help France to reduce its vulnerability between 1975 and 1979 as shown in the two precedent tables. The South African involvement in supplying France with sensitive raw materials over the first phase of the French stockpile programme brought considerable amounts of cash to Pretoria, which, at the same period asked for more French industrial involvement in the development of the booming South African economy. Table 8 shows the financial output of South African supplies of vulnerable raw materials to France in 1977 and 1978.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/2, Annexure Jacket 1979, Department of Mines, Minerals Bureau, Internal Report No. 45 of 30 April 1979, The dependence of France on foreign mineral supplies, Table 7. France: Economic and Financial situation

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, Table 8. France: Economic and Financial situation.

Table 8: Value of France's selected mineral imports from South Africa, 1977-78 (in thousands of FF)

Commodity	1977	1978
Coal (bituminous)	651 878	764 455
Gold	121 467	313 060
Iron Ore	66 975	96 126
Manganese Ore	64 767	95 730
Nickel	41 088	72 981
Ferrochrome	40 890	33 415
Platinum Group Metals	35 107	38 251
Copper	31 977	35 412
Diamonds: industrial	7 468	17 597
Diamonds: gem quality	5 785	4 909
Vermiculite	3 652	4 261
Vanadium Pentoxide	3 608	6 620
Tin	3 275	9 474
Ferromanganese	3 236	-
Manganese	2 238	2 561
Total	1 083 411	1 494 852

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/2, Annexure Jacket 1979, Department of Mines, Minerals Bureau, Internal Report No. 45 of 30 April 1979, The dependence of France on foreign mineral supplies, France: Economic and Financial situation.

Table 8 shows that the import of South Africa's raw materials by France was increasing as part of the first phase of the stockpile programme initiated in 1975. However, despite spending huge amounts of money in getting strategic raw materials from several suppliers such as South Africa, the French government was still in need of more stocks in order to decrease France's dependency on such commodities. Even though France reached some autonomy in the supply of some strategic commodities, the country was still depending on 55 to 60 percent from overseas suppliers.¹⁶⁹ Two-third of French mineral supplies came from developing countries. As a result, the French government made a decision to quadruple its strategic and raw material stocks to a level worth about £ 150 million. At

¹⁶⁹ *Le Matin*, 4 January 1979.

the end of March 1979, André Giraud, French Minister of Industry, followed cabinet approval of an overall programme to make France less vulnerable to fluctuating supplies of raw materials. The French stockpile strategy covering the first phase 1975-1979 was worth FF 250 million (£ 29 million). The French government agreed that stocks in 1979 were insufficient and that were looking into ways of financing an increase to four times the level of the first phase.¹⁷⁰

The French government agreed to continue to spend about FF 50 million a year on an inventory of France's raw material sources, under a renewed five-year plan starting in 1980 as the country had a raw material deficit of about FF 7, 5 billion a year.¹⁷¹ These measures were linked to the efforts to increase French cooperation with developing countries that had important mineral deposits. For the mining counsellor of the South African embassy in Paris, it was clear that minerals of South African origin had an important role to play in any French stockpile plan, as Pretoria was already a major French supplier of strategic minerals during the first phase of the French stockpile programme.¹⁷²

In April 1981, France elected François Mitterrand as the first socialist President of the Fifth Republic. Mitterrand's arrival at the Elysée Palace brought some drastic changes in the long Franco-South African military relations because the socialist Party had already promised to cut France's nuclear and military ties with Pretoria in case of victory during the 1981 presidential elections.

¹⁷⁰ *Financial Times*, 4 January 1979.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, French Stockpile plans. France: Relations with the RSA, 2.8.1978 – 4.4.1979.

Chapter 5

The French involvement in South Africa's arms industry and the role of important French lobby groups.

This chapter focuses on the role played by French arms companies in the building of a local arms industry in South Africa from the mid-1960s onwards and the start of French business circles on the South African market. It also explains the role played by the Gaullist party in assisting South Africa to build its war machine just after the first UN embargo of 1963 as well as the establishment of Franco-South African lobbies to promote all kinds of mutual interests. In addition, it clarifies the role played by Armscor in supplying the SADF with major weapons developed on French models in the 1980s, when the country was militarily involved in Southern Africa.

5.1 The 1963 UN arms embargo against South Africa and Pretoria's decision to build a local arm industry and the role played by French arm companies.

In 1963, the UN adopted a military embargo against Pretoria in protest at political imprisonments and the climate of violence in South Africa. As Pretoria came more and more under international pressure, the South African authorities knew that they had to diversify their sources of military supplies. The South African government, which was determined to abide by its apartheid policy despite international pressures, looked for new military suppliers in Europe. As a result, with the turn-around of the British government towards the supply of military equipment, the French government saw the opportunity to step in and fill the gap opened by the departure of the British.¹

The only French military equipment in use in the SADF during that period were Entac anti-tank missiles that South Africa bought in 1955-56.² By the early 1960s, French military equipment was in high demand on the world market, especially from Third-World countries which did not want to depend only on the two superpowers, namely the

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 4, *L'Apartheid et la France 1958-1973*, Congres National Africain, p. 41. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 4.10.1972 – 5.9.1975.

² D C Bach: *La France et l'Apartheid, histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 145.

USA and the USSR, for their military needs. In fact, the French involvement in the colonial warfare in Indochina and Algeria gave the French army a certain experience with guerilla warfare as well as the possibility for French manufacturers to improve their products as the country, was under a vast military programme that de Gaulle launched in 1958 after his return to politics.³

By the early 1960s French military equipment was in demand in the SADF and France became one of Pretoria's main military suppliers. The fact that France did not vote for the UN Security Council embargo in 1963 helped South Africa to build strong military capabilities over the following years and by the end of the 1960s the SADF was considered to be the strongest defence force in Africa. French willingness to sell military equipment to South Africa was accompanied by de Gaulle's decision to build up an independent nuclear force and the necessity to improve the economy and modernize the industrial infrastructure brought South Africa into the picture as a supplier of gold and uranium, and as a customer for French armaments and goods. South Africa produced uranium and France was desperately in need of such raw material to increase its nuclear power. In fact, in 1957, France could not buy Canadian uranium, as the USA and Britain were the only Western nuclear powers able to get free use uranium from the non-Communist world. At the time, South Africa and the North American producers were producing respectively 15 and 76 percent of the Western uranium.⁴

In the meantime, South African authorities took the decision to build a local arms industry in order to free the country from its high dependence on western countries, and in 1961 no less than 127 licences for the local manufacture of military equipment were negotiated with overseas arms firms.⁵ In 1961, the first military licence sold to Pretoria by Paris was the production of French Panhard AML armoured cars, and by 1965 production started to take place under the supervision of the German company

³ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, South Africa: 1960-1965. Visite du Ministre de la Défense, le Cap, 12 Juin 1961, p. 4.

⁴ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud*, p. 175.

⁵ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 41.

Hentschell.⁶ The Verwoed government wanted to free its military dependence on its Anglo-Saxon traditional partners that were London and Washington. Thus by 1963, France, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), Belgium, Switzerland and Israel were Pretoria's other military suppliers.⁷

The first French Alouette helicopters arrived in South Africa in 1961 after Pretoria took the decision to expand the SAAF's helicopter squadrons, and in July of the same year, South Africa's Defence Minister Jim Fouché accompanied by Commandant General P H Grobbelaar and J P de Villiers, Secretary for Defence, went to France as part of a European tour that took them to Britain, West Germany and Portugal.⁸

In Paris, Defence Minister Fouché was to collect additional information regarding both armament procurement as well as guerrilla warfare doctrine from the French military authorities. He announced his government's intention of buying another group of French Alouette III helicopters as well as the French Mirage III jet fighters.⁹ During Fouché's mission in Paris, a third contract for helicopters was signed on 11 July as well as a contract for Brandt rockets. Thus, the first arms deals were finalized during 1961, including a number of production licences for small arms, and for the Panhard armoured cars that were to become the Eland under South African production. By 1961, France sold to South Africa a variety of military equipment including seven Alouette II helicopters, 33 Alouette III helicopters, 60 Brandt mortars with their ammunition and 150 000 Brandt rockets.¹⁰ In September 1961, negotiations with the French government on Mirage jet fighters led the South African government to sign a contract for 16 fighters worth £ 7, 4 million.¹¹

Prior to the establishment of the Armaments Production Board in 1964, several technical missions went to France where they visited French firms specialising in the production of

⁶ French Foreign Affairs Ministry, Department of Political Affairs, Afrique-Levant, UN series No. 8, Paris, Livraison de matériels d'armement à l'Afrique du Sud par de pays tiers, 6 Octobre 1965. South Africa: 1960-1965.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, Visite du Ministre de la Défense à Paris, Le Cap 12 Juin 1961.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Afrique du Sud, Paris 23 Août 1961. South Africa: 1960-1965.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Télégramme No. 103, Pretoria, le 19 Septembre 1961 Ambafrance.

military equipment, including ammunition and explosives. For instance, a South African technical mission went to France between 22 and 28 November 1961. The mission was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Verster, an ammunition specialist from the South African Defence Ministry. He was accompanied by four members from the African Explosive Chemical Industry, a South African company approved to produce all ammunition for the SADF. In France they visited several companies that manufactured ammunition. Thus, on 23 November they had a discussion at DEFA, caserne SULLY on the production of 90 mm anti-tank ammunition for AML 245. On 24 November they met with Rouxel, Director General of the Expansion-Exportation Department. Later on they met at Direction des Poudres where they discussed the manufacture of ammunition for 17 mm rockets and 90 mm guns with French specialists and assisted at a demonstration of rifle grenades and had further discussions on the manufacture of ammunition. On 27 November, the South African delegation visited the Hotchkiss-Brandt factories at Nantes, which specialised in the manufacture of ammunition for 60 mm and 80 mm mortars. On 28 November, the same delegation visited Hotchkiss-Brandt factories at La Perse St Aubin which specialised in the manufacture of 37 rockets before returning to Paris.¹²

On 9 April 1963, at the request of the South African government, a report on organization and overseas cooperation dealing with rocket and guided missile research and development by L J le Roux, vice-President of the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was published in South Africa. Indeed, during a meeting of the Defence Research Council (DRC) on 3 August 1962, le Roux, assisted by Dr. C F Naudé and Commandant F van Niekerk, was tasked to go to Western Europe to gather information on rocket and guided missile Research and Development (R&D) and to establish what assistance could be obtained in speeding up the South Africa's programme.¹³

¹² DOD, SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. AMI, Group 2, Box 2, Note relative au séjour en France d'une mission Sud Africaine, Paris le 22 Novembre 1961. Subject: Manufacture of Ammunition and Explosives.

¹³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Pretoria. File No. 9/56/9/1, Rocket and guided missile research and development; report on organization and overseas cooperation. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1963.

In France, as far as the air-to-ground missiles were concerned, the team visited the firms Hotchkiss-Brandt and Nord Aviation. At the first firm they were interested in the production of a 3-inch rocket, 37 mm and 68 mm rockets of which the manufacturing licences were already bought by the Department of Defence from Hotchkiss-Brandt for local production. In Nord Aviation, they were interested in the AS 20 and AS 30 guided missiles. Then, for air-to-air missiles, the team visited the Matra Company. The SAAF were interested in the acquisition of Matra 530 and 535 guided missiles for use by supersonic aircraft. The team recommended that in case South African scientists and technicians were to be trained on more sophisticated types of guided missiles, it would be possible to include the Matra 530 in the local production provided the necessary licence could be bought.¹⁴

Regarding negotiations with overseas firms, the French firms Hotchkiss-Brandt, Nord Aviation and Matra were grouped together by the South African team since these firms manufactured anti-tank missiles, guided and unguided air-to-ground missiles and guided air-to-air missiles. Propellants for all missiles were produced by Monopole des Poudres and their production was a government monopoly. During their visits, the South African team was introduced to various weapon systems and given full descriptions of each of them. As a result, L J le Roux proposed that cooperation with the French firms was to be established, mainly on the basis of buying manufacturing licences and getting the necessary know-how by sending some of Pretoria's technicians to France.¹⁵

With the view to furthering the missile programme, South African scientists were recruited and sent overseas, principally to France, to study the principles and techniques of missile construction. The missile programme was jointly financed by the South African and French governments, and the missiles were developed with the assistance of a French electrical engineering company Thomson CSF.¹⁶

¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Pretoria. File No. 9/56/9/1, Rocket and guided missile research and development; report on organization and overseas cooperation. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1963.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ J Cock: *War and Society, the militarisation of South Africa*, p. 221.

Pretoria's military orders placed with France between 1 April 1961 and 11 August 1964 amounted to over R 77 million (See Appendix 3). The major military equipment bought from France during that period covered only the needs of the South African Army (SA Army) and the South African Air Force (SAAF) while the South African Navy (SAN), the third component of the SADF in the 1960s, remained under British monopoly as defined under the Simon's Town agreement of 1955 and the agreement signed in Cape Town in October 1958 between the two countries (Cf Chapter 3). The French military involvement in the SAN would only take place in the late 1960s-early 1970s when Pretoria bought three submarines from the French dockyards.¹⁷

The South African government's desire to modernise and improve its defence forces became a reality with the adoption of important measures elaborated in 1960, decided in 1961 and applied in 1962. The major part of those measures was within the competence of the Defence Ministry. They concerned the increase of troops, the modernisation of equipment and the reorganisation of the Defence Force.¹⁸ In February 1963, under the Defence Amendment Bill, Defence Minister Fouché announced that he was authorised to increase the number of personnel in the three services of the SADF, especially the increase of Permanent Forces that was to reach 19 000 men with the SA Army as the main beneficiary of that increase; it doubled in manpower between 1961 and 1963.¹⁹

If in terms of manpower the SA Army expanded, the SAAF on the other hand made the most significant improvement with the acquisition of 40 Alouette IIs and IIIs, seven C-130s from the USA and 16 Mirage IIIs. The equipment had not only been almost entirely renewed, but also sensibly increased.²⁰

Several other South African military missions took place after 1961, and in 1964, just after the UN military embargo against Pretoria of 1963; the South African government took the resolution to launch the Armaments Production Board under the Armament Act

¹⁷ A Du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 270.

¹⁸ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294. Report of the French Military Attaché in Madagascar, Captain J. Fouillard in May 1963. He was in charge of exploring the South African military needs on behalf of his government.

¹⁹ *South African Digest*, 21 February 1963: "Defence Amendment Bill will speed up mobilisation".

²⁰ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294. Report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, Colonel Orsini (26.04.1963 – 24.06.1966).

(No. 87 of 1964) as a new organization of armaments production.²¹ The setting up of the Armaments Production Board could be seen as a sign of seriousness with which the UN embargo of 1963 was met in South Africa. Its first task was to coordinate the weaponry acquirement activities of all parties concerned, namely the government, the SADF, private business and the few state industrial units that subsisted at that time. The Armaments Board took over from the Department of Defence the management of the two state factories, the Lyttelton Engineering Works and the Pretoria Metal Press (PMP) .303 ammunition factory, to improve effectiveness. The purchase of armaments, which up to 1964 was handled by the SADF and the State Tender Board, was also reassigned to the new organization for the same reason. The main task of the Armaments Board was to guarantee efficient exploitation of industry. The principle of using private manufacturing for arms production was, in general, validated but with significant exemptions.²²

New state factories were to be erected for the manufacture of weapons, which were described as either extremely tactical or where production was unprofitable by regular business principles. The description of ‘strategic’ arms by the South African government at the time incorporated merely ammunition, guns, missiles, explosives, propellants, mines and bombs. The inventory did not embrace aircraft or ships. Aircraft construction started as a private activity in 1964, and was afterwards reassigned to state manufacture. During the early 1960s, South African arms manufacture was at the assemblage phase, as conveyed by F J Bell, Armscor Manager, when he placed South African industry in the second echelon in the mid-1960s, and it was apparent that the industry could only begin military production at a level they were familiar with. Accordingly, the initial activities were domestic assemblage from imported kits of components under the severe control and management of the licensor. Without them, South Africa could not have got off the ground. For the first time, the industry was exposed, in the attendance of the licensor, to quality control, excellence supervision, configuration control and all the various buzz expressions, which the majority of them had never encountered before.²³

²¹ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 42.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

In 1964, the South African administration made the decision on supplementary substantive resources to support the development of an aircraft industry, but still based on private enterprise. The government relocated 40 percent of its peace-period maintenance facility to private concerns: the Bonuskor group was solicited to shape the corporations for the undertaking of the aircraft industry and two were recorded the same year. One was the Atlas Aircraft Corporation of South Africa with an opening capital of £ 23.5 million, set up as the operational company in November 1964. The second was Bonaero Corporation with controlling interests in Atlas. The other main shareholder besides Bonuskor was the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC).²⁴

Thus, in June 1964, D Maartens and Nel de Wet of Bonuskor visited Rome from 15 to 22 June, Paris from 24 to 28 June and London from 30 June to 8 July in connection with an important project for the South African government.²⁵ Maartens was originally authorized by the South African government to discuss with the Fiat-Macchi Group in Italy a project for the creation of an industry to import, assemble and eventually manufacture jet-trainer aircraft in South Africa. He was also authorized to discuss the creation of a plant for aircraft maintenance and repair in South Africa with suitable French aircraft manufacturers.²⁶

At the initiative of French interests in de Gaulle's party, it was suggested that the French aircraft industry might be able to seek the cooperation and obtain the working plans of the Macchi Group and so set up an industry that would enjoy the approval and hence the protection of the French government. Consequently, Maartens returned immediately to Paris to continue conversations after the French Prime Minister, G Pompidou had personally indicated to General André Puget of Sud-Aviation, the builders of the Concorde, the Caravelle and the Alouette helicopter, and hence one of the most advanced aircraft constructors in the world, that he might with advantage meet Maartens. In the meantime, the latter ascertained that the Fiat-Macchi Group would not object in principle

²⁴ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 65.

²⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 1, Cypher telegram, dispatched 12 June 1964. France: Aankoop van Toerusting vir SA department van vendediging: Frankryk, Relevant files: 4.4.1963 – 26.8.1964.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, French Financial and technical assistance.

to working with the French, and would in fact prefer to place the operation under the protection of the French government.²⁷

On his return to Paris, two meetings were arranged between Maartens and Sud-Aviation representatives. A satisfactory agreement was reached with a Sud-Aviation subsidiary for the aircraft repair and maintenance project, and it was provisionally confirmed by the signing of a letter of intent. An agreement was also reached in principle that Sud-Aviation should undertake a technical advisory project leading to the manufacture of Macchi jet-trainer aircraft and eventually of other types. It was, however, made clear that the latter agreement depended on the approval of the South African authorities and that a letter of intent would be transmitted to Sud-Aviation by the South African embassy in Paris, once the necessary authorization had been received.²⁸

While Maartens had conversations with Sud-Aviation, de Wet was introduced to the leading French financial and steel manufacturing interests, including CAFL, Schneider, Alsthom and Société Générale, who showed considerable willingness to participate in the project. Sud-Aviation confirmed that the steel firms were entirely able to supply all the special requirements of the aircraft industry at competitive prices. The steel firms in question were equally ready to cooperate with Sud-Aviation both on a short term (supply) and long term (manufacturing) basis.²⁹

Construction of the Atlas Aircraft industrial unit was initiated with advisory support and maps drawn up by the French firm Sud-Aviation in 1965. The permit for the first aircraft to be manufactured, the Impala-1 jet trainer, had already been acquired from Italy, and assemblage could start in 1966. In addition to the assembly plant, the Atlas works incorporated an overhaul hangar, electrical, mechanical and hydraulic workshops, storehouses and three turbojet test houses. The deadline for the completion of the

²⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 1, French Financial and technical assistance. France: Aankoop van Toerusting vir SA department van vendediging: Frankryk, Relevant files: 4.4.1963 – 26.8.1964.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

complete plant area was May 1967, by which time the SAAF started to operate some 15 Impalas.³⁰

Yet, at the request of the South African government, a memorandum was sent on 16 October 1964, by the South African Military Attaché in Paris, Colonel H R Meintjes, in which he recommended that Pretoria should notice that by virtue of the French organization for the supply of armament, an extremely tight control was exercised over the export of war materials from France. In the French organization it became clear that no transaction involving the acquisition of armaments, licences for local manufacture of war material, technical assistance for such manufacture, the training of scientific or technical personnel could be concluded with any French manufacturer without the authority of the French government, acting through the Ministerial Delegation for Armament (DMA). It followed therefore that any approach relating to the acquisition of war material or associated supplies stood a greater chance of proceeding smoothly if such approach was in the first instance made through the official channels of the South African embassy in Paris to the competent authority to authorize such a transaction. Such a competent authority for all aspects of war supplies in France was the DMA.³¹

Any requirement, be it for research study, the evaluation of a weapon system, the acquisition of a manufacturing licence for equipment to be manufactured in the RSA or for the purchase of equipment, would originate in the normal way with the General Staff of the armed forces. After the approval of the Commandant General such a requirement would be passed to an authority, subject to the Minister of Defence, representative of all interests affected by Defence Research and Development, production and procurement (e.g. The General Staff, the Secretary for Defence, the CSIR, the Defence Production Board, the Department of Finance, the Department of Commerce and Industries and the Department of Foreign Affairs).³²

³⁰ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 65.

³¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 2, French organization for Armament supplies. France: purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, Relevant files: 20.1.1964 – 1.2.1965.

³² *Ibid.*

The decision as to the method by which the requirement should be satisfied was to be taken by this authority. Where the decision taken involved the possibility of calling upon French resources, whatever form these might have taken, the South African embassy in Paris was immediately to be put fully in the picture and called upon to take the necessary steps to obtain official authority for negotiations to commence. This might involve a simple request for information, an application for authority for the visit of an evaluation mission or permission to undertake negotiations with French business or industrial interests. Such a procedure would have the advantage of keeping both the South African embassy and the French government officially informed of Pretoria's activities in the field of armaments in France and of eliminating the intervention of agents during the initial stages of negotiations leading up to the signing of a contract.³³

Consequently, as French military equipment was in increasing use within the SADF, especially in the SA Army and the SAAF, Pretoria's military authorities were able to buy manufacturing rights of French ammunition and equipment. Thus, in their efforts to speed up the building of the local arms industry, South Africa addressed a list of items to be addressed to French manufacturers. For the SA Army, manufacturing rights were addressed for the acquisition inter alia of the Hotchkiss-Brandt 81 mm mortar, the grenade rifle Heat STRIM, the guided missile anti-tank HE ENTAC and the armoured car VA 90 Mk 11-turret.³⁴

As far as the SAAF was concerned, Pretoria requested licence rights for, inter alia, aircraft bomb initiators (pyrotechnic re-arming cartridges) for its Mirage jet fighters.³⁵

Thus, by December 1966, a certain number of agreements for the cession of the manufacturing licences involving many millions of French Francs in down payment and

³³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 9/56/9 Vol. 2, French organization for Armament supplies. France: purchase of equipment for the SA Department of Defence, Relevant files: 20.1.1964 – 1.2.1965.

³⁴ DOD, SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. File No. Map 70/15 Vol. 1, Items for which manufacturing rights must be assessed, Appendix A to Manufacturing Rights – French Ammunition and Equipment, Subject: Armament policy.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

royalties were signed between the South African authorities and the French firms as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: French military licences bought by South Africa by December 1966.

Items	Licence granted by
AML Armoured Car	Panhard
81 mm Mortar and Ammunition, 60 mm Muzzle-Loading Mortar and Ammunition, 37 mm and 68 mm SNEB Rockets	Hotchkiss-Brandt
50 kg Practice Bomb	SAMETO

Source: DOD, SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. File No. Map 70/15 Vol. 1, Licence agreements, Annexure 2 to MAP/70/15 dated December 1966. Subject: Armament policy

According to the same source, manufacturing licences for ENTAC missiles, 400 kg aircraft bombs and anti-tank rifle grenades were also granted to South Africans and negotiations were in progress for the licence agreements of AML turrets for 90 mm DEFA gun and torpedoes.

Table 9 shows that the technical military missions that were sent to Western Europe and France in particular, by 1960 onwards by the South African military authorities brought a major boost to the implementation of a local arms industry in South Africa. In fact, by 1966 France sold to South Africa not only modern military equipment but also a number of manufacturing licences that were to play an important role in the development of Pretoria's own arms industry at a time that the country was under the embargo of its traditional Anglo-Saxon military suppliers, in particular Britain under the leadership of Harold Wilson from 1964 onwards. France could not miss such opportunity to increase its share in world military market dominated by the USA and the USSR.³⁶

In 1964, Britain refused to train South African scientists in fields of military research. Prior to the British's refusal, in December 1963 Pretoria approached the French government with which, with de Gaulle's approval, an agreement was reached between

³⁶ DOD, SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. File No. Map 70/15 Vol. 1, Items for which manufacturing rights must be assessed, Appendix A to Manufacturing Rights – French Ammunition and Equipment, Subject: Armament policy. See also A du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 267.

the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and a certain French firm, which, within a few months, made arrangements for sixteen South African scientists to be trained in France. A contract between the CSIR and that French firm was entered into and probably ran for a period extending up to 1968.³⁷

As S Meiring Naudé, President of the CSIR, said, it was vital that relations between South Africa and France were to be fostered to the utmost so that the arrangements for essential training were not to be disturbed in any way. He also said that he was convinced that the French were the only people who were willing to assist South Africans in the important field of training and who showed that they were determined to resist any interference from other Western powers who objected to the training of South Africans in the field of defence research matters.³⁸

Meiring Naudé was convinced that the aims of the French were not purely out of sympathy with the South African cause, but were directed to increase trade relations with South Africa. He personally believed that Pretoria was able to secure greater assistance from the French provided every attempt was made to place government orders for military and other equipment in France. He recommended very strongly that the French were approached for tenders for every government project or order contemplated in those instances where they supplied suitable equipment. That was not only to strengthen Pretoria's political ties with France but was also to open new doors to South African defence scientists that were still closed at the time.³⁹

Economic, political and technical events consequently brought France to provide South Africa with military apparatus and award Pretoria the certificates needed to start a domestic military industry. Indeed by 1966, South Africa had bought the indispensable manufacturing licences for the local fabrication of small arms and associated weapons generally in use in the SA Army as the chief priority of the Pretoria government. South Africa relied on local manufacture for the conventional military equipment required by the SADF at the time. As far as the creation of a local aircraft industry was concerned,

³⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 1, Relations between France and South Africa. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 18.5.1962 – 15.12.1965.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

overseas backing and contribution was fundamental. Consequently, French experts and advisors, over 1000 British aircraft engineers and technicians as well as Italian engineers helped the South Africans to set up the Impala manufacture line.⁴⁰

Between 1961 and 1968, South Africa acquired numerous of manufacturing rights from French companies that operated mostly in the production of arms needed by the SA Army. Thus, as early as 1961 the French firm Panhard Levassor sold South Africa the licence agreement for the local manufacture of the AML 245 armoured car when Pretoria bought 100 cars and spare parts for the later assembly of 800 more cars.⁴¹

Between 1962 and 1968 Hotchkiss Brandt sold inter alia licence rights and huge quantities of SNEB 37 and 68 mm rockets and launchers, and 60 and 81mm mortars and their ammunition to South Africa. As far as the Direction Technique de L'Armement Terrestre (DTAT) was concerned, between 1964 and 1965, it sold licences, 60 and 90 mm mortars as well as large numbers of their ammunition while SAMETO, ALKAN, Cartoucherie Française and Direction des Poudres licences and a certain range of their equipment such as bombs, mortars, rockets and ammunition were acquired by the SADF between 1964 and 1968. Still in 1968, licence rights for the local manufacture of the Franco-South African missile Crotale/Cactus were granted to Pretoria by CFTH as the project was jointly developed by both governments.⁴²

France became one of Pretoria's main military arms dealers from the mid-1960s onwards, offering the occasion to French companies involved in the arms business to expand their share of the lucrative South African military market though the financial figures of such operations were not made public. Pretoria paid huge amounts of money to French firms for the cession of manufacturing licences, which most of the time, cost more than the supply of the equipment itself because it involved the know-how transfer as well as the technical assistance of French technicians before South Africans were able to master the whole manufacturing process. Yet, until 1968, most of the licences purchased by Pretoria

⁴⁰ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 65.

⁴¹ DOD, SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. File No. MAP/TS/70/15 Vol. 1, Armament Policy.

⁴² *Ibid.*

did not include manufacturing rights for the local production of French aircraft, which by the end of the 1960s became the strike force of the SAAF.

During the 1960s, French firms played a significant role in the South African arms industry, which facilitated the country's self-sufficiency as far as the manufacture of small weapons was concerned. Thus, between 1965 and 1969, France supplied 45 percent of South Africa's total arms imports.⁴³

In 1968, the South African government came to the decision to change the name of the Armament Production Board, which became the Armament Board and was completed by the setting up of a unique production unit, the Armament Development and Production Corporation (Armcor), under the Armament Development and Production act (No. 57, of 1968).⁴⁴

The establishment of Armcor may be seen, partly, at least as a natural continuation of the move towards rationalization in arms production. Partly too, it resulted from a study of foreign arms industry establishments. P W Botha took a personal interest in the development of South Africa's arms production capacity, as he visited Portugal and France for the purpose of investigating the organization of arms production. Armcor was a state corporation depending almost entirely on private enterprises. From the parliamentary debates it could be seen that from 1967 onwards it was first of all the French military industrial system that was used as the model for South Africa.⁴⁵

Armcor played a central role in the highest military decision-making body, the Defence Council. In Act No. 57, amending the Armaments Act of 1964, the missions of Armcor were inventoried as follows: first, to take over all manufacturing facilities so far handled by the Armament Board; to enlarge such facilities and set up new industries; and to handle all arms exports and imports. In accordance with section four of the Act, the company should as well 'carefully review all issues connecting to raw materials required for the development or manufacture of armament, to the labour supply available for such

⁴³ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 42.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

development or manufacture, to the rates of remunerations proposed to be paid and to the weapons essential for export...'.⁴⁶

Armcor fell directly under the Minister of Defence, similar to the SADF. However, it was accountable to the Chief of the SADF (Commandant General) for armament acquisitions, a responsibility that he entrusted to Armcor. Its straight responsibility to the Defence Minister rested on finding an efficient and economical way to achieve that charge. The administration and the modus operandi of Armcor were handed over to a board of managers selected by the President. The boards of the auxiliary corporations were composed of skillful administrative and expert staff recruited from the private sector and from Armcor's own panel and higher-ranking management.⁴⁷

By 1968, the Armament Board assumed responsibility for the acquisition of all equipment and technical stores within South Africa and abroad. It also took over the coordination of defence research. The Commandant General of the SADF sat on this Board, and its chairman attended meetings of the Supreme Command, to ensure proper co-ordination.

As far as the Franco-South African military relationship was concerned, in June 1968, Professor H J Samuels, chairman of the Armament Board, on behalf of the South African government signed the project Cactus contract with representatives of Thomson-Houston.⁴⁸

Close military cooperation between French firms and South African authorities continued with the supply and launch of other major types of military equipment such as the first French built submarine for the SAN, the *Maria van Riebeck* launched by Mrs. Elize Botha, Defence Minister's wife on 18 March 1969 in Nantes.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented South Africa's Military Industry*, pp. 45-46. See also M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, pp. 225-226.

⁴⁷ H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 124.

⁴⁸ French Defence Ministry, Historical Archives, Paris, Box No. 14 S 294. Imports from France, Report of the French Military Attaché in South Africa, December 1968.

⁴⁹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 March 1969: *South Africa's first sub is launched*. See also A du Toit: *South Africa's Fighting Ships, Past and Present*, p. 270.

Nevertheless, despite Paris' refusal to supply Pretoria with new helicopters, the French contribution to the South African local arms industry was to reach a further step in April 1971 when the French firm Aéronautique Marcel Dassault (AMD) decided to build its Mirage III B and F1 jet fighter aircraft in South Africa under licence, a decision that was to be confirmed later by Armscor chairman Professor Samuels in an interview on 27 June 1971. French military supplies to Pretoria continued throughout President Pompidou's presidency despite mounting international pressure that both Paris and Pretoria were more and more subjected to.⁵⁰

By the early 1970s, the South African government was persuaded that it would have to become independent in arms manufacture if it were to stay alive. This certainty was in light of the preceding and mounting support by the global community for the arms ban, the domestic menace of uprising in South Africa, and the risk of a regional conflict. To meet South Africa's changeable armaments requirements and expand the domestic capacity for doing so, Armscor's terms of reference were easy and straight: engage the private sector 'efficiently and cost-effectively' in the implementation of this task.⁵¹

The arrival of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing at the Elysée Palace in May 1974 was to bring an important change in the supply of French weapons and licences to South Africa. In fact, for the first time since 1958 France had a non-Gaullist President and that was about to bring a significant change in Franco-South African military relations. In fact, as Third World countries and the French public opinion put more and more pressure on the French government to reject its military role in assisting Pretoria with arms, President Giscard d'Estaing promised during his presidential campaign that he would redefine military relations between South Africa and France. However, Giscard d'Estaing's promise came at a time that Pretoria had already acquired major French military equipment and licences that were to enable the country to build its defence and military industry as seen previously in this chapter.

The French decision to stop the supply of continental and air equipment to Pretoria made South Africa rethink its defence policy. At the time the survival of the apartheid

⁵⁰ *Le Monde*, 29 June 1971.

⁵¹ J P McWilliams: *Armscor South Africa's Arms Merchant*, p. 26.

government was no longer a guarantee, with the fall of the Portuguese colonial power in Angola and Mozambique in 1974 as well as Pretoria's involvement in the war in Angola from 1975 onwards. In February 1976, the French government agreed to supply 2 Avisos type A 69 of 1200 tons for the SAN. The two ships were to carry 75 seamen each and to be used for anti-submarine purposes aimed at the surveillance of the South African coastline as well as for instruction, as the Cape sea route remained a concern for the French government.⁵²

With the independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975, Pretoria had to modify its regional defence strategy. The Vorster government decided to send the SADF into Angola when South Africa was facing increasing SWAPO attacks in northern SWA as well as the communist threat with the MPLA in power in Luanda. In fact, the SADF's intrusion into Angola in 1975 aimed at countering the MPLA's ascendancy of the decolonisation process and to place in power a government more favourably predisposed to Pretoria and the West. Pretoria was persuaded to interfere in Angola by the United States. The Marxist MPLA came to power with Cuban and Soviet aid and the Angolan government was committed to providing material support to the ANC and SWAPO.⁵³

Yet, Angola's economic power as an oil producer was of huge strategic significance in Southern Africa, and was essential in determining Pretoria's antagonistic posture from 1975 onwards. Unlike other Southern African countries, Angola was the only oil producer in the region and under peaceful circumstances would be a major supplier to Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) states, which aspired to diminish their economic reliance on South Africa. For Pretoria, a client administration in Angola would have supplied South Africa with a priceless buffer against oil sanctions. As Pretoria failed to apply the same variety of economic sanctions against Angola as in the case of most its other neighbours, it opted for a military stratagem against Luanda.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the fact that Paris chose to espouse a partial military embargo for conventional and air equipment against South Africa came to complicate the equation for

⁵² *Le Monde*, 18 February 1976.

⁵³ J Cock & L Nathan (Ed): *War and Society, the militarisation of South Africa*, p. 116.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

South Africa's military provisions. Pretoria believed that the growing variety, number and level of sophistication of weapons from the Soviet Union to Angola, Mozambique, the ANC and SWAPO offered the weapon aptitude for the conduct of conventional war against South Africa. Consequently, Armscor's responsibility was to become progressively more important in the delivery of military equipment to the SADF that was now heavily implicated in the war in Angola and South West Africa. With the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo against Pretoria, Armscor was to play a key function in the domestic manufacture of sophisticated arms, based mostly on licences purchased from France before 1975. With the escalating involvement of the SADF in the Angolan conflict in the 1980s, Armscor was to turn out to be an important arms manufacturer on the world market.⁵⁵

The tactical significance of the industry in the background of the international arms ban and of mass opposition to apartheid was self-evident. The ambition to build up a completely self-sufficient, technological arms manufacturing facility in South Africa had also positioned Armscor at the cutting edge of technological research and development within South African industry. This latter feature had built on a co-dependent connection between Armscor and the private sector. Indeed, key Armscor staff such as Piet Marais (chairman) and Van Vuuren boasted that Armscor had performed as a representation of successful 'privatisation' over the past twenty years or so. They argued that the 'privatisation' of arms industry was of fundamental significance in developing its autonomy in the face of worldwide embargoes.⁵⁶

5.2 The role of French equipment in Armscor's capability to produce world-class military equipment after the 1977 UN arms embargo.

In June 1976, the Soweto riots started and by January 1977, more than a thousand people were killed as a result. Pretoria's refusal to end apartheid and its military involvement in Angola and other neighbouring countries led the international community to impose a total arms boycott on South Africa on 4 November 1977 (Cf chapter 4). The 1977 United Nations mandatory arms prohibition was intended to end the acquisition of weapons by

⁵⁵ J P McWilliams: *Armscor South Africa's Arms Merchant*, p. 24.

⁵⁶ J Cock & L Nathan (Ed): *War and Society, the militarisation of South Africa*, p. 217.

the Pretoria government. The philosophy behind the UN measures was that if Pretoria had no means of acquiring weapons, South Africa could no longer pursue its political goals through the violence of the SADF and Police. Nevertheless, the opposite happened. South Africa directed its efforts into its local arms production, developing a range of weapons systems.⁵⁷

French licences and weapons played a major role in the building of South Africa's arms industry. Under Armscor leadership, some important military programmes were initiated to supply the SADF with sophisticated equipment at the time that Pretoria carried out important military campaigns throughout Southern Africa in general and Angola in particular. The first major French military equipment to be produced under licence in South Africa was the assemblage and later production of the Panhard AML-60 and AML-90 armoured cars by Sandock-Austral from 1963 under the name of Eland. Some 1400 vehicles were allegedly manufactured, of which a quantity were sold abroad.⁵⁸

With the acquisition of numerous French licences between 1961 and 1968 by Pretoria (cf Appendix 3), French firms helped Pretoria become self-sufficient for the production of small arms that the SADF and the Police needed.

Another successful Franco-South African project was the development of the Cactus low-level surface-to-air missile system that was produced by South Africa and a number of French firms to specifications of the SADF.⁵⁹

The acquisition of a manufacturing licence for the Mirage III and F-1 aircraft by South Africa in 1971 led Armscor to turn its attention to the SAAF during the 1980s after the SA Army needs were mostly achieved by the end of the 1970s. The bulk of Armscor's requirements for the SAAF was performed by the Atlas Aircraft Corporation. It began in the mid-1960s with the assembly and later the production of Italian Impalas among other aircraft.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ J P McWilliams: *Armscor South Africa's Arms Merchant*, p. 22.

⁵⁸ H-R Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 124.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

After the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo against Pretoria, the international community was not aware of the important role that Armscor played in the local arms production as in the early 1980s South Africa began an arms export drive in the Greek Defendory Expo in 1982 which was the consequence of an endorsement by Pretoria of ‘a major effort to boost foreign sales’. Armscor was requested to leave the international arms show in Athens in deference to the 1977 UN arms embargo. In 1984, Armscor was once again part of an international arms show in Santiago, Chile.⁶¹

There, Armscor exhibited military electronics, ordnance and missiles at the FIDA’ 84 armaments show. Part of this drive was the outcome of Armscor’s capability being cut in half due to the decline of orders caused by the termination of the Rhodesian conflict, the decrease of large range offensive operations in Angola and a drawdown on unfriendly confrontations against SWAPO alongside the Namibian-Angolan border.⁶² Yet, with the implementation and the amplification of the 1977 UN compulsory arms ban against Pretoria, Armscor’s benefits were to increase from R 200 million in 1974 to R 1, 3 billion in 1984 and were to reach roughly R 1,7 billion in 1987-88 when the SADF became seriously absorbed in the Angolan civil war.⁶³

In 1981, Armscor initiated the helicopter programme based on French Alouette III and Puma helicopters. Thus, in 1985 the Alouette III-based Alpha-XH1 took off primarily as a result of a development aircraft planned to show the method for a further difficult scheme. It was considered “as a school for Armscor engineers” and was utilized to build up a domestic design and expansion potential, and in the growth and testing of diverse models and schemes. Simultaneously, it also offered a ‘fall-back’ position, in case a further grand programme experienced postponements or difficulties. An extremely basic light combat helicopter, Alpha mated a domestically manufactured airframe and system fire to the vibrant structure of the Alouette III. The resultant helicopter had an empty weight of 1400 kg and a maximum take-off weight of 2200 kg. The Alpha included several domestically produced elements in its engine, gearboxes and rotor structures. The

⁶¹ D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a Comparative Analysis*, p. 511.

⁶² J P McWilliams: *Armscor South Africa’s Arms Merchant*, pp. 28-29.

⁶³ J Cock & L Nathan (Ed): *War and Society, the Militarisation of South Africa*, p. 223.

contract for its design and production was signed in March 1981, and the earliest flight took place on 3 February 1985.⁶⁴

The next step of the helicopter programme was characterized by the Puma XTP-1 test platform, flown in 1986. The XTP-1 was one of two Puma 330s used to build up and test both the armaments systems of the upcoming combat helicopter and a range of domestically produced components of the Puma dynamic system. The XTP-1 was in addition the prime experiments podium in developing a domestic Puma repairs competence, with the objective of reaching “self-capability for the impending South African fleet – in both manufacture and repairs”. According to Armscor, the resulting helicopter was barely to be a Puma excepting in general design and look. The Puma programme was initiated in 1981 and ran in parallel with the Alpha XH1 programme.⁶⁵

In 1986, the UN compulsory arms ban was being applied with great eagerness and growing efficiency. As a result, South Africa had to rely on home-produced design, development and manufacture ‘of all prospect needs, with no reliance on overseas support’. As a consequence, the SADF was completely dependent on Armscor for meeting its requirements. In its initial stage of weapons fabrication, Armscor focused on improving existing equipment for explicit needs. Thus, the Cheetah jet fighter, an upgrade of the French Mirage III was made for the SAAF among other aircraft.⁶⁶

Apart from the above-mentioned triumphant Armscor programmes based on French apparatus, other reports of French contributions to Armscor’s technological accomplishments also included other equipment such as the Ratel armoured personnel carrier, which, in accordance with some specialists, was a duplicate of the French Berliet VXB. Special lathes for the making of the G-5 shells were imported from CIT Alcatel of France.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ J P McWilliams: *Armscor South Africa’s Arms Merchant*, p. 130.

⁶⁵ H.-R. Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 130. See also D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, A Comparative Analysis*, p. 510.

⁶⁶ D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a Comparative Analysis*, pp. 509-510.

⁶⁷ J Cock & L Nathan (Ed): *War and Society, the Militarisation of South Africa*, p. 224.

In 1987, the July/August *National Defense* magazine revealed that international arms embargoes faced by South Africa enabled the country to be ranked the world fifth largest exporter of defense equipment with a wide range of products.⁶⁸

During the 1988 FIDA Arms exhibition in Chile, South Africa disclosed its homemade 'Sidewinder' missile and a remote-controlled reconnaissance aircraft. The missile codenamed V3C was supposed to be on a par with the AIM-9L Sidewinder and the French-built MATRA MAGIC-2. Armscor continued to cooperate with French firms in developing weapon systems despite official French denials. This revelation came to corroborate accusations held against France for her continual cooperation with the Pretoria government, even though not as openly as before 1977.⁶⁹

With the experience that Armscor and Atlas achieved in the helicopter programme throughout the 1980s, the Rooivalk combat helicopter was created through the effort on Alpha and on developing the competence to produce Puma systems domestically, and on 15 January 1990; the trial product of the Rooivalk was revealed to the public. The Rooivalk was based on the Puma dynamic structures. The archetype successfully completed its land experiment programme in 1989, and went into flight-testing early in 1990.⁷⁰

By 1981, French armaments played a key role in Armscor's capacity to manufacture new weapons. Throughout the 1980s the French input in the building of South Africa's military industry was more successful within the aircraft manufacturing when Armscor used original French jet fighters and helicopters bought from France between 1961 and 1971. Indeed by the early 1970s, most of the SAAF jet fighters and helicopters were from French origin. Yet, the fact that France did not observe the voluntary UN arms embargo against Pretoria in 1963, gave the South African government enough time to acquire numerous weapons and manufacturing rights from French firms before President Giscard d'Estaing announced his partial embargo against Pretoria in 1975. It was also reported that despite France's decision to abide by the obligatory 1977 UN arms ban, France was

⁶⁸ J P McWilliams: *Armscor South Africa's Arms Merchant*, pp. 94-95.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

⁷⁰ H.-R. Heitman: *South African Armed Forces*, p. 131. See also M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, p. 242.

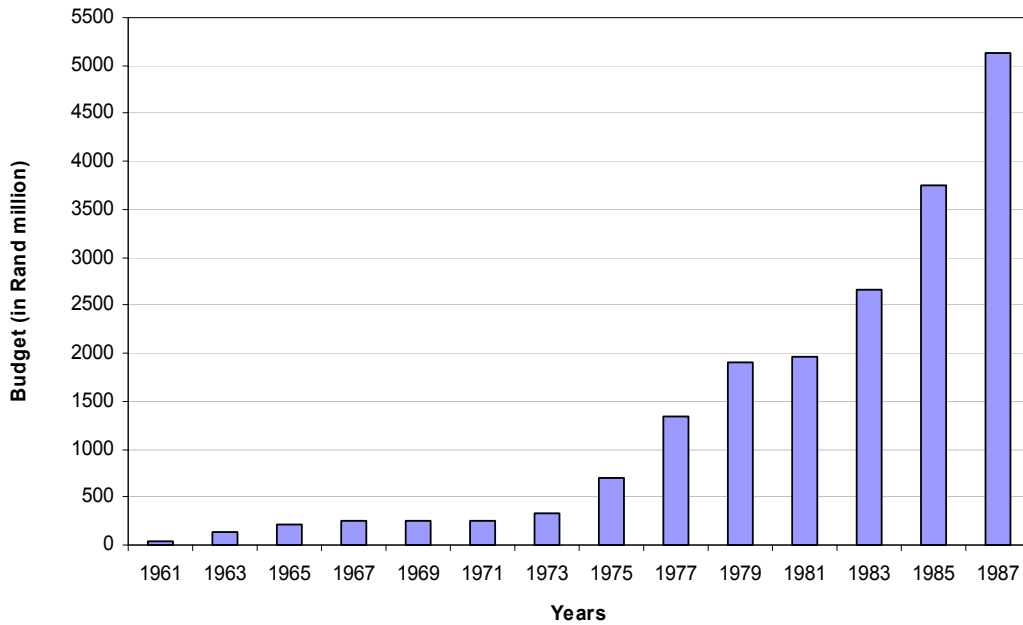
among countries that delivered armaments or accepted orders from South Africa after 1977, alongside with Spain, Italy, Argentina and Bulgaria.⁷¹

Between 1961 and 1975, South Africa benefited for a long period of fourteen years of French military assistance in the forms of supply, maintenance and know-how technology transfer through the presence of French engineers and technicians that worked in South African firms such as Atlas Aircraft Corporation from the mid-1960s onwards. The setting up of a local arms industry was made possible through the study of the French model of arms production that resulted in the official implementation of the Armament Production Board in 1964 as seen previously in this chapter.

Nevertheless, one could ask how by the mid-1960s France became one of the most important if not the most important of Pretoria's military suppliers in a traditional Anglo-Saxon country like South Africa. Yet, the following graph shows the growth of the South Africa military budget between 1960 and 1987 with a particular accent after the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo. Indeed, after 1977 Pretoria had to rely on Armscor for its military needs. Therefore, huge amounts of money had to be invested into Armscor, which became the SADF's most important weapons supplier within the general context of Pretoria's increasing military campaign in the sub region by the late 1970s onwards.

⁷¹ D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a Comparative Analysis*, p. 508.

Figure 1: South African Military Expenditure, selected years (1961- 1987).⁷²



With the implementation of the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, the SADF had to rely on the local production of weapons developed by Armscor, which by the late 1970s, became the first supplier of weapons to Pretoria's forces. As a result, the South African government had to invest huge amounts of money to develop arms mostly based on French weapons that they acquired before 1977. The rise of the military budget was a result of Pretoria's decision to become more and more involved in Angola where its forces remained until the late 1980s. From R 44 million in 1960-61 fiscal year, Pretoria's military expenditure reached R 1350 million in 1976-77, by 1981-82 it amounted to R 2465 million and by 1986-87 it reached more than R 5000 million when the SADF was heavily involved in Angola. These amounts also reflect the high costs of weapons development and production by Armscor during the 1980s when the embargo became severely observed by most countries.

⁷² Source: S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 25. Figure 1 derived from Appendix 4.

5.3 The role played by French political and business circles and other lobbies in building a strong Franco-South African military relationship.

The French decision to supply military equipment to South Africa by the early 1960s was first of all a political decision taken by General de Gaulle himself. South Africa's military needs from France came at an opportune time for both countries. After the Canadian refusal to supply France with the uranium needed to continue its military nuclear programme initiated by the Fourth Republic regime under the name of Force de Frappe, South Africa remained the only country of the Western world from which Paris could get the necessary material to become the third major nuclear power in the West. With the implementation of the DMA, French military equipment started to reach exponential demand on the world market.⁷³ Thus, from a low FF 450 million in 1959, they reached FF 1150 million in 1960; FF 1700 million in 1961-1962 and by 1966 they reached over FF 3 000 million.⁷⁴ With these figures one could see that French military equipment was in increasing demand, especially from Third World countries that did not want to depend only on the two superpowers that were the USA and USSR. With the British decision to stop supplying arms to Pretoria, de Gaulle saw the opportunity to boost France's share in the lucrative South African military market. However, such an important decision could not be taken without important political backing within the French parliamentary spheres.

Thus, as soon as 1960 an important lobby of members of the French National Assembly mostly from General de Gaulle's camp, established the first France-South Africa Friendship Group composed of 34 members. As the Franco-South African military interests started to grow in the early 1960s and after the legislative elections in 1962, which brought Georges Pompidou as Prime Minister, the Friendship Group was reshuffled. From that time, it consisted of 43 members, of whom 28 were from the UNR, five from Centre Démocratique, four from Rassemblement Démocratique, three Républicains Indépendants, two socialists and one Indépendant.⁷⁵

⁷³ *Les trafics d'armes de la France*, p. 26.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁷⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, South African friendship groups in the French National Assembly and the Senate. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

In addition, a committee of honour was formed within the group and was composed of former Ministers and important personalities such as Louis Terrenoire (Minister of Information in the Debré government), George Bonnet, René Capitant, Diomédé Catroux, Hippolyte Ducaux, General Noiret and Pierre Pasquini.⁷⁶

In the French Senate, a France-South Africa Friendship Group was also formed for the first time just after the 1962 legislative elections. Georges Repiquet, Senator for the island of Réunion, was the leader and he hoped to have an initial membership of about twelve senators, including Senators Maurice Verillon and René Tinant, who visited South Africa before the implementation of the Friendship Group.⁷⁷

The formation of such Friendship Groups within the French National Assembly and the Senate in the early 1960s demonstrated de Gaulle's willingness not only to supply South Africa with the military equipment but also to sustain the new military partnership between Paris and Pretoria; and to create new opportunities for French business circles in South Africa. In fact, the victory of the Gaullist Party the 1962 legislative elections assured de Gaulle the political backing that he needed to take decisions on Franco-South African military relations. Thus, France's decision to not consider the 1963 UN military embargo against South Africa was a result of de Gaulle's tenure of power at the National Assembly and Senate levels, as these organs were under his control and he could make decisions without any major opposition.

After the visit of French Senators to South Africa in the early 1960s, the South African embassy in Paris requested the creation of a special organ outside the purely inter-governmental sphere, to put French-South African relations on an organized basis. Thus, R M Macnab, Information Counselor in Paris, held further talks with Pierre Alexis, the Senate official who accompanied French senators in South Africa about the creation of such an organ in Paris. As numerous countries with diplomatic missions in Paris had either a Chamber of Commerce or an Institute, the French official proposed the creation of a committee as the most suitable body at that stage. Alexis himself was prepared to

⁷⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, South African friendship groups in the French National Assembly and the Senate. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

organize and run the Committee France-South Africa. He suggested that the Committee should have a registered office in Paris with a permanent woman secretary.⁷⁸

The benefits of such an organization were evident, since it was a recognized basis for promoting friendship between two nations. In the purely information area, a great deal could be accomplished behind the smoke-screen of an official body. The South African Club in London, the Nederlandse-Suid Afrikaanse Vereeniging in Amsterdam, the Suid-Afrikaanse-Duitse Vereniging in Munich, existed already and the creation of an equivalent body in France had long been overdue. Historical and sentimental ties already existed between the two countries that were allies in war. Yet, in the early 1960s, South Africa acquired new military interests in Paris and, in the light of the European Common Market new commercial arrangements could perhaps be created.⁷⁹

The political aspects, in terms of France's right of veto at the UN and her influence in French-speaking Africa were not less important. Furthermore, the fact that there was a South African-French Friendship Group in both the French National Assembly and the Senate was relevant. According to Macnab, it was a serious weakness that the South African House of Assembly and Senate were in no way concerned in the creation of the above groups, which had had to be fostered by this Friendship Group with French parliamentary officials. Macnab said that if the South African-French Friendship Groups were to flourish in Paris, it was important that direct contact be made between South African Parliamentarians and their French counterparts. He suggested that like groups could be formed in South Africa on the example of the former Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He concluded that all relations could be greatly facilitated, however, if a France-South Africa Committee existed to act as a spur and a coordinator.⁸⁰

The two French Parliamentary Groups, the commercial interests such as the French Bank of South Africa, the wool buyers, the aircraft and armaments firms, oil companies, fruit importers, etc; the Huguenot church bodies, the Longueval authorities (Delville Wood),

⁷⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, Proposal for establishment in Paris of France-South Africa Committee. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962–15.12.1965.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

returned holders of South African scholarships and other interested academics, writers, explorers, naturalists, honorary consuls if and when appointed, travel, tourist and emigration organizations were the elements to grouped in the Comité France-Afrique du Sud.⁸¹

Alexis, who reported to the Senate on the possibilities of increasing links with South Africa, wrote to Macnab in connection with the work of the Committee. He said that “the first task of the Committee would be to assemble documentation concerning South Africa and to make known its needs in the cultural and economic sphere, then to look for the means of satisfying these and creating a convenient meeting place for the interested parties”. Alexis foresaw the linking of certain towns in France with towns in South Africa (Paarl with La Rochelle for instance), with an exchange of mayoral visits and the holding of South African weeks and vice versa. Under the aegis of the Committee, receptions (and platforms) for visiting ministers and others from South Africa could be arranged; its office would be an additional information centre and the whole of South African efforts in France could take on a new dimension.⁸²

The French quite naturally insisted at the same time that in South Africa a South Africa-France Committee be set up as an equivalent body there. The South African ambassador supported the view that a meeting at high level should be arranged between the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Information, and Commerce and Industries, together perhaps with the Director of the South African Foundation and his French Committee chairman, with the aim of considering this question.⁸³ Macnab felt that the creation of a South Africa-France Committee in South Africa under the leadership of Harry Andrews could be left to the Foundation. However, in Paris, South African diplomats, as government representatives, were to take the initiative.⁸⁴ The Committee France-South

⁸¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, Proposal for establishment in Paris of France-South Africa Committee. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962–15.12.1965

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Africa was finally established by French businessmen with interests in South Africa during the course of 1964.⁸⁵

At the start of the Franco-South African military relationship in the early 1960s, the French government decided to create political lobbies within the National Assembly and the Senate that were aimed at protecting decisions in connection with the arms deals between Paris and Pretoria. Also, in the early 1960s, several missions of French Parliamentarians to South Africa took place and as they noticed the economic potential of the new republic, they recommended a boost of French trade ties with South Africa. Thus, the setting up of the two Parliamentary South Africa-France Friendship Groups within French political spheres was not fortuitous, as they opened ways to further trade links between the two countries. On the other hand, Pretoria's decision to start buying arms from Paris was also politically calculated. When South Africa decided to become independent in 1961, it left the Commonwealth family and could no longer rely on British support in terms of international policy and arms acquisition. The fact that France detained the right of veto within the UN was a major point that led Pretoria to buy French arms, pursue its apartheid policy despite worldwide concern, and develop trade links from 1963 onwards.

Pretoria also looked at the fact that France remained the only former colonial power that kept its influence on its former colonies in Africa and as such the South African government could rely on the French government to put pressure on French-speaking African countries during the UN debates over apartheid. Indeed, as de Gaulle was one of the "Big Four", neither Africans nor the countries of the East dared to launch a frontal attack against France's policy in Africa. The Africans knew that such an attack would be the cause of a major division between moderates and progressives, between Arabs and Bantus and even between the English-speaking and the French-speaking, thus an additional element of discord within the OAU. Furthermore, de Gaulle had always clearly said to the Africans at the UN and to the big powers that his policy in Africa was dictated by the interests of the African tradition of France as well as "his own views on

⁸⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, France: Review of 1964. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: Annexure jacket 1965.

geopolitics". De Gaulle did not allow any line of conduct with regard to his African policy to be dictated to him by non-Africans or Africans on matters such as the Algerian War or France's policy towards South Africa. The consequence of this, combined with de Gaulle's personal prestige, was that French doings in Africa were never really attacked at the UN nor by African governments during the entire reign of de Gaulle.⁸⁶

The idea of setting up of the France-South Africa Committee was aimed at promoting, protecting, and intensifying relations between Paris and Pretoria in all sectors of activities as seen before.

Consequently, from 1963 onwards, many French politicians, businessmen and firms gave particular attention to South African needs, and by the end of the 1960s; France became Pretoria's major supplier of military equipment and an important commercial partner with French military contracts with South Africa opening new horizons for French business circles in South Africa. Thus, still in 1963, Raymond Schmittlein, a prominent Gaullist, former cabinet Minister and at that time deputy speaker in the French National Assembly, who was also chairman of the South African-French Friendship Group in the French Parliament, recommended South Africa as a field of politico-economic investment to a special high-level Study Committee of the UNR, engaged in examining France's long-term relations with developing countries in Africa and elsewhere.⁸⁷

He also brought the potential of South Africa to the notice of the COFREDI Group, an important French manufacturing consortium, which had close links with similar consortia in other countries of the European Common Market, particularly Germany. Schmittlein, as well as being the chairman of the South African-French Friendship Group, was chairman of France-Israel alliance and had through the leading personalities of this alliance, close links with powerful financial groups such as the Rothschilds and the Suez

⁸⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, France and South Africa. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Pretoria, File No. 1/8/3, Vol. 2, French politico-economic investment in South Africa. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

Finance Company. Schmittlein had direct access to the French Prime Minister Pompidou and to de Gaulle himself.⁸⁸

As a result of contacts with the South African embassy in Paris, partly engineered by Schmittlein, it was arranged in 1963 that Antoine Pinay, former French Prime Minister and Finance Minister under General de Gaulle until 1960 (Cf Chapter 2), who was connected with the COFREDI Group through the Compagnie Française des Diffusions des Techniques, a non-profit organization of which he was chairman, would receive an official invitation to visit South Africa as the guest of the South African government on the occasion of a business trip to Africa which did not originally include South Africa. Pinay was neither a Gaullist nor a Parliamentarian, but the leader of the “Independants”, the right of Centre Party in the Fourth Republic. He was generally accounted to be a possible successor to General de Gaulle, in view of the wide respect in which he was held by most sections of the French electorate, apart from the extreme left. He continued to exercise major influence in European circles, especially in the economic sphere and had close working relations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington.⁸⁹

Pinay’s visit to South Africa, which took place in December 1963, not only gave him a bird’s eye view of the South African economy and its potential, but also enabled him, through his discussions with the South African Prime Minister Verwoerd and other Ministers such as Dr. Dönges, Louw, Dr. Diederichs and Fouché to assess South Africa’s political stability. Pinay was accompanied by Rugina, a representative of the COFREDI Group who was kept in the background as far as Pinay’s official appearances were concerned.⁹⁰

However, it was through Rugina, supplemented by dispatches from the South African embassy in Paris, that the South African Department of Foreign Affairs was able to build up a picture of the underlying purpose of the visit. Rugina was to investigate and if feasible to undertake politico-economic investment in South Africa on the hypothesis that

⁸⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/8/3, Vol. 2, French politico-economic investment in South Africa. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

South Africa could be regarded as a major bulwark on the African continent against Soviet and other communist forces in the East, against the anarchical trends occasioned by the withdrawal of Europeans elsewhere in Africa, and against a take-over on the African continent, by anti-European though not necessary communist countries, of major African resources.⁹¹

In pursuance of that objective, Rugina was authorized by the French government to offer facilities for developing the economic infrastructure of South Africa, particularly in those fields that would be potentially suitable for rapid conversion to defence and armament production. Consequently, Rugina was authorized to offer liberal credit facilities for the purchase of French manufacturing machinery and to undertake to provide technical know-how as well as trained personnel.⁹²

The COFREDI Group was prepared to work out with the South African authorities ways and means of extending and developing the French investment in South Africa. Rugina had at his disposal the resources and engineering skills of light and heavy industry on a major scale, with intimate connections with similar consortia in other EEC countries. He told Pretoria that his aim was not to displace traditional British or other investment, but to supplement it and to make available the somewhat different but probably not less valuable techniques developed by the French industry. Rugina was accompanied by a French engineer, de Perthe, who was able to discuss technical details with the competent people. While he thought that the main emphasis should be on the development of the economic infrastructure in the engineering industry, which would be capable of rapid

⁹¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/8/3, Vol. 2, French politico-economic investment in South Africa. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

⁹² *Ibid.*, the figures mentioned were US \$ 100 million, plus an additional million if other non-French consortia were to be brought into the picture. The loan should be backed by the South African IDC or some financial institution of standing. Rugina said that he was in the position to bring about 50 engineers and technicians to South Africa almost immediately. Extensive training to South African technicians could be offered in France. He suggested that the COFREDI Group operated on a basis of three percent commission of which one percent would be profit, one percent would go to administrative expenses and one percent would be paid into a fund to be administered by a Franco-South African Committee.

conversion to defence needs, he was equally prepared to consider the development of an armament industry in whatever particular field South Africa might desire.⁹³

The reaction of the South African Department of Commerce and Industries was lukewarm. Indeed, in the absence of any governmental directive that the enquiries and proposals of Rugina should receive preferential treatment, that department felt that Rugina should be referred to the IDC which should be asked to treat his enquiries on the same basis as any other proposal for the establishment of industry in South Africa. The Department of Defence (DOD) was initially not greatly interested, but undertook to make a study of the fields in which it was thought South Africa would benefit from the type of assistance and investment in industry and industrial know-how which Rugina was able to provide. On the basis of the discussions that took place between Rugina and the Departments of Defence and Commerce and Industries, Rugina was given a letter by the Department of Foreign Affairs assuring him that his proposals would be closely examined and promised that he would be notified, early in 1964, of the outcome of this investigation.⁹⁴

Despite this promise, no reply could be obtained from the Department of Defence for some time. Ultimately, a meeting was convened of representatives of the Departments of Commerce and Industries, Defence, Foreign Affairs with a representative of the IDC also present. Consequently, this meeting drew up a list of items which it considered would be of potential interest to the COFREDI Group, but it was stated on the defence side that no need was seen for assistance in the development of armament, except in respect of two pistols.⁹⁵

In the meantime, as South Africans took time to respond, Schmittlein informed the South African embassy counselor on 14 March 1964 that he was anxious to discuss an important matter with him. Schmittlein reminded the South African Counselor that the Pinay proposals had arisen out of the desire of the UNR study group to develop closer relations with South Africa. The project entrusted by it to the COFREDI Group, had duly

⁹³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/8/3, Vol. 2, French politico-economic investment in South Africa. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

been discussed in South Africa with political and industrial leaders. Pinay was most favourably impressed by South Africa and had in turn reported optimistically to de Gaulle, Pompidou and Couve de Murville. From their reactions, the UNR study group was inclined to conclude that if the project for French industrial participation could be successfully implemented, this would not only be of strategic value in itself but the French government would be willing and able to use it as a screen behind which substantial French military and other essential supplies could be made available to South Africa in the event of international sanctions.⁹⁶

Consequently, the South African authorities telegraphed a list of items to Paris in mid-March 1964. In response to the telegram, Rugina came back in South Africa in April 1964 and was accompanied by an engineer, to discuss matters further. Thus, arrangements were made for him to have talks with the Departments of Commerce and Industries and Defence, with the IDC and various South African industrial enterprises through the IDC. Rugina told Pretoria that according to the list he received, he saw principal scope in the machine tool industry, in the development of special steels, and in the tractor industry. Thus, he referred to the ability of his consortium to establish a tractor plant which could switch over without any difficulty to the production of tanks.⁹⁷

In connection with Rugina's visits to South Africa, the South African embassy in Paris reported that Schmittlein, who took the original initiative in this enterprise, was not directly connected with the COFREDI Group or with the details of the Rugina negotiations. For obvious political reasons, he also did not wish to be brought directly into the picture, but he clearly wished the whole enterprise to succeed and would do what he could in that direction. Schmittlein was also concerned with promoting the interests of the Jewish and Israeli groups with which he was connected, but there was nothing necessarily incompatible between his interests in that direction and his desire to promote and strengthen Franco-South African relations.⁹⁸

⁹⁶Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/8/3, Vol. 2, Pinay-Rugina Project. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, French politico-economic investment in South Africa.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

As far as Pinay was concerned, although connected with the COFREDI Group, he was not concerned with the details of negotiations conducted by Rugina. However, he was genuinely interested in promoting Franco-South African relations.

The nexus consisting of Schmittlein with his direct access to Pompidou and De Gaulle, Pinay with his influential European contacts, his high standing in conservative French circles and his links with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the COFREDI Group with its related consortia on other EEC countries provided a means of strengthening South Africa's politico-economic relations with France, which South Africans could not afford to neglect. Another factor was that the nexus was probably in a position to assist in public relations, provided the arrangements were made with the necessary discretion such as through a French consultant rather than through official South African government channels.⁹⁹

Yet, the channel which this nexus could provide to de Gaulle was politically important in view of the possibility already canvassed in some quarters, that de Gaulle's "presentation of himself as the new link between the West and Afro-Asia, combined with pressure from Francophone African nations, could lead him to plump in extremis for an anti-South African line".¹⁰⁰

Conversely, the same nexus could conceivably offer a channel to some of the less extremist Francophone African states, which could possibly be exploited by South Africa once the Security Council confrontation with the African nations on the sanctions issue had taken place.

The South African Department of Foreign Affairs, although not in a position to make technical comments on the Rugina proposals or their acceptability as technical

⁹⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/8/3, Vol. 2, French politico-economic investment in South Africa. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

propositions, felt that the political context in which they were presented, made it essential that the proposals be fully explored.¹⁰¹

Pretoria's hesitation towards the French military offers was to change in October 1964 when Harold Wilson became British Prime Minister. Immediately after his election, he announced his government's decision to observe the 1963 UN arms embargo against Pretoria. From that time, the South African government decided to seriously consider French military offers, as they could no longer rely on London's support for their military needs. In consequence, the first concrete outcome of the Pinay project was the agreement between Bonuskor and Sud Aviation for the implementation of a local arms industry in South Africa. Rugina of COFREDI was an appointed agent of the UNR Comité d'Etudes for the general supervision of the project.¹⁰²

The Gaullist Party decision to supply Pretoria with the necessary military equipment was also motivated by the fact that Pretoria was able to provide France with important raw materials such as gold and especially uranium for its nuclear programme after the 1957 Canadian decision to stop supplying uranium to Paris. Consequently, by the end of 1964, the quantity of French military materials in the SADF started to grow so that by the end of 1968, South Africa bought several manufacturing rights for military equipment from French firms (See Appendix 3).

The establishment of Franco-South African Friendship Groups in the French National Assembly and the Senate was the responsibility of the Gaullist Party as most of their members came from the UNR. Yet, leaders of those groups were very close to the French government. During de Gaulle's two terms of office, the Gaullist Party remained the major political force in France. As a result, de Gaulle and his friends were able to develop strong connections with the apartheid government in whatever direction they wanted.

During the 1960s, the French Parliamentary Friendship Groups linked with African countries fell under one central group, the "Europe-Africa" group. The designation of

¹⁰¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/8/3, Vol. 2, French politico-economic investment in South Africa. France: Relations with the RSA. Relevant files: 18.5.1962– 15.12.1965.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, the Pinay Project.

“Europe” was apparently used intentionally for the sake of the smaller African states, in order to make them sense the weight of Europe behind France. In 1967, the chairman of the “Europe-Africa” Group was Jacques Vendroux, de Gaulle’s brother-in-law and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the French National Assembly. Yet, one of de Gaulle’s nephews, P Vendroux was also member of the France/South African Friendship Group in the National Assembly. The members of the group comprised the chairmen of all the individual Friendship Groups in the National Assembly that were linked with African countries.¹⁰³

Towards the end of 1966, Antoine Pinay was back in South Africa and this time with Jacques Segard, the chairman of the France-Afrique du Sud committee. The two influential French businessmen were on a private visit. They met with Prime Minister Voster, Foreign Affairs Minister Hilgard Muller and Finance and Economic Affairs Minister N Diedrichs as well as numerous other South African business and political leaders.¹⁰⁴

The Gaullist Party always made sure that the Franco-South African Friendship Group in the National Assembly was under the leadership of a prominent Gaullist MP or an ally. Thus after the French legislative elections of 1967, the France-South African Friendship Group in the French National Assembly was reshuffled and Claude Roux took over from Schmittlein when he became the new chairman of the group. Roux visited South Africa in 1965 as a guest of the South African government while he was still an ordinary member of the same group.¹⁰⁵

Thus, he was in the position to promote Franco-South African interests in the French National Assembly. Yet, the fact that the “Europe-Africa” Group was in the hands of de Gaulle’s bother-in-law showed the importance that he demonstrated for Africa in general and South Africa in particular. Thus, through his brother-in-law, General de Gaulle was

¹⁰³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, France/South Africa Friendship Group in the French National Assembly. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962–15.12.1965.

¹⁰⁴ *France-Afrique du Sud*, Bulletin d’Informations No. 39, 1 January 1967, London.

¹⁰⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, France/South Africa Friendship Group in the French National Assembly. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962–15.12.1965.

in a position to get any information that concerned any particular country in Africa. In the particular situation of the Franco-South African relations, members of the France-South Africa Friendship Groups in the French National Assembly and the Senate as well as some individuals such as Schmittlein, Pinay and Rugina were influential people within the French politico-economic circles and had close relations with de Gaulle and Pompidou. They were the confidants of de Gaulle and Pompidou as they were the ones in charge of the early negotiations aimed at boosting trade relations between Paris and Pretoria in the early 1960s.¹⁰⁶

Throughout de Gaulle and Pompidou presidencies, the South African regime benefited from strong French political support as the Gaullist Party remained the major political force until 1974. In fact, despite international condemnation of both the apartheid policy and the French military assistance in supplying Pretoria with huge quantities of arms, the Gaullist regime remained faithful to Pretoria's military needs as their successive governments were able to resist internal and international pressure to end French military supplies to South Africa. The Gaullist regime was therefore responsible for the success of French arms within the SADF, as the special relation offered huge financial opportunities to French firms that were involved in the manufacture of military equipment. As a result, under de Gaulle, South Africa became a favourable military partner and French arms exports to South Africa tripled between 1961 and 1968.¹⁰⁷

Yet, with mounting internal and external pressure condemning the French policy towards Pretoria, the French industrialists involved in the military production or having commercial interests in South Africa formed the first important lobby of employers that militated for the maintenance of French relations with Pretoria. Thus, as far as the military deals were concerned, private French firms such as Avions Bréguet-Marcel Dassault, Panhard and Levassor, Matra, Thomson-C.S.F., Dubigeon-Normandie (CIFACL), Creusot-Loire and its subsidiary Framatome had very close relations with Pretoria and its representatives in Paris. The company managers of these firms had close

¹⁰⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 1, France/South Africa Friendship Group in the French National Assembly. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 18.5.1962–15.12.1965

¹⁰⁷ *La France Militarisée*, p. 18.

contacts with South African officials visiting Paris as well as with Pretoria's diplomats in France. The French company managers formed an important lobby of pressure as they had strong economic power and close contacts with French Presidents, Members of government and Parliamentarians.¹⁰⁸

French banks also played an active role in the success of military trade between Paris and South Africa. Indeed, French banks formed the second most influential lobby group, as they were involved in the settlement of the deals. Yet, Paris made sure that most transactions were covered by financial loans from French financial circles as a means of improving France's share of the South African market. Thus, most important French private and state banks joined this lobby. Private Banks such as the *Suez Group* with their South African subsidiary the *Banque de l'Indochine* and the *Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas* were the most important that operated in South Africa. Commercial banks such as the *Crédit Commercial de France*, the *Crédit Industriel et Commercial (CIC)* played also an important role in maintaining French trade relations with South Africa, as the Pretoria regime contracted several loans for the funding of important projects in South Africa or the purchase of equipment from France. French nationalized banks such as the *Banque Nationale de Paris*, *Crédit Lyonnais* and *Société Générale* were also part of the lobby as they credited loans to South Africa. Specialised French financial organs such as the *Banque Française pour le Commerce Extérieur* and the *COFACE* also played a significant role in assisting French investment projects in South Africa.¹⁰⁹

As military supplies boosted French trade relations with Pretoria, some influential French firms not directly involved in the Franco-South African arms deals could be considered as part of the third most influential lobby that militated for the maintenance and even the increase of French trade links with South Africa. For instance, French car manufacturers *Peugeot*, *Citroen* and *Renault* had assembly plants in South Africa.¹¹⁰

In the mining and oil sector, the *Compagnie Française des Pétroles (Total)* was one of the most influential members of the third lobby. In fact, the group interests in South Africa

¹⁰⁸ *La France et l'Apartheid*, p. 185.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

were enormous as it was involved with SASOL activities. The Société Nationale des Pétroles d'Aquitaine was involved in prospecting for oil. Alongside Total, it was implanted in South Africa and Namibia where the Compagnie Française des Pétroles (CFP) participated in the exploitation of the uranium mine of Rössing. The Bureau de Recherche Géologique et Minière (BRGM) participated in prospecting and although French mining groups were not well implanted in South Africa, French investments in the mining industry were quite important. Yet, the fact that French investors got their dividends from De Beers and other South African gold mine firms offered a crucial reason for the maintenance of French interests in South Africa.¹¹¹

Generally speaking, French interests in South Africa were involved in all sectors and the lobby groups mentioned in this chapter represented the most important French firms that had huge interests in the maintenance of trade links with the apartheid government. In that position, these groups were the most likely to exert pressure on the French government as they were economically important and had close links with political leaders in all French political circles.

The French government's decision to abide by the 1977 UN mandatory embargo against South Africa, led Jacques Soustelle, former French Minister and a defender of South African interests in France, to suggest to the South African authorities the setting up of a South African lobby in Paris in November 1978. He proposed that the lobby should gather a few very influential and prominent people at the top that were to meet every month during a two-hour meeting. During the monthly meeting, the body was to discuss operations in South Africa and projects which could be developed as well as the linked operations between French and South African firms on external markets. Naturally, the Presidents of the joint Committee were to be the South African ambassador in Paris, at the time Louis Pienaar, and Jacques Soustelle. The proposed members of the Committee were to be chairman Ambroise Roux or his personal representative, chairman Baron Empain or his personal representative, the chairmen or the representatives of Banque Indosuez (French Bank of Southern Africa), Banque de l'Union Européenne, Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, one representative of the Franco-South African Committee of the

¹¹¹ *La France et l'Apartheid*, pp. 189-190.

Conseil National du Patronat Français (CNPF), one representative of the Dassault Group, two representatives of the two other big French companies that worked in South Africa, like Peugeot or Total, Pietersen and Boyazoglu of the South African embassy in Paris.¹¹²

The main aim of the Committee was to tell the business community that on a competitive basis the French firms would be always given the preference for South African tenders. In return, these French firms would always support South Africa in France when Pretoria's superior interests were menaced by political interference of the Quai d'Orsay. The interest of such an operation was obvious: the more French interests and capitals would be linked to South Africa and the more "kept in hands" these interests would be by an active joint committee, the more eager they would feel to support South Africa and protest jointly in the Quai d'Orsay or the Elysée Palace.¹¹³

According to former Minister Soustelle, French industrialists needed a conductor like the joint committee, and the efficiency of this committee reposed upon two facts: an improvement of the Franco-South African joint ventures involving a maximum of French firms in South Africa and common ventures of French and South African firms abroad in external markets. The committee had to work on a permanent basis with regular meetings unlike the Franco-South African branch committee of the CNPF, which, according to Soustelle, was full of good intentions but perfectly inefficient.¹¹⁴

The work scheme of the committee was the following: the secretary would gather monthly all tenders from South Africa (State, Provincial or City tenders) and would dispatch them to the members of the committee at the monthly meeting. All projects involving important credit lines would be debated with the representatives of the banks and projects involving countries of the Rand zone like Swaziland, Bophuthatswana and Lesotho would be examined. International projects in regions like the French speaking

¹¹² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, Memorandum concerning the setting up of a South African Lobby in Paris. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 2.8.1978 – 4.4.1979.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Africa, Latin America or even Rhodesia on which French and South African firms could work jointly would be examined.¹¹⁵

Despite the 1977 UN mandatory embargo against South Africa and the French government decision to abide by it, South Africa could still count on the help of some influential French people like Jacques Soustelle as well as on French business circles that intended to or already operated in South Africa. Thus, the proposed setting up of the joint committee was intended to boost Franco-South African trade links at the time that the international community, through the UN, called on all South Africa's trade partners to break their economic relations with the Pretoria government. Despite the French decision to abide by the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, the same French government was always against the adoption of the commercial embargo against Pretoria that most Third World countries presented before the UN. One could see that French firms played an important role in leading their government not to reject any decision that did not guarantee their interests in South Africa. Furthermore, Giscard d'Estaing's government decided in 1975 to implement a stockpile programme that was intended to reduce France's dependence on imported strategic minerals, and South Africa played a major role in that regard (Cf Tables 6, 7 and 8 in Chapter 4).

This chapter cannot end without showing the important role played by the South African embassy in Paris in the success of both the military and trade relations between Paris and Pretoria prior to the 1975 Giscard d'Estaing's first French arms embargo. In fact, Pretoria's representation in Paris was the principal venue where South African propaganda was spread throughout French political and business circles. If the political section was in the hands of the Ambassador, the South African representation employed French people within its information section and they were present all over French territory. The information section of the embassy had the responsibility for making South Africa known in French political and business circles. Thus, this section listed addresses of most French liberal professions such as medical doctors and dentists, where it could

¹¹⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 9, Memorandum concerning the setting up of a South African Lobby in Paris. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 2.8.1978 – 4.4.1979

reach more people for South Africa's propaganda. The South African embassy distributed free publications in these cabinets so that most French people were to notice South Africa and its huge economic potential while in the waiting rooms.¹¹⁶

Some publications like Panorama issued in South Africa and the monthly *L'Afrique du Sud Aujourd'hui* (South Africa Today) published in Paris were the most important means of promoting South Africa throughout the 1960s and part of the 1970s. By the mid-1970s, the two publications were brought together under the name of Panorama, which offered more detail about South African's political and economic lives. It was distributed to all Francophone countries worldwide.¹¹⁷

The information section of the South African embassy was therefore active, as towards the end of the 1960s, when the military relations reached a particular level of confidence, Pretoria built a luxurious and modern embassy in Paris that was to be the venue of South Africa's meetings with influential Francophone African leaders under Vorster's policy of entente.

As far as the military relations between the SADF and France were concerned, the military section of the embassy was the most important of all technical sections within the delegation. In fact, since the beginning of their relations, Pretoria's military needs were always the responsibility of Military Attachés that were technically able to specify details of the SADF needs for the French firms. Thus, South African Military Attachés in Paris were particularly active through French industrial and military channels that were linked with arms supplies in South Africa.¹¹⁸

Yet, France's decision to adopt a partial military embargo against Pretoria in August 1975 made the South African Department of Defence release a Ministerial directive to the embassy in Paris on 31 January 1976. The situation regarding Pretoria's contacts with France remained very delicate, and it was necessary that extreme care be exercised by South African military officials in Paris so as to ensure that the existing working

¹¹⁶ *La France et l'Afrique du Sud*, p. 182.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

relationship at the time was not further disturbed. Consequently, the South African Defence Minister directed that a low profile was to be maintained in all future contacts with French authorities, and that the SADF and Armscor were to maintain close liaison and absolute synchronization of their activities in this connection.¹¹⁹

Thus, all procurement action was to be conducted by Armscor alone, whereas military aspects were to be dealt with by the military attachés. From that time, visits by Armscor and SADF personnel were to be strictly controlled, and only those visits of personnel vitally concerned were to be considered. Furthermore, the Armscor commercial representative who was to be posted to Paris in the course of 1976, was, if at all possible, be accommodated at the embassy with the SADF Attaché.¹²⁰

Despite the French decision to adopt a partial embargo against Pretoria, the military section of the South African embassy in France remained active as Pretoria succeed in ordering two Agosta class submarines from France in July 1976 and other naval equipment were to follow (Cf Chapter 4).

However, with the mounting international pressure on South Africa's apartheid policy, with the killings that followed after the 1976 Soweto riots and Pretoria's continuous occupation of the Namibian territory and its military campaigns in Angola, the UN called on all countries to adopt a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa in November 1977.

As a result, France decided to reinforce its August 1975 arms embargo by adopting the UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. Consequently, the South African embassy received formal notification from the French government of the prohibition to supply the four war vessels that Pretoria bought before the 1977 UN embargo (cf Chapter 4). From that time, no official military transaction between South Africa and France took place. Nevertheless, military relations did not end there as the SADF and Armscor attachés remained in Paris until the arrival of the Socialist government in May 1981

¹¹⁹ DOD, SANDF Documentation Centre, Pretoria. File No. AMI / DBB / 1 / 3. Vol. 1, Ministerial directive: relationship with France, period from 31 January 1977.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

which was to concentrate its efforts at bringing South Africa to withdraw from Namibia and end apartheid.

In the meantime, French business circles continued to be active in South Africa where they got some important contracts like the US \$ 1 billion Koeberg nuclear contract that a French consortium led by Framatome signed in 1976 with Pretoria. Yet, with the 1977 embargo against Pretoria, the French diplomacy under Giscard d'Estaing started to be very active as France was part of the five Western countries that the UN asked to negotiate with the South African government for an international settlement of the Namibian question.

The Franco-South African relations were also backed by the South Africa Foundation, which was a private organization aimed at promoting South Africa on the international market. The Foundation was financed by important South African firms. In the late 1970s, its honorary chairman was the chairman and managing director of the most important state owned South African firms namely SASOL and Federal Groep. He was assisted by Jan S Marais, former chairman and managing director of Trust Bank. Among its members was Daniel Banmeyer, chairman of SPIE-Batignolles South Africa, managing director of Total South Africa and chairman of the Alliance Française in Johannesburg.¹²¹

Thus, the Paris' bureau and the French Committee of the Foundation in South Africa hosted French visitors such as former Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentarians, Newspaper Managers, Writers and Artists. The truth of the matter was that the South Africa Foundation looked for such people and systematically invited them to visit South Africa. Those who accepted the invitation had to follow an identical programme set for other French official visitors in South Africa. The managing director of the Paris office, Desmond Colborne was well connected in Parisian circles.¹²²

In conclusion, France played a major role in the implementation of Pretoria's local arms industry. In fact, under the de Gaulle and Pompidou presidencies, France sold to South

¹²¹ *La France et l'Apartheid*, p. 183.

¹²² *Ibid.*

Africa not only the necessary military equipment but also licences for their production. Yet, with the mandatory arms embargo against them, the South African authorities developed a strong military industry via Armscor that was able to supply the SADF with the equipment needed for its campaigns in SWA and Angola where they became militarily involved. With the Angolan conflict in the 1980s, Armscor produced world-class military equipment, among which were the Rooivalk attack helicopter, based on French Puma programme, and the Cheetah jet fighter, based on Mirage III programme.¹²³

However, the success of military and trade relations between Paris and Pretoria was the result of important politico-economic lobbies that were very active both in France and South Africa. In the case of France, apart from de Gaulle and Pompidou's personal involvement in the implementation of strong military ties between the two countries, two important Franco-South African Friendship Groups were implemented in the French National Assembly and Senate. Thus, most of the members involved in those Friendship Groups were usually linked to influential French firms operating in South Africa as well as French political spheres. They were therefore the main protectors of South Africa's interests in France. Furthermore, French military supplies opened vast business opportunities for French firms in South Africa. As a result, French multinationals as well as most influential financial circles and banks involved in the South African market formed influential business lobbies with French political leaders. The duration of the military relations between the two countries resulted from the combination of political and business influences in France as well as in South Africa.

¹²³ M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, pp. 236-238.

Chapter 6

France: the settling of the ‘Namibian problem’, and the escalation of violence in Southern Africa.

This chapter focuses on France’s participation in the resolution of the Namibian independence process. The French involvement came at a time when France decided to observe the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo against Pretoria. The international community through the UN mandated France and four other Western countries to find an internationally acceptable solution in Namibia as Pretoria faced increasing international isolation. It also looks at Pretoria’s first military drive in Southern Africa in the late 1970s. The South African Defence Force became increasingly involved in military campaigns in neighbouring countries, especially in Angola where they clashed with Luanda’s forces backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union. This chapter gives an assessment of the Giscard d’Estaing and François Mitterrand governments’ general relations with Pretoria and military ones in particular after Paris decided to abide by the 1977 mandatory embargo against her formal military customer.

The French military supplies to South Africa officially ended in November 1977 with Paris’ decision to observe the UN mandatory arms embargo against Pretoria. The consequence of that decision was Paris’ refusal to supply the four war ships Pretoria ordered in 1976. Yet, the 1976 Soweto riots and Pretoria’s involvement in the Angolan war as well as its continuing occupation of the territory of Namibia brought the French government to be part of the Contact Group that was mandated by the UN to conduct negotiations with Pretoria for the implementation of Namibian independence and the end of the apartheid policy. In the meantime, the 1976 Koeberg contract brought more international pressure on Franco-South African relations as the international community accused South Africa of planning to build nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the presence of the South African Defence Force in Angola became a burden for the international community as the SADF conducted campaigns in that country and elsewhere in Southern Africa.

However, France's decision to adopt the 1977 arms embargo did not mean the end of relations between the two countries. Though Giscard d'Estaing did end the military supplies to the SADF, France signed some major trade contracts such as the nuclear deal with South Africa. It was also under Giscard d'Estaing that the French diplomacy became involved in the Contact Group that was asked to negotiate with Pretoria for an international settlement of Namibian independence. But, despite the official French position to stop the supply of military equipment to Pretoria, South Africa's Military Attachés in Paris remained there and it was believed that some informal channels continued to supply French armaments to Pretoria. The election of François Mitterrand to power in May 1981 created huge concern about the future of Franco-South African relations.

The French partial military embargo in August 1975 declared by President Giscard d'Estaing himself and the mandatory embargo of November 1977 jeopardized the profitable military trade between Paris and Pretoria, which was to meet more difficulties under the Mitterrand presidency. The French socialists' determination to bring independence to the Namibian people and end apartheid in South Africa were to meet US opposition and their own reluctance for mandatory economic sanctions against Pretoria.

6.1 France's position towards the Namibian question under Giscard d'Estaing.

The involvement of the Contact Group over the Namibian question started in April 1977 when the Contact Group of five Western nations (Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom, the United States of America) offered their good offices to promote the implementation of Resolution 385 (1976), adopted unanimously by the Security Council with the full support of SWAPO, on the transition process to independence through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations.¹ The resolution of the five Western countries to lead talks with South Africa over the self-determination process of Namibia was not without interest for them. In fact, apart from Canada, the other members had major economic interests in South

¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Declaration of the International Conference in Solidarity with the struggle of the People of Namibia, UNESCO House, Paris 11-13 September 1980, France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

Africa and Namibia. In 1980, for instance, the UK had 1200 corporations working in South Africa; the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) had 350, the USA 340, France 50 and Canada 5.²

Though the USA had limited direct investment in Namibia, they were concerned about the growing instability in the region and a potential Soviet expansion that might threaten access to raw materials, principally uranium. Another concern was the security of the Cape route, around which 75 percent of the West's oil deliveries were transported.³ The same countries were also among South Africa's major trading partners in 1980. Thus, the FRG, Britain, the USA and France were respectively in first, second, third and fifth positions as major trading partners.⁴ Excepting Canada, the same countries were also among South Africa's main military suppliers before the adoption of the embargo of 1977, when Israel became the single most important provider of military know-how to the South African government.⁵

Therefore, it was in the Contact Group's interest to be engaged in the process of the Namibian independence as some of their corporations operated in Namibia. As long as the Contact Group kept the negotiating process active, it discouraged the South African government from imposing an internal arrangement unacceptable to the international community. The Contact Group also diverted pressures at the UN for economic sanctions against Pretoria.⁶ Thus, over the years, the Contact Group attempted to bring South Africa to accept the main suggestions of the UN, but somewhat without success. Official negotiations between the Contact Group and South Africa began in October 1978. A month before negotiations started the UN adopted Resolution 435 on 29 September, which in effect determined the future of South West Africa/Namibia.⁷

² S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 23.

³ M P Karns: 'Ad Hoc Multilateral Diplomacy, The United States, the Contact Group, and Namibia' in *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 1, p. 96 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

⁴ *Financial Mail*, Johannesburg, 4 July 1980.

⁵ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 24.

⁶ M P Karns: 'Ad Hoc Multilateral Diplomacy, The United States, the Contact Group, and Namibia' in *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 94-95 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

⁷ M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, p. 198.

After the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the Namibian problem became the centre of interest for a great number of African countries and the international community, which made great efforts to achieve the independence of the territory. Meanwhile, South Africa tried to endorse an internal resolution as an option to the United Nations plan, by organizing new elections on a tribal basis, claiming a lack of impartiality on the part of the United Nations and its Secretary General. South Africa tried to give her “puppets” in the territory a chance to gain the appearance of credibility through limited social reforms, in order to be able to defeat SWAPO at the ballot box. The progress towards that solution was slow but steady. After legislative powers were given to the National Legislative Assembly, South Africa gave executive powers to the Council of Ministers created in June 1980 and a certain military autonomy to the territory. Indeed, the Department of Defence for South West Africa and the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) was established with effect from 1 August 1980. The DOD was responsible for the finances, logistics and administration of the Territorial Force, while the SADF remained for military operations.⁸

On 13 June 1980, Dirk Mudge, President of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) was elected President of the Council of Ministers.⁹ The new Council led by Mudge had 12 members and was under the authority of Gerrit Viljoen, the Administrator General of the territory, representing Pretoria. The DTA hoped that by gaining some executive powers from Pretoria and introducing limited reforms, they would become more credible and possibly be able to face SWAPO in future general elections.¹⁰

South Africa’s prime objective was to weaken SWAPO’s credibility towards the Namibian people because no other party was able to beat SWAPO if an election were to be held at that time. At each stage of the process, the media dutifully echoed virtuous protests made by the Western countries involved in the settling of the Namibian problem. In the meantime, according to experts, the use of Namibian mineral resources by multinationals went on at a dangerous pace. France was an interested party in exploiting

⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

⁹ *Le Monde*, 15/16 June 1980.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Namibia's mineral resources. Some of her big companies had powerful vested interests in Namibia and that was the reason for France's participation in the great diplomatic manoeuvres of the Contact Group. Paris and her partners had huge economic interests in Namibia and South Africa itself. However, the Contact Group was not under the French leadership but under American direction.¹¹

Presenting their plan as the implementation of Security Council Resolution 385 (1976), the five Western countries weakened the content of the resolution. Indeed, in accepting the terms of Resolution 435, SWAPO made a significant compromise. Despite that, South Africa refused to implement the resolution and proceeded unilaterally to organize the December 1978 elections.¹²

Negotiations regarding the creation of the demilitarized zone showed that the Western countries were always careful to seek South Africa's agreement, and not to consult with SWAPO, even though the organization was recognized by the UN as the sole representative of the Namibian people. Although the creation of a demilitarized zone was originally a proposal of the late Angolan President Agostinho Neto, the final project of the five supported South Africa's strategic interests and sought to weaken SWAPO. Discussing the project in Geneva (Switzerland) in November 1979, the Five accepted under pressure from the South African government, the presence on an equal footing with SWAPO of the "internal parties", which was one step towards their recognition. Despite SWAPO's immediate acceptance of the proposal for a demilitarized zone (postponing until later the negotiations about the finer points), it was South Africa again, through its rearguard actions, which prevented the implementation of Resolution 435.¹³

The fact that Pretoria was able to show such arrogance in all the diplomatic manoeuvrings was due entirely to the support given to her by the West. The actions of the Western countries had hindered rather than helped the UN in its search for a just solution to the Namibian problem. That situation served their immediate economic

¹¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

interests in Namibia, which interests were considerable, and that they did their utmost to delay the resolution of the problem.¹⁴

The election of US President Ronald Reagan in November 1980 allowed the South African government to postpone the implementation of the UN plan for the Namibian problem. In fact, Reagan chose not to pressurize Pretoria, allowing the South African regime to change their mind about the promised concessions that they made under the Carter administration.¹⁵ Reagan's election was a major boost for Pretoria to impose its views and continue its war in Southern Africa in the early 1980s. The Reagan administration resurrected several questions including essential factors of the arrangement embodied in Resolution 435 and the organisation of the Contact Group. Washington developed its three-phased approach and linked the departure of Cuban troops from Angola to the Namibian resolution, tolerating South Africa's new grounds for rescheduling the sovereignty of the territory.¹⁶

As a result, for Serge Boucheny from the French communist Party, the five Western countries showed themselves to be collaborating with South Africa, first by modifying the interpretation of certain ambiguous clauses in Resolution 435, and then by refusing to admit that the situation in Namibia had deteriorated.¹⁷

That situation was profoundly exploited by Pretoria, in particular through a considerable increase in its military forces in Namibia, the state of terror in the country and the elimination of SWAPO militants. The compromises accepted by SWAPO related to a precise situation: in a discussion aimed at reaching a compromise in a new situation, the five countries did not seek an "acceptable solution on the international level", but tried to make SWAPO appear as the intransigent party. That was also a means of avoiding the precise working out of sanctions against South Africa at the UN. The Contact Group's

¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

¹⁵ *Le Monde*, 18 November 1980.

¹⁶ M P Karns: 'Ad Hoc Multilateral Diplomacy, The United States, the Contact Group, and Namibia' in *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 1, p. 114 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007

¹⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

mission on Namibia could be regarded as a setback for the forces fighting for the independence of Namibia.¹⁸

At the Strasbourg Conference on “The relations between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the regime in Pretoria”, Paul Verges, Secretary General of the communist Party of Reunion and a member of the Strasbourg Assembly, drew attention to the serious consequences of underestimating the process of growing militarization in the Indian Ocean and South Atlantic. Before that, at the initiative of the French Giscardian MP Jean d’Ormesson, the European parliament adopted the principle of the creation of a European naval force to exercise military control over the transport of oil and other mineral resources around the Cape of Good Hope. And during a session of the Western European Union (a parliamentary assembly which specialized in military problems), all political groups excluding the communists, agreed to the establishment of the naval force. More and more people from all viewpoints, apart from the communists at the Strasbourg assembly, the Western European Union and the Council of Europe, were more or less openly in favour of making an “agreement” with South Africa.¹⁹

France, in close collaboration with other NATO countries and members of the Contact Group, supported military arrangements in which South Africa could emerge to play a crucial coordinating responsibility. In fact, South African governments for a long time kept trying to draw NATO awareness in broadening the organization’s sphere south of the Tropic of Cancer. Owing to the lack of interest from NATO, South Africa suggested the development of an equivalent South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO), which would incorporate Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and naturally, South Africa.²⁰

The fact that Walvis Bay was the only deep-sea harbour between Lobito and the Cape on the South Atlantic was of increasing strategic importance. This went some way towards explaining the double game played by Giscard d’Estaing’s government regarding the

¹⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa’s Military Industry*, p. 29. See also R G Breto.: ‘*South Africa-Chile-Israel Connection*’ in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1984, p. 189 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

question of whether Walvis Bay belonged to Namibia or South Africa. It was clear that Namibia's strategic position, as much as its natural wealth, made the Pretoria government an accomplice of the Western powers.²¹

The complicity of the French government in the status quo of the Namibian problem was often criticised by the communist Party. Thus, communist MPs denounced the fact that French companies continued to operate in Namibia despite the UN decision asking countries involved there to stop their activities and French communists criticized Paris' responsibility for the survival of apartheid. For them, the taxes paid to Pretoria and continuous activities of French companies constituted a form of direct aid to South Africa, and contributed to the reinforcement of apartheid.²²

French communists were denouncing what was Paris' real policy with regard to the apartheid regime. Indeed, at the official level, the French government undeniably denounced the apartheid strategy of institutionalised racial segregation stubbornly followed by successive NP governments. But at the unofficial stage, economic and trade relations between the two countries continued to flourish. Thus, South Africa was one of France's main providers of strategic raw materials such as coal, natural and enriched uranium, manganese, titanium, platinum and diamonds. In addition, direct French investments in South Africa amounted to some R 500 million at that time, representing 7, 6 percent of all foreign investment, while more than 80 French firms still operated in South Africa.²³

In response to the above accusations, Paris replied, inter alia, that it had no control over the activities of private firms and that even when the State had large holdings in those companies, it could not do much about it due to the fact that some companies, such as the oil firms, were a power unto themselves and the State could do little. It was practically impossible to control the investments of French companies abroad. Even though the

²¹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ G Martin: 'The historical, economical, and political bases of France's African policy' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, June 1985, pp. 194-195 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

French government had huge interests in those mining companies, oil concerns and banks, it felt that it had no responsibility in international law.²⁴

The truth of the matter was that like the majority of Western powers, France did not accept the decision by the UN General Assembly to create a UN Council for Namibia as valid, and therefore did not acknowledge that the decisions of that Council had any legal value particularly on Decree No.1 on the protection of the natural resources of Namibia.²⁵

Thus Paris simply considered South Africa's presence in Namibia as illegal and had only promised to limit its economic activities in Namibia until independence. In fact, the French government pointed out that "the Insurance Company for External Commerce (COFACE) refused to guarantee operations in Namibia and that investment requests were refused to French firms that wanted to operate or maintain their activities there".²⁶

The Giscard d'Estaing government did not acknowledge SWAPO as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people, and thus maintained relations with the leaders of the "internal parties", even though they only represented small minorities and did not take part in drawing up the UN settlements plans for Namibia. For instance, by agreeing to receive Dirk Mudge just after his nomination by Pretoria as the chairman of a Council of Namibian Ministers, France not only reaffirmed that she did not accept SWAPO as sole representative of the Namibian people, but accepted the undermining of the UN's proposed solution.²⁷

While the Contact Group efforts failed to bring a satisfactory international resolution to the Namibian problem as negotiations reached an impasse in 1979-80, Pretoria pursued the implementation of its domestic plan for Namibia. Thus, control over the South West Africa Territory Force (SWATF) and the Police was then passed to the DTA. Meanwhile,

²⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Pretoria increased its military drive against SWAPO, which endured increasingly heavy losses in southern Angola and Northern Namibia.²⁸

The executive powers given to Dirk Mudge represented one more step toward an internal solution as sought by Pretoria. The French government received him at the very moment when South Africa was conducting pre-emptive strikes and other raids against SWAPO in Angola with military equipment from French origin.²⁹ Indeed, after retreating from Angola in early 1976 at the end of Operation Savannah, the South African government decided to espouse a strategy of premeditated trans-border operations in Angola. This started on 6 May 1978 with Operation Reindeer (in the form of three sub-operations) which intended at launching a substantial assault on six People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) bases at about 25 Km north of the Namibia-Angola border.³⁰

The original plan was to destroy all SWAPO military bases by elements of 32 Battalion supported by the SAAF as Cassinga was assumed to be a SWAPO's military command centre for southern Angola. The approach was later adjusted due to lack of meticulous information about certain bases, as the SAAF did not want to risk losing its aircraft, which became virtually irreplaceable with the 1977 UN compulsory arms ban. As a result, 32 Battalion was requested to initiate the attacks under the order of Major Eddie Viljoen with a number of Puma and Super Frelon helicopters support for trooping purposes. Operation Reindeer finished on 11 May 1978 and was considered costly and not a very productive one in terms of urgent results achieved, as the SADF lost five soldiers and about 30 wounded.³¹

According to SADF sources at the time, more than 800 people were killed overall in Reindeer's three sub-operations, predominantly at Cassinga. Nonetheless, several years afterwards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa recorded that in

²⁸ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, pp. 265-266.

²⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

³⁰ W Steenkamp: *Borderstrike: South Africa into Angola 1975-1980*, p. 141. See also M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, pp. 191-192.

³¹ W Steenkamp: *Borderstrike: South Africa into Angola 1975-1980*, pp. 223-225.

accordance with the Cuban archives, about 150 Cuban combatants were killed during the operation. Yet, after Operation Reindeer, SWAPO did slow its escalation of the insurgency in Northern Namibia to the extent that it was two years before the SADF felt the necessity to carry out another truly big invasion in Southern Angola.³²

Operation Reindeer did not subdue SWAPO activities for long, as just two months after its conclusion, there was an increase in incidents in the operational area which declined rather towards the end of 1978 but did not fade away in the next 18 months. The SADF responded with repetitive small incursions and violent patrols by SWA/Namibia-based troops on both sides of the border and in Southwestern Zambia, as well as two small operations codenamed Rekstok and Saffraan into Angola and Zambia in 1979.³³ By the first quarter of 1980, PLAN began to get its affairs in order again as SADF intelligence became aware of amplified SWAPO activities that were taking place at all levels inside PLAN, and reported that 800 rebels had been relocated from Southwestern Zambia to the Cunene province in South-Western Angola. This caused a clear and pressing danger to the electrical power-lines originating from the Ruacana generating station just south of the Cunene.³⁴

As a result, in early May 1980, the SADF troops stationed in SWA received orders to mount a sizeable pre-emptive attack, codenamed Operation Sceptic, generally known as Operation Smokeshell, in Southern Angola. Operation Sceptic was planned to achieve a number of political and military aims. In addition to normally disrupting insurgent activities and inflicting maximum losses, it was intended to damage or devastate the Soviets' confidence in SWAPO, re-establish the confidence of the Ovambos and their government in the security forces, strengthen the faith of the South African population in the SADF and permit SWA/Namibia's recently established multi-racial Ministers' Council to get off to a good start by allowing it to function from a position of strength.³⁵

The operation started on 29 May. After numerous clashes with SWAPO fighters during June and early July, Sceptic was called off towards mid-July with more than 360

³² W Steenkamp: *Borderstrike: South Africa into Angola 1975-1980*, p. 225.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 253-255.

insurgents killed and 17 South Africans and SWA/Namibians dead, the highest death toll incurred in any single operation up to that time. On the other hand, PLAN's operational potential received a disastrous blow. The operation had a corollary effect which was not so instantly noticeable. It was the first proper armoured infantry operation the SADF had performed since it had been properly equipped for such battles, and the lessons learnt would be applied with overwhelming consequences in the warfare, which was still to arrive.³⁶

Despite the use of numerous weapons of French origin during Operation Sceptic, Paris was always careful to take a severe stand against Pretoria, as the country was still heavily dependent on South African minerals.

Thus for French communists, Giscard d'Estaing was opposed to economic sanctions against South Africa for economic reasons. In fact, in August 1975 France initiated a five-year mining plan aimed at building a French stockpile of minerals in order to free the country from its dependence on Middle East oil. The same plan was to be renewed in 1980 and South Africa played a major role in its success.³⁷ At that time, France directed of her foreign policy to be more and more in line with the European Economic Community (EEC), particularly where South Africa was concerned. Thus, France and her other EEC partners adopted a Code of Conduct with regard to South Africa. Pierre Lagarce, a socialist MP and former spokesperson of the Development and Cooperation Commission of the European Parliament, commented on the Code of Conduct. In a very instructive report he condemned clearly apartheid policy and showed the limitations of the Code of Conduct.³⁸

The strategy that he proposed to the EEC was to show a disquieting "realism", stressing the importance of South Africa as a commercial partner and producer of raw materials vital to the EEC. He categorically opposed an economic boycott by the EEC against

³⁶ W Steenkamp: *Borderstrike: South Africa into Angola 1975-1980*, pp. 256-258.

³⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 9, French Stockpile plans. France: Relations with the RSA, Relevant files: 2.8.1978 – 4.4.1979.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, File No. 1/30/3, Focus on France: Serge Boucheny – Senator of Paris – Parti Communiste Français (PCF), 25 August 1980. France: Relations with South Africa, Annexure Jacket 1980.

South Africa. Consequently, France hid behind EEC decisions to justify her position on economic sanctions against South Africa.³⁹

In Namibia, the Giscard d'Estaing government was mainly interested in economic profits. To preserve short-term interests, by taking part in the extended looting of a non-developed country, it took no account of the suffering of the Namibian workers and the unjust and tyrannical regime imposed on an entire people by Pretoria.⁴⁰

France under Giscard d'Estaing succeeded only in maintaining its economic patterns with South Africa at the expense of the Namibian people and did not follow the UN recommendations that appealed to all member states to stop exploiting Namibian minerals.

In January 1981, a last attempt to reach a breakthrough with Resolution 435 was made by the Carter administration before leaving office. A 'pre-implementation conference' took place in Geneva and was attended by SWAPO, Pretoria, the DTA and various internal parties. The meeting was chaired by Brian Urquhart, under Secretary-General of the UN. Unfortunately no promises were achieved and the conference did not produce any optimistic outcomes.⁴¹ The conference was expected to establish South Africa's "trust and confidence" in the fairness of the UN and to set dates for a truce and the implementation of the settlement plan.⁴²

The failure of the Carter administration over the Namibian independence process gave Pretoria time to delay the implementation of UN recommendations as the incoming Reagan administration declared itself for a policy move closer to Pretoria's position on Namibia. And British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher shared Reagan's position on Namibia. Moreover, the Zimbabwean independence in April 1980 came to jeopardize expectations of any arrangement of the Namibian question as it drastically amended the

³⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria, Pretoria, File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 9, Declaration of the International Conference in Solidarity with the struggle of the People of Namibia, UNESCO House, Paris 11-13 September 1980. France: relations with the RSA, 2.8.1978– 4.4.1979.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 266.

⁴² M P Karns: 'Ad Hoc Multilateral Diplomacy, The United States, the Contact Group, and Namibia' in *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 1987, p. 112 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

regional environment and caused Pretoria to reconsider its policy in Southern Africa. Pretoria could no longer afford an international resolution with the security risk of a SWAPO government in Namibia and a black unfriendly government in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the collapse of the white minority rule in Rhodesia became a security threat for Pretoria.⁴³

Under Giscard d'Estaing, France decided to become part of the Contact Group that the UN mandated in 1977 to negotiate with Pretoria over the Namibian independence process. Despite Paris' decision to observe the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo, Giscard d'Estaing failed to put pressure on Pretoria as the country's economy depended heavily on South African strategic minerals for its stockpile programme, started in 1975 and in which South Africa was a key player. Yet, the continuing presence of French firms operating in Namibia was a clear indication of Paris' reluctance to adopt economic sanctions against Pretoria, as trade relations became the main ground of their relations after 1977.

6.2 The French socialist government position, Mitterrand and the change in French approach.

Well before François Mitterrand came to power in May 1981, socialists made it clear that once in power, French military supplies and other related businesses with Pretoria were to be stopped.⁴⁴ Prior to the 1978 French Parliamentary elections the socialists kept South Africa under the microscope constantly. Their line on the apartheid issue was hard and approached the ideological position of the communists, leading to an alliance for the French Parliamentary elections, which they lost to Pretoria's relief as France voted for the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo.⁴⁵

From December 1977 until the end of Giscard d'Estaing presidency in May 1981, South Africa faced more and more difficulties in getting military supplies from Paris. Pretoria

⁴³ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 266.

⁴⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3 Vol. 2, *Apartheid-Non*, Interview with Lionel Jospin: National Secretary of Socialist Party for the Third World, 11 March 1977. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 13.10.1975 – 29.4.1977.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

knew that the arrival of the socialist government at the Elysée palace would critically jeopardize French military supplies to Pretoria. In fact, few days before the second round of the presidential elections, Mitterrand replied to a letter addressed to him by the French Movement against apartheid by saying that if French people elected him, he would revise French relations with South Africa especially in the military field. He added that he was personally against the situation in Southern Africa where human rights were not respected nor peace and justice. Mitterrand promised that he would engage France in debates in international organizations regarding initiatives in favour of justice and peace in Southern Africa.⁴⁶ The official position of the French socialist Party was that trade with Namibia should end immediately, that imports from South Africa should be decreased, that French public and private ventures in South Africa should be discontinued and that the front-line states should be given political, diplomatic and humanitarian support.⁴⁷

Immediately after Mitterrand's election, a South African pro-governmental newspaper, *Die Vaderland*, stated that Pretoria and Paris would be faced with special attention on French investments in South Africa, the building of the Koeberg nuclear plant and the supply of electronic equipment that could be used for the defence of the RSA.⁴⁸

On 20 May 1981, an international conference on sanctions against South Africa took place in Paris. The conference was organized by the UN and the OAU. Lionel Jospin in his capacity as First Secretary of the French socialist Party gave a welcome speech during which he called for the French government to be forced to cease all trade with Namibia as well as a total arms embargo against Pretoria. The international conference took place on the eve of Mitterrand's inauguration and was mostly represented by Third World countries, while the Contact Group nations did not attend the talks. Jospin's speech represented the official view of the French socialist Party concerning France's relations

⁴⁶ *Le Monde*, 14 May 1981.

⁴⁷ G Martin: 'The historical, economical, and political bases of France's African policy' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, June 1985, p. 195 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007

⁴⁸ Quoted in *Le Monde*, 15 May 1981.

with South Africa. As expected, Jospin's declarations greatly aroused Pretoria's concern.⁴⁹

South Africa was particularly concerned about French involvement in the Namibian question and cooperation regarding the Koeberg nuclear plant. Pretoria was anxious about the possibility that France could adopt a hard line or withdraw from the talks on the Namibian independence process as part of the Contact Group. South African diplomats were worried about the possible new French position towards Namibia, especially since the Reagan administration took office and that Washington tried to solve the question by dealing only with Pretoria and not with its other four partners. Pretoria feared that a possible French withdrawal from the Contact Group, could lead to the revival of SWAPO's positions towards Pretoria at a time that France was looking for a more negotiable solution to the question.⁵⁰

The other concern was the possible nationalization of one of the main contractors of the French consortium building the Koeberg nuclear plant. In fact, the group Creusot-Loire was one of the French enterprises to be nationalized by the new government. The withdrawal of the French consortium in the Koeberg project might have caused important delays in completing the nuclear plant on time. The first reactor was due to start functioning at the early stage towards the end of 1982 and the second one year later.⁵¹ However, that situation was unlikely to happen regarding the huge amounts of money that France was to lose; the contract was worth US \$ 1 billion.⁵²

The new French socialist-led government was formed on 23 June 1981 with Pierre Mauroy as Prime Minister. Shortly after the formation of the new government, in which Claude Cheysson was appointed Minister of External Relations, a UN special conference took place in Paris and was attended by delegates from more than 100 countries. The conference was called to develop and implement further economic sanctions against South Africa. During his speech, the first since his appointment, Cheysson declared his solidarity and support with all countries struggling against racism and apartheid in South

⁴⁹ *Le Monde*, 21 May 1981.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 22 May 1981.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, See also S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 161.

Africa and SWA. French President François Mitterrand was expected to take a tougher line against trade and other economic cooperation with South Africa than had his predecessor Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, under whose regime South Africa became France's fifth largest trading partner.⁵³

However, Paris was well aware of the role that South Africa played in supplying crucial raw materials such as uranium and coal. For instance, in 1980, South Africa became the biggest supplier of coal to France, making Paris increasingly dependent on South African energy exports. France was already a major buyer of Namibian uranium for its ambitious nuclear programme aimed at freeing the country from dependence on Arab oil. Figures from the coal importers association showed that South Africa supplied 9, 2 million tons in 1980, taking over the top slot from West Germany.⁵⁴ France launched a major nuclear programme after the 1973 oil crisis and in 1981, for the first time, oil was to account for less than half of the energy needs and South Africa played a major role in this regard.⁵⁵

The French socialists could not therefore take the risk to reveal publicly all their thoughts about future trade relations with Pretoria as French business circles were now quite worried. In fact, at the time of Mitterrand's election, 165 French companies were officially listed as having business directly or indirectly in South Africa and SWA.⁵⁶

Most top French banks and companies had major interests in South Africa, representing some FF 8 billion. Those business circles were particularly worried when Mitterrand came to power because they were not prepared to leave their share of the cake to their British, American and West German counterparts in the lucrative South African market. What Pretoria and French business circles operating in South Africa feared was the immediate and total implementation of the socialist policy of nationalizing all major French companies and banks linked with the apartheid state as an efficient means to stop apartheid in South Africa and Namibia. However, on 26 May 1981 Claude Cheysson

⁵³ *South China Morning Post*, 26 May 1981.

⁵⁴ *Pretoria News*, 19 January 1981: *SA now France's main coal supplier*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Le Monde*, 22 May 1981.

declared that all previous French political and economical commitments would be fully respected and stressed that the French signature was sacred.⁵⁷

In the same sense, Jacques Delors, the new French Finance Minister confirmed his colleague's statement in the *Washington Post* by saying that France would respect its international commitments, even the arm sales to South Africa.⁵⁸ The announcements of French Ministers came to stop some ongoing comments that took place just after Mitterrand's victory about the hardening of French relations with Pretoria. Nevertheless, Cheysson said that France was now on the same path as anti-South African forces.⁵⁹

Racism and the Namibian issue were top of French socialists' agenda as the territory was the last occupied country in Africa after the Zimbabwean independence.

In July 1981, Cheysson labelled the South African government as a "totally insupportable totalitarian regime". Referring to French arms exports to South Africa, he recognized that the arms industry was vital because it employed 300 000 people in France. But even so, the government had to take precautions. For him, a country with a totally insupportable totalitarian regime must never receive French arms.⁶⁰

Philippe Decreane, African Affairs editor of the liberal evening *Le Monde*, whose wife had been personal secretary to Mitterrand for ten years, believed that France would increase pressure on Pretoria over two issues – speeding up the independence of Namibia and ending apartheid. According to him, in the direct way, Cheysson was in complete agreement with Mitterrand in believing that the only language understood by Pretoria was that of firmness and there could be no compromise with P W Botha.⁶¹

Indirectly, France would try to give aid to Bantustans like Transkei, Venda, Ciskei and especially Bophuthatswana, with the goal of giving them the means to 'break their subjection to Pretoria'.⁶² Policies of direct and indirect pressures were aimed at ending

⁵⁷ *Le Monde*, 27 May 1981.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 May 1981: *France lines up against South Africa*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; *Now the French have a word for S Africa*.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13 July 1981: *French 'to turn screw on SA'*.

⁶² *Ibid.*

apartheid. It was expected that France would take a tougher stand on South Africa's internal policies, while working to maintain the favourable trade links, said Bernard Dorin, the French ambassador in South Africa.⁶³ Despite these promises, the Namibian people knew that they had to wait years before independence was granted. The Contact Group efforts were still in vain and Pretoria was not willing to evacuate the territory as requested by the international community.⁶⁴

In connection with the military embargo against Pretoria, Paris took the decision to compensate armament industrialists that were affected by the embargo. Thus, the French naval dockyards Dubigeon-Normandie that were supposed to supply Pretoria with two Agosta class submarines, obtained FF 47, 5 million as a compensation after the deal was cancelled.⁶⁵

French business circles continued to assist South Africa in other fields of its economy. Thus, the Franco-German consortium Stein-Industry-EVT was chosen by ESCOM to supply six generators for the Matimiba thermal station that was to be opened in Ellisras, northern Transvaal. The deal was worth R 1 billion and the Franco-German consortium was chosen amongst others from Europe, the USA and South Africa.⁶⁶

After the failure of the French embassy's initiative in support of the protesting Nyanga squatters, France underlined the socialist government's hard line attitude to Pretoria with a firm statement banning all arms sales to South Africa. In fact, Cheysson affirmed in a British television interview that not a single French arm would be sent to South Africa. However, he reiterated earlier reassurances given by his cabinet colleagues that all contracts signed by the previous administration would be honoured, in particular the nuclear reactors that were to be supplied by French firms for the Koeberg nuclear power station.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 15 July 1981: *France outlines its stance on South Africa*.

⁶⁴ *Le Monde*, 28 July 1981.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 August 1981.

⁶⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 August 1981: *Not one rifle for SA, says France*.

Although France had no existing contracts for the supply of military hardware to South Africa at the time, Cheysson ruled out the possibility of any new contracts. For him, France would not also in future, under the socialists, supply spare parts for weaponry or hardware such as the French-built submarines and Mirage jet fighters supplied under the previous government to the SADF.⁶⁸

In the meantime, the failure of the Contact Group on Namibia to provide a solution drove a deep wedge between them. There were new French moves to take the initiative out of the grasp of the Reagan administration, given the failure of the Geneva talks in January 1981. Thus, a delegation of five Foreign Affairs Ministers from Algeria, Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Rwanda, representing the OAU arrived in Paris on 25 August 1981 for urgent talks with their French counterpart Cheysson. The emergence of a major French initiative was partly prompted by dissatisfaction with the Reagan administration's approach and also because France wished to dissociate herself from a stalemate at a time when it was eager to make new friends in Black Africa. Cheysson's meeting with the five African Foreign Affairs Ministers came amid wide speculation in Paris over the remark made during weekend by the French Minister of Cooperation, Jean-Pierre Cot, who said that the Contact Group was on the verge of breaking up. Cot made his comment in Lagos during an official visit and reliable sources believed that Nigeria depended heavily on French support on the SWA/Namibian question at the UN the following week.⁶⁹ According to the same sources, France was ready to propose that Nigeria – which had the largest standing army in Africa – should supply peacekeeping troops in the event of a SWA ceasefire, instead of the UN force rejected by Pretoria.⁷⁰

South African invasions in Angola and its on-going military campaigns in the region led the French government to give permission to the ANC and SWAPO to open information offices in Paris. The main benefit for the movements was the possibility of increasing their fund-raising activities in France and a dozen Francophone African countries. It was the first time that a French government allowed the ANC and SWAPO to open offices in Paris, giving them at the same occasion official recognition and more exposure to the

⁶⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 August 1981: *Not one rifle for SA, says France*.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*,: *New SWA deals on bargaining tables*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

French media and public. The preceding French governments did not officially recognize the Nationalist organisations despite “their condemnation of the apartheid policy”.⁷¹

During all the UN sessions over the South African raids into Southern Angola, the USA used their right of veto to dismiss any initiative of the international community calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Pretoria’s troops from Angola. That situation highlighted a difficult relationship between France and the USA within the Contact Group due to the fact that the two countries had diametrically opposed views over the Namibian question. In fact, the French government vigorously condemned South African raids into Angola and called for an urgent application of the UN Resolution 435, which would allow the withdrawal of foreign forces from Namibia and the implementation of a democratic process to assure peace and free determination of the people in the region.⁷²

The growing dissensions between the USA and its European partners, especially France, over Namibia did not help to avoid the possibility of an internationalization of the conflict in Southern Africa.⁷³

On 23 November, meeting with Guy Penne, Mitterrand’s African and Madagascan Affairs Counselor, Sam Nujoma called on the French government to stop all arms sales to South Africa. For the SWAPO leader the situation in Southern Africa was explosive and Namibians demanded that the French stop the supply of military equipment to Pretoria.⁷⁴

On 2 December 1981, Mitterrand received the credentials of four diplomats among whom were a South African and an American. Robert du Plooy was the new South African ambassador in Paris. Mitterrand told du Plooy about his concern regarding the settlement of the Namibian question. He added that France wished that Namibia would accede in the very near future to its independence according to the UN Security Council resolution, and

⁷¹ *Sunday Times*, 13 September 1981: *France-SA ties slump*.

⁷² *Le Monde*, 4 August 1981.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 25 November 1981.

that France had decided to take an active part in the implementation of an international settlement of the question.⁷⁵

In its session of 17 December 1981, the UN General Assembly declared the year 1982 an international year of mobilization against apartheid. At the same time, the Contact Group representing the United Nations handed Pretoria and Windhoek some amended proposals on the future constitution of the territory in order to find a solution on the Namibian conflict.⁷⁶

Negotiations between the Five and Pretoria became more intense because South Africans and the internal parties wanted assurances from the Western powers concerning the impartiality of the UN since the General Assembly always considered SWAPO as the sole representative of the Namibian people.⁷⁷

In January 1982 a meeting involving Americans and Angolans over the Namibian dilemma was held in Paris. The Paris gathering took place between the US under Secretary of State Chester Crocker and the Angolan Foreign Affairs Minister Paulo Jorge.⁷⁸ Before meeting the Angolan diplomat, Crocker had a meeting in London with Brand Fourie, a close collaborator of Pik Botha.⁷⁹ Washington's aim was to examine Pretoria's real concerns and prepare South Africans to make compromises on phase-two problems. Indeed, Crocker wanted to promote South Africa with an American diplomatic umbrella in exchange for Pretoria's compliance on the Namibian problem. On the other hand, he wanted Luanda to put pressure on SWAPO leader, Sam Nujoma with the aim of bringing the latter to recognize the proposed decolonization arrangement as the Angolan government sponsored the Nationalist movement.⁸⁰

According to Washington, the recognition of the December 1981 decolonization plan offered by the Western powers to Pretoria and SWAPO could bring a ceasefire, enabling the deployment of 7 500 UN forces in the region. The respect of the ceasefire by the

⁷⁵ *Le Monde*, 4 December 1981.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 19 December 1981.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ C A. Crocker: *High Noon in Southern Africa, Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, p. 141.

⁷⁹ *Le Monde*, 16 January 1982.

⁸⁰ C A. Crocker: *High Noon in Southern Africa, Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, p. 125.

belligerents would have stopped guerilla actions as well as Pretoria raids into Angola, therefore no need for the 20 000 Cubans to remain in Angola.⁸¹ It was assumed that throughout the London gathering between Crocker and Fourie, the deployment of the UN forces was discussed, and once more Pretoria asked for the neutrality of the international organisation over that problem. Nevertheless, Pretoria unofficially approved the 1978 UN deployment plan by tacitly admitting a 7 500-man deployment, although stating its inclination for inferior numbers.⁸²

According to the left-wing Paris daily newspaper *Le Matin*, in its 27 March publication, France was apparently the third largest exporter of arms in the world, with ± 12 percent of the total market, behind the USA and USSR, which together totaled about 75 percent. In connection with South Africa, the article said that it was without doubt the first file that the French Defence Minister consulted after his arrival in the government was one on South Africa.⁸³

The article also said that the French Defence Minister never allowed the contents of that explosive file to be divulged and that despite France's official declaration to adhere to the 1977 UN mandatory embargo against Pretoria, Paris never stopped supplying military equipment to the apartheid state. The Giscardian government continued to supply arms and spares, permitting Pretoria by the issue of licences to produce Crotale/Cactus missiles (Matra) and light armoured cars (Panhard). Several transactions after France's official decision to abide by the 1977 mandatory embargo which the French Defence Minister, by the eccentric solidarity of the governing class, classified under the heading "miscellaneous" came before the extremely official Interministerial Commission for the Study of Exports of War Material (CIEMG). It seemed that the socialist rulers, declined, now that they were in power, to explain to the French people that, concerning the armaments deal to South Africa, their predecessors lied to the nation.⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Le Monde*, 16 January 1982.

⁸² C A. Crocker: *High Noon in Southern Africa, Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, p. 130.

⁸³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 13, France: Arms Exports. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 16.6.1981 – 28.4.1982.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* See also D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a Comparative Analysis*, p. 508.

Furthermore, the article revealed that the French arms manufacturers were greatly perturbed when Mitterrand and the socialists came to power but they had since become considerably reassured. The article ended with the thought that as of April 1982, the arms industry was 90 percent nationalized; the French government had a new responsibility in that field. However, an anonymous French arms dealer said in the article that, despite the fact that France declared that it would not sell arms to South Africa, it continued to supply military equipment by way of various intermediate countries and Zaire was cited as an example.⁸⁵

In reaction to Pretoria's Mebos Operation into Angola in July-August 1982, Paris vigorously condemned the South African attacks. Indeed, on 16 August, the spokesperson of the French External Affairs Ministry said that Pretoria's aggression came as a shock at a time when the Contact Group and the Front-Line states as well as SWAPO on their 12 August meeting in New York, made some important progress, notably regarding the UN partiality denounced by Pretoria.⁸⁶

On 5 December 1982, the international community through the UN General Assembly called for the second time in one week for the implementation of a mandatory economic embargo against South Africa, especially over oil supplies. The UN General Assembly also condemned countries such as Israel and the USA that were accused of cooperating with Pretoria.⁸⁷

December 1982 was a particularly busy month for the UN General Assembly as the international organization adopted ten resolutions against the apartheid government. The most important of those resolutions, the one asking the Security Council to pass a total and mandatory embargo against Pretoria was adopted by 114 votes against 14 and 11 abstentions. The Contact Group countries voted against the resolution, which, inter alia, recommended the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Monetary Fund to cease their cooperation with South Africa. Only one out of the ten resolutions was adopted by general consensus, the one calling all member states to generously

⁸⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 13, France: Arms Exports. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 16.6.1981 – 28.4.1982.

⁸⁶ *Le Monde*, 15/16 August 1982.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 December 1982.

contribute the UN special fund to help apartheid victims. The USA voted against the rest of the resolutions while France, for the first time, voted in favour of texts on the creation of a centre against apartheid and apartheid in sport.⁸⁸

Despite France's willingness to look for a settlement solution over the Namibian question, SWAPO's leader was still quite severe towards France. Thus, on 20 January 1983, Nujoma accused Paris of playing a double game with the Namibian question. For him, though France was opposed to the linkage issue, her technicians continued to work in South Africa where they helped the apartheid regime to build Panhards and Mirage jet fighters. France also continued to supply spare parts for Alouette, Puma and Super Frelon helicopters to Pretoria. He asked Paris to impose economic sanctions against South Africa, as France's declarations ought to lead to real action.⁸⁹

6.3 The determination of the French socialist government to fight apartheid and bring peace in Southern Africa, 1982-1984.

While France and her Contact Group partners were still engaged in the Namibian decolonisation process, the French government informed the Secretary General of the United Nations of its decision to make voluntary financial contributions to the peoples of Southern Africa for the year 1983. Thus, on 18 March France made available US \$ 140 000 to the UN fund for Namibia and also made a direct contribution of US \$ 135 000 to the UN Institute for Namibia in Lusaka. Paris also donated US \$ 55 000 to the UN trust Fund for South Africa. The donation was to be directed exclusively at providing financial aid to persons indicted as a result of the discriminatory and repressive apartheid laws, and at helping imprisoned persons and their families in the field of education. France also provided US \$ 90 000 to the UN Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ *Le Monde*, 11 December 1982.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 25 January 1983.

⁹⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 14, Financial Assistance of France to the Peoples of Southern Africa. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 6.5.1982 – 10.6.1983.

By providing money to the UN special organs dealing with Southern Africa, France showed, once again, its determination to participate actively in the implementation of an international solution for the people of Southern Africa.

On 31 March, *The Herald* published a statement on the French African policy almost two years after the socialists took power. According to the report, many of the socialist supporters were disappointed when the French government turned back to its traditional friends on the African continent. Indeed, France's traditional African friends appeared to have gained the upper hand in relations with the Elysée Palace under President Mitterrand.⁹¹

The new French government did not practise what it preached while in the opposition, and the frustration of the socialist supporters was shared by Jean Pierre Cot, Mitterrand's first Cooperation Minister, who resigned in December 1982 after reportedly clashing with the Elysée Palace and the Quai d'Orsay.⁹² Before Cot's resignation it became clear that France's Africa policy was increasingly being decided at the Elysée, where the President's son, Jean Christophe Mitterrand had been named a deputy to Guy Penne, Mitterrand's advisor for African and Malagasy Affairs.⁹³

On 13 April, the French Anti-Apartheid Movement (MAA) published a charter calling for total isolation of the apartheid government. The charter was co-signed by 30 organisations including Christian, Jurist, and Trade Unions as well as Political Movements.⁹⁴

On the other hand, the same day the UN Council for Namibia published a communiqué in connection with the upcoming international conference to be held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris in May. It revealed that Western nations as well as Japan, Switzerland, Israel and Taiwan continued active collaboration with Pretoria. The UN Council for Namibia particularly condemned the USA, France, Britain and West

⁹¹ *The Herald*, 31 March 1983: *Paris turns back to its old friends in Africa ...*

⁹² *The Herald*, 31 March 1983: *Paris turns back to its old friends in Africa ...* See also K Whiteman:: 'President Mitterrand and Africa' in *African Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 328, July 1983, p. 329 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

⁹³ *The Herald*, 31 March 1983: *Paris turns back to its old friends in Africa ...*

⁹⁴ *Le Monde*, 15 April 1983.

Germany for their support of the South African government and protested against the opposition of the USA, France and Britain to mandatory economic sanctions against Pretoria.⁹⁵

In late May 1983, two major actions once again put South Africa under an international spotlight in general and France's attention in particular. Responding to the ANC sabotage actions in Pretoria during which the Nationalist movement detonated a bomb in Pretoria, killing some people, the South African regime launched a raid against Maputo in Mozambique. According to Pretoria's military decision makers, the ANC perpetrators of the Pretoria raid came from Mozambique where some 400 ANC combatants were reported to be based. Pretoria wanted to oblige the Mozambican government to withdraw its protection of ANC militants living there.⁹⁶

Most of the Western capitals involved in the Contact Group condemned Pretoria's bombing attack and the South African raid into Mozambique. Though the French government conveyed its condolences to the South African government for those killed in the bombings, it firmly also condemned Pretoria's raid on Maputo.⁹⁷

On 23 May, a spokesperson of the Quai d'Orsay stated that "nothing could justify the aggression against an independent State and the friendly Republic of Mozambique. France once again criticized the system of apartheid which, by its defiance of human rights, engendered a diplomatic cycle of violence and reprisals".⁹⁸

On 25 May, Claude Cheysson continued to attack the South African raid into Mozambique when he was a guest of French MPs at the National Assembly. He said that the French condemnation of the apartheid government had to be more provocative towards the leaders that claimed themselves to be from a Christian morality and that

⁹⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 14, Speech pronounced by the Minister of External Relations of France at the opening of the conference of support to the Namibian people (UNESCO, Paris 25 April 1983). France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 6.5.1982 – 10.6.1983

⁹⁶ *Le Monde*, 25 May 1983.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 15, Anti-SA public statements by President Mitterrand, External Relations Minister Cheysson and Elysée Spokesman Gallo. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 11.6.1983 – 8.3.1984.

France had to keep condemning in the name of principle. At the same time, the ANC representative in Paris, Leonard Mnumzana said that the ANC had decided to respond to Pretoria's violence by revolutionary violence. In the meantime, a meeting over the Namibian question was to be held in Washington on 26 May between the US Secretary of State, George Shultz, SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma and Foreign Affairs Ministers of the six Front-Line states namely Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.⁹⁹

In New York, the South African representative at the UN asked the Mozambican Foreign Minister, Joaquim Chissano, to clarify the position of his government towards the ANC. According to the South African Press Agency (SAPA), Chissano stated that the Mozambican government would continue to assist the ANC and was determined to pursue the struggle till the South African white supremacists were no longer in power.¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, the Lesotho government conveyed an official note to the South African government to protest against Pretoria for marking Maseru as an ANC base. Maseru's statement followed Maputo's raid as the tiny kingdom experienced the same actions in December 1982. Though Maseru recognised the presence of South African refugees on its soil, the Lesotho's government did not allow refugees to build offensive bases against South Africa. And to prove their honesty, Maseru offered to dismantle ANC bases immediately if Pretoria could show them the concerned bases. In response, Pik Botha repeated his accusations against Maseru and asked them to take concrete measures against ANC to prove its sincerity towards Pretoria.¹⁰¹

On 2 June 1983, Minister Cheysson addressed the French Senate, and during a lengthy speech on foreign policy, referred to South Africa and SWA/Namibia. He stated that

⁹⁹ *Le Monde*, 27 May 1983.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

“France could no longer continue to camouflage, under the cover of meetings of the Contact Group of Five, that which had become intolerable”.¹⁰²

On 26 July 1983, Cheysson started an official four-day visit to Brazil and during the course of an initial public declaration; he discussed SWA/Namibia. According to the Paris based socialist daily newspaper, *Le Matin*, the French Minister stated that “the resolutions of the United Nations must be applied in their entirety...France had thought of leaving the Contact Group whose actions were cautious to the extreme, even hypocritical. It was unacceptable to link the destiny of Namibia with that of Angola”.¹⁰³

On 19 August 1983, it was announced that the UN Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar would visit South Africa from 22 to 25 August. Perez de Cuellar was invited by the South African government in order to discuss the implementation of the UN plan for Namibia. Perez de Cuellar was to visit Cape Town, Windhoek and Angola.¹⁰⁴

Seeing that the Contact Group’s attempts at bringing Pretoria to comply with the UN proposals over the Namibian problem were unsuccessful and that Paris and Washington views diverged, France withdrew from the Group, citing lack of evolution in the negotiations. From that time, the Reagan administration was left to come up with a satisfactory suggestion for the Angolans and the South Africans over the departure of Cubans that would lead to the Namibian self-determination.¹⁰⁵

6.4 France’s hesitation to adopt economic sanctions against Pretoria.

On 2 November 1983 Pretoria organised the historical constitutional referendum, which allowed partial powers to the Coloured and Indian communities. The UN General Assembly immediately announced in its Resolution on 15 November that those

¹⁰² Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 15, Anti-SA public statements by President Mitterrand, External Relations Minister Cheysson and Elysée Spokesman Gallo. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 11.6.1983 – 8.3.1984.

¹⁰³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 15, Statement on SWA/Namibian independence by French Foreign Minister on visit to Brazil. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 11.6.1983 – 8.3.1984.

¹⁰⁴ *Le Monde*, 19 August 1983.

¹⁰⁵ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa’s Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 282.

constitutional proposals were different from the principles of the UN charter; and consequently, because the Black majority was not incorporated during the consultation, the results of the referendum were not legitimate. Despite the UN rejection of the new South African constitution, Pretoria went ahead with its plans at a time that the domestic situation became increasingly precarious for the survival of the white government.¹⁰⁶

The year 1983 finished with Pretoria's refusal to leave the Namibian territory despite the efforts made by the global community and the Contact Group. That situation brought the UN General Assembly to denounce once more the South African government for its intransigence on the Namibian question. Indeed, five resolutions against Pretoria were passed and approved at large majority during the UN General Assembly on 1 December 1983. The Contact Group countries did not take part in the debate and abstained during the vote. During the votes, the UN General Assembly rejected and condemned both South Africa and the USA for the fact that they established a link between the Namibian independence and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.¹⁰⁷

Since the arrival of President Mitterrand at the Elysée Palace, the French policy regarding South Africa was dictated by economic considerations. As a matter of fact, while shunning close contact, France declared herself firmly opposed to economic sanctions against South Africa. Paris also declared that it was against military and nuclear cooperation with Pretoria despite the South African military representation in France as well as Armscor's continued operation from the South African embassy in Paris.¹⁰⁸

The French government did not want to lose a vital trading partner like South Africa when the country continued to depend on Pretoria's minerals for its stockpile programme instigated by Giscard d'Estaing in the mid-1970s. French socialists officially embraced the nuclear era in January 1978.¹⁰⁹ Despite political speeches condemning apartheid and

¹⁰⁶ *Le Monde*, 17 November 1983. See also C A. Crocker: *High Noon in Southern Africa, Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁷ *Le Monde*, 3 December 1983.

¹⁰⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 15, French Policy towards South Africa, France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 11.6.1983 – 8.3.1984.

¹⁰⁹ J Howorth: 'Consensus of silence, the French Socialist Party and Defence Policy under François Mitterrand' in *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 60, No. 4, 1984, p. 582, at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

the SADF military invasions in neighbouring countries, trade relations between Paris and Pretoria continued. Thus, on 8 March 1984, Pretoria's Finance Minister Owen Horwood signed a financial agreement with a consortium of 12 European banks led by the *Crédit Commercial de France* for ECU 40 million retractable bonds. It was the first time that the Republic of South Africa raised finance in the ECU market and it was an important new field that opened itself to South Africa as far as borrowing was concerned. The other French banks were the *Banque Nationale de Paris*, *Banque Indosuez*, and *Société Générale*.¹¹⁰

The French participation in the consortium was to be interpreted as an indication of the French business circles' strong desire to continue good commercial relations with South Africa said the President of the *Crédit Commercial de France*. Prior to the deal, it was reported that Edith Cresson, French Minister for Foreign Trade informed Stegmann, chairman of SASOL, of the French desire to expand trade relations with Pretoria and that there was a rush of French trade missions to South Africa which underlined the desire for continued economic cooperation.¹¹¹ The credit transaction between South Africa and the group of mostly French banks was made achievable by the fact that under French law; even nationalized banks were assured autonomy of action, leaving Mitterrand's objective to discontinue all support to South Africa to be indisposed.¹¹²

France was once again involved in the Namibian and apartheid questions when a delegation of the commission of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the French Senate met Pik Botha in Cape Town on 8 March 1984. During the meeting, Pik Botha expressed the disappointment of his government over the French attitude, as Paris could not wish Pretoria away. According to him, the outside world could and should not judge South Africa if it did not have first hand and intimate knowledge of the African continent.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 15, *Vertroulik*, France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 11.6.1983 – 8.3.1984.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² C Alden & J-P Daloz: *Paris, Pretoria and the African Continent*, p. 76.

¹¹³ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 16, Meeting between the Honourable RF Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs and a delegation of the commission of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the French Senate: Cape Town, 8 March 1984. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 9.3.1984 – 25.7.1984.

For him, the only way of securing lasting peace in the region would be to bring President Dos Santos and Dr Savimbi together, but was afraid that Moscow was not interested in peace. Botha concluded his speech by saying that it would be a tragedy if France should turn her back on the needs of Southern Africa and extended an invitation to Paris to assist in the economic development of the sub-continent.¹¹⁴

Despite France's condemnation of the apartheid policy and Paris' involvement in Southern African problems, relations between France and South Africa continued in other fields such as the nuclear one. In fact, unit one of the Koeberg nuclear power station, built by the French consortium Framatome-Alsthom-Atlantique and Framatag, started functioning on 14 March 1984 after being postponed for almost a year due to sabotage actions committed by the ANC in December 1982. The functioning of the second unit was scheduled for the end of 1984.¹¹⁵

On 24 March 1984, the South African embassy in Paris reported a possibility of French military assistance to Angola. Indeed, in a secret note to Pretoria, the South African embassy said that well-informed sources believed that 37 fighter helicopters of the French army were offered to the Angolan government. The objectives of the helicopters offer were to allow Luanda to face the increasing pressure imposed by UNITA led by Jonas Savimbi. The sources said that those helicopters were to be armed in Lisbon and that Angolan pilots for the helicopters were trained at Toussus le Noble in France during the 1983 summer. The South African embassy wished to know what role France was to play in the Southern African conflict if ever the information was confirmed.¹¹⁶

Mitterrand's government decided also to strengthen the military ban against South Africa on products that could be exploited for military purposes. On the other hand, the fall of South African exports to France was a result of France resolution to diversify her suppliers as far as the purchase of her raw materials was concerned. Until 1981, South

¹¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 16, France: Verskaffing van Dauphine Franse helikopters aan Angola. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 9.3.1984 – 25.7.1984.

¹¹⁵ *Le Monde*, 17 March 1984.

¹¹⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 16, France: Verskaffing van Dauphine Franse helikopters aan Angola. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 9.3.1984 – 25.7.1984.

Africa remained the first provider of coal and uranium as well as other specific strategic resources to Paris.¹¹⁷ From being greatly reliant on South Africa's natural resources under Giscard d'Estaing, the French socialists managed to decrease such reliance by expanding their sources of supplies, particularly from their former colonies in Africa and from South America. For instance by 1982, Niger supplied nearly 60 percent of Paris' uranium requirements, attenuating the country's reliance on South African supplies.¹¹⁸

Yet, the French socialist government put pressure on French firms that operated in Namibia to reduce and at a later stage stop their activities in that country due to the fact that one of the UN's special commissions denounced the West for the illegal exploitation of Namibian minerals, and France had some of its major firms in Namibia. After P W Botha's visit to France in June 1984, the French people and international non-governmental organizations continued to call on the French government and the international community for more drastic measures against South Africa.¹¹⁹

In conclusion, by the end of 1977, France not only decided to abide by the UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, but also got involved in the Contact Group of Western nations that the International organization asked to deal with the South African authorities for the implementation of the Namibian independence according to the UN terms.

Thus, the Giscardian government was part of the negotiating teams that were asked to look for an internationally acceptable solution of the Namibian situation. One should recall that four of the five Western countries charged to negotiate with the parties involved over the Namibian question were at the same time South Africa's major trade partners. In France's case, under Giscard d'Estaing administration, its involvement was quite cautious, as Pretoria became Paris' major supplier of strategic raw materials like uranium and coal among others.

¹¹⁷ K Whiteman: 'President Mitterrand and Africa' in *African Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 328, July 1983, p. 331 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

¹¹⁸ G Martin: 'The historical, economical and political bases of France's African policy' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Juin 1985, p. 197 at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

¹¹⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Pretoria. File No. 1/30/3, Vol. 17, Manifestation anti-apartheid de l'U.F.R. à St Denis, Le Quotidien de la Réunion, 9.8.1984. France: Relations with South Africa, Relevant files: 9.8.1984 – 14.9.1984.

The Koeberg contract was also one of the reasons for Paris' hesitation to take a tough economic position against South Africa, as the latter was the biggest African market of French goods. Thus, though French military supplies to Pretoria officially ended under Giscard d'Estaing presidency, the two countries remained linked through military licences that Pretoria acquired before 1977. From 1977 until the arrival of the Socialists in power, France and South Africa remained bounded through economic ties that made France heavily dependent on Pretoria's strategic raw materials. That situation weakened the French position within the Contact Group as the Five failed to reach any particular arrangements over the Namibian question.

The arrival of the French socialist government in power in May 1981 brought a revival of the French diplomacy within the Contact Group. Indeed, right at the beginning, the French diplomacy became increasingly involved in talks with the South African government over the Namibian independence process and the end of apartheid at a time that many believed that Mitterrand would implement his electoral promises such as the immediate end of military and nuclear relations with South Africa.

International and French public opinions were quite disappointed with France's position over those issues at a time that French military equipment was used by the SADF in Angola and elsewhere in the region. The French diplomatic efforts were also undermined by the US's attitude towards Pretoria. In fact, Paris and Washington had different opinions over the settlement of the Namibian independence process. France believed in an international settlement according to the UN terms while Washington linked the problem to a Cuban withdrawal from Angola. Nevertheless, the US diplomacy succeeded in early 1984 in reaching the first major ceasefire agreement between South Africa and Angola on the one hand and between Mozambique and South Africa on the other hand. In fact, under the leadership of the USA, South Africa and Mozambique held talks that led to the signing of an agreement between the two countries. Thus, in March 1984, P W Botha and Samora Machel signed a security agreement known as the Nkomati Accord at their common frontier. Under the Accord, the two leaders agreed not to interfere in one

another's internal affairs and not to permit the ANC and Renamo to carry out acts of violence, terrorism or hostility in each other's territory.¹²⁰

Yet, as far as the ceasefire between Angola and South Africa was concerned, it happened after the SADF launched in December 1983 Operation Askari against SWAPO headquarters in Cuvelai, about 200 km inside Angola. Despite the backing of the MPLA and two Cuban battalions during the hostilities, SWAPO and their allies lost 324 men whereas 21 South Africans soldiers also lost their lives, the biggest toll death up to that time. Soon after Operation Askari, Luanda and Pretoria started to discuss a truce.¹²¹ The ceasefire between the two countries would be known as the Lusaka Accord, reached under American auspices. According to its terms, South Africa had to stop military campaigns into Southern Angola and to depart from the huge part of the 5th Military Region that they occupied for some time. In return, Luanda would make sure that SWAPO combatants would not re-occupy the regions evacuated by the SADF.¹²²

In the meantime, French diplomacy took strong steps towards Pretoria with their decision to officially recognize the ANC and SWAPO and allowing them to open offices in Paris. Thus, France participated in all international decisions calling for the end of apartheid, the settlement of the Namibian independence and South Africa's withdrawal from Angola with the exception of its reluctance for an economic embargo against Pretoria. Paris knew the strategic importance of South Africa's minerals for its economy and therefore could not afford to take such dangerous step against Pretoria. That position put more international pressure on the French government, which maintained economic links with Pretoria as Paris allowed P W Botha to come to France for a private visit in June 1984. P W Botha was to launch the construction of a museum for South African soldiers who died in France during the two world conflicts. The French socialist government was also pressurized by its political ally, the French communist Party which was determined to fight apartheid by all possible means.

¹²⁰ B J Liebenberg and S B Spies (Ed): *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 448.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 455.

¹²² H-R Heitman: *War in Angola: the Final South African Phase*, pp. 11-12

At the same time the international community, especially Third World countries, continued to pressurize Pretoria at a time that South Africa increased its military campaigns throughout Southern Africa, refused to leave Namibia, strengthened its apartheid measures through the adoption of a new constitution that was to become an accelerator of domestic violence, and proclaimed of a state of emergency by President Botha in July 1985.

Chapter 7

In the crucible: Paris and Pretoria, 1984-1990.

This chapter focuses on P W Botha's attempts at social and political reform in South Africa through increasing military repression, something that distinguished his presidency. This chapter also deals with the effect of mounting French and international pressures on South Africa and its impact on resolving Namibian independence as well as Pretoria's military campaigns in Southern Africa. It results in the end of the SADF's long involvement in the Angolan conflict at the end of the 1980s. These events are placed within the broader context of the domestic turmoil in South Africa, leading to the resignation of P W Botha and the F W de Klerk decision to speed up changes in South Africa as well as the changing international context, brought on by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Chapter 7 explains the role played by the French socialist government in bringing the international community to adopt more drastic measures against Pretoria in spite of Paris' hesitation to fully implement economic sanctions against the apartheid state at a time that South Africa's raw materials continued to play a major role in the French industry. Finally, the expulsion of the South African military attaché by the French socialist government would confirm the end of military relations between Pretoria and Paris, which had remained excellent under the Gaullist leadership between 1960 and 1974, but no official French military supplies went to Pretoria took place during the 1980s.

7.1 The election of P W Botha as State President, his attempts to reform apartheid laws and the growing international pressures on Pretoria.

The strengthening of the apartheid laws by the Pretoria regime destabilized the social climate in the country throughout the first half of the 1980s. In fact, while South Africa became heavily involved in the Angolan conflict (1980-1984), Pretoria also faced considerable internal difficulties. Sabotage campaigns led by the ANC by 1980 inside and outside South Africa as well as the official recognition of the Nationalist organization by some Western countries such as France in the early 1980s gave a boost to ANC

activities. The social destabilization campaign had its roots in the 1976 Soweto riots when the police killed hundreds of demonstrators. The UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa in 1977, Pretoria's involvement in the Angolan war as well as the Contact Group efforts in the independence process of Namibia did not prevent the South African government from strengthening its internal apartheid policy, especially against the Black population.

To help him with his reforms, P W Botha gathered a team that was traditionally elite, but also aware of the necessity to update and be pragmatic. Core constituents to his panel of expert reformers were a group of SADF officers devoted to the "winning hearts and minds" (WHAM) philosophy. Close friendships had grown up between these officers and Botha when he was still Defence Minister; they remained part of his inner team when he became Prime Minister and then State President. A fundamental member of this team was Defence Minister Magnus Malan. Thus, as President, he gathered a panel consisting of a military chiefs, top civil servants, academics, and business leaders.¹

In the meantime, by 1980 the ANC had started a new degree of sabotage and infiltration acts within South Africa, causing significant losses to the economy as the number of ANC attacks amplified dangerously. In fact from 56 attacks in 1983, they reached 136 in 1985 and the following year they were numbered at 228.²

The South African government replied by killing ANC members and amplifying its apartheid measures, among which was the proposition for a new constitution that granted partial powers to the Indian and Coloured communities. To counter growing international sanctions, P W Botha built Armscor into the world's tenth largest arms manufacturer, and Sasol's oil-from-coal plants was built to guarantee fuel supplies. These "security companies" attracted massive quantities of South Africa's funds and manpower. Armscor ultimately had 23 000 employees, and supplied work for an additional 100 000 people through nine subsidiaries and 3 000 subcontractors.³

¹ P E Louw: *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, pp. 93-94. See also M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, pp. 202-203.

² P E Louw: *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, p. 135.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

In an attempt to lessen the international isolation of the country, P W Botha initiated a new constitution.⁴ Despite the UN's clear indication not to concede any favour to Pretoria, the government went ahead with its constitutional plans and scheduled general elections for September 1984.⁵

Once again the international community rejected such plans when the UN Security Council during its session on 17 August 1984 approved a resolution by 13 votes with two abstentions (USA and UK) that declared the new constitution and the elections invalid by stating that the constitutional modifications were contrary to the UN Charter. Pretoria denied the UN's right to intervene in South Africa's internal affairs.⁶

While the UN Security Council condemned Pretoria's new constitution, Pik Botha went to Maputo where he met with Mozambican authorities and discussed security questions regarding that country. Back in Pretoria, he declared that security problems in Mozambique had become serious and urgent. Meanwhile, ANC and Swaziland representatives met in Lusaka on 17 August where they discussed the new development of ANC militants in that country after Mbabane signed a security pact with Pretoria in 1982 that entered into effect on 17 February 1984. No solution was found during that meeting and after February 1984, hundreds of ANC militants were arrested and expelled to Tanzania.⁷

The new South African constitution denied any constitutional power to the Black majority, which at the time represented 24 million people. In addition, Pretoria decided to increase rent and electricity fees on 1 September 1984. In fact in July 1984, the Lekoa Town Council in the Vaal Triangle chose to increase tariffs for urban services in the townships of Sebokeng, Bophelong, Sharpeville, Boipatong and Zamdela by nearly R 5 per month. The Black community reacted with violent uprisings, as they were the most affected by the economic depression at that time. Early September was marked by violent

⁴ *Le Monde*, 17 November 1983. See also B J Liebenberg and S B Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, pp. 478-479.

⁵ *Le Monde*, 19/20 August 1984

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

demonstrations that took place in townships near Johannesburg. The police reacted by killing 29 people and wounding tens of others according to the official figures.⁸

The September uprisings were the most serious that the country faced after the 1976 Soweto riots. The intensity of the violence brought more police reinforcements, assisted by SADF helicopters. The explosion of riots in townships followed a series of violent events which entered Black schools after the 2 November 1983 referendum, and public disturbances occurred after the August 1984 elections as well as an increase of sabotage attacks that were very often claimed by the ANC. On 4 September the US government expressed its profound anxiety about the violence in South Africa and said that it followed the situation closely while the UN Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, deplored the loss of human lives in South Africa.⁹ The riots did not prevent the election of P W Botha as State President on 5 September 1984 with tremendous powers in his hands. Under the new constitution, he kept the position of head of government with huge powers. No general and parliamentary elections were scheduled before 1989 when his mandate ended, as he wanted all elections to take place simultaneously.¹⁰

On 9 October 1984 Claude Cheysson, then French External Affairs Minister, was a guest of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid in New York where he gave a speech on apartheid. Cheysson was the first Western Minister to attend a special session of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid. The meeting was attended by some three hundred and fifty diplomats; among them were Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Front-Line states, Peter Onu acting Secretary General of the OAU, and SWAPO Secretary General Herman Toivo.¹¹

During his speech, Cheysson on France's behalf denounced the apartheid policy and called on Pretoria to stop believing in such policy. He then recalled France's actions through international organisations and announced the French government decision to increase in 1985 its contributions towards the UN special organs against apartheid. Thus,

⁸ *Le Monde*, 6 September 1984. See also B J Liebenberg and S B Spies (Ed): *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 499.

⁹ *Le Monde*, 6 September 1984.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 September 1984.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1984.

Paris decided to augment from FF 1 132 750 in 1984 to FF 1 400 000 its aid to the UN information programme for Southern Africa and to the UN Special fund for apartheid victims. Moreover, Claude Cheysson announced for the first time a special French contribution of FF 150 000 for 1984 for the publicity campaign against apartheid and Paris' decision to double grants for black South Africans in exile. However, Cheysson declared Paris' opposition to a total boycott against South Africa as suggested by the UN Special Committee and a number of African states. He said that the international community should speak to South Africans, show them that their attitude was morally unacceptable, dangerous in practice and spiritually scandalous.¹²

Despite international pressures on the Pretoria regime, the climate of violence remained high until the end of 1984 with students mainly from the Vaal Triangle still boycotting classes and the international community taking more drastic measures towards Pretoria. In December 1984 the UN Security Council decided unanimously to extend its 1977 mandatory arms embargo against Pretoria to arms imports from South Africa. The UN Security Council decision came at the time that South Africa was already exporting military equipment throughout the world via Armscor. In reaction to the UN decision to strengthen the military embargo against Pretoria, President Botha slammed the interference of major powers in South Africa's internal affairs.¹³

On 15 February 1985, Pik Botha met his new French counterpart Roland Dumas in Paris. Pik Botha was the first South African official to visit Paris since the arrival of the socialists in power in May 1981. Roland Dumas replaced Claude Cheysson, who had been a virulent opponent of the apartheid government. During the meeting, Dumas recalled Paris' wish to see Pretoria implement the UN resolution for the Namibian independence. The meeting gave the French diplomats the opportunity to learn about the latest negotiations between South Africa and its neighbours, namely Angola and Mozambique with whom Pretoria had signed two agreements in 1984, owing to the fact that since December 1983, Paris froze its participation in the Contact Group.¹⁴

¹² *Le Monde*, 20 October 1984.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 15 December 1984.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16 February 1985.

Pik Botha's private visit to Paris came at a time that Paris had good relations with Luanda and Maputo. The fact that the French decided in December 1983 to freeze its participation did not give France the chance to play an important role at a time that the USA was playing a leading role in the search for peace in Southern Africa. Thus, the French initiative to receive a Pretoria official came at a period that France's African partners such as Mozambique wished that Paris would ask Pretoria to hold to its commitments in Southern Africa.¹⁵

As far as the Franco-South African military connections were concerned and despite the fact that France officially stopped supplying arms to Pretoria in 1977, some countries continued to accuse France of continuing to provide South Africa with military equipment. For instance, on 20 April 1985, the Soviet News Agency, TASS accused the French socialist government of continuing to supply military equipment to South Africa. According to the TASS report, French military supplies did not only cover grenades and cartridges but also Puma and Alouette helicopters made in France. Paris denied these accusations.¹⁶

In the meantime, with no official record of military deals between the two countries during the first years of the socialist presidency and the deterioration of the domestic situation in South Africa, Paris drastically shifted its attitude towards Pretoria by calling for the international community to adopt new economic sanctions that would bring the collapse of apartheid. This policy shift was a result of Paris' withdrawal from the Contact Group in 1983 as their views opposed those of the USA, which backed the Pretoria government. Thus, during an international seminar on Human Rights held in Paris at the end of May 1985, the French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius declared that France would stop her investments in South Africa within 18 months or a two-year period if the South African government was not prepared to implement "precise measures" to end apartheid.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Le Monde*, 16 February 1985.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 April 1985.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2/3 June 1985.

Fabius' position was a shift of the French position towards possible economic sanctions against Pretoria. The First Secretary of the socialist Party, Lionel Jospin called for French economic sanctions against Pretoria as a way of ending the apartheid French politicians had always refused such an idea as ineffective. Yet, since their coming to power in May 1981, French socialist Ministers such as Claude Cheysson were always careful to call for a total embargo against South Africa. Thus the new French External Affairs Minister Roland Dumas, declared on 22 May 1985 before the National Assembly that the French government decision not to vote for the UN resolutions imposing economic sanctions against South Africa was due to the fact that the embargo was not adapted to South Africa's case and instead of promoting change might actually have the opposite effect.¹⁸

The French government's refusal to enjoin economic sanctions against Pretoria was quite understandable. In fact, despite the "official" end of French military supplies to South Africa in 1976-1977, tremendous economic links developed between the two countries thereafter. Despite the cold welcome that the French government gave to the South African Prime Minister in May 1984, 90 percent of Franco-South African relations remained on the economic level.¹⁹

With the continuing deterioration of the domestic situation and the rise of ANC sabotage attacks in South Africa, the Botha government decided to renew its military raids into neighbouring countries. As a result, on 14 June 1985, Pretoria launched a military raid against ANC members in Botswana where 14 people were killed. The South African cross-border raid was launched against ANC headquarters and militants living in Botswana. It was aimed at preventing further infiltrations of ANC terrorists, as 23 ANC militants infiltrated South African territory where they were tasked with launching attacks against moderate black leaders. The South African raid in Botswana was the third of a series in neighbouring countries that Pretoria suspected of accommodating ANC activists. For instance on 9 December 1982, the South African raid in Maseru (Lesotho) killed a total of 42 people among which 30 ANC members. On 23 May 1983, another

¹⁸ *Le Monde*, 2/3 June 1985.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

raid in Maputo killed 58 with 17 Mozambican soldiers among them. As a result, Lesotho and Mozambique were obliged to expel ANC members from their territories.²⁰

In reaction to the SADF raid into Botswana, Washington condemned Pretoria by saying that the raid would complicate peace efforts in Southern Africa and they were worried about the sincerity of the South African government's desire to settle issues in the region in a constructive manner. Washington recalled its ambassador in Pretoria for consultation. In the same way, the French government condemned the South African incursion into Botswana through the Quai d'Orsay spokesperson who said that 'France condemned the military incursion of South African forces into an independent and sovereign Botswana regardless of international law'.²¹

Consequently, the international community through the UN Security Council gathered on 19 June and adopted a resolution condemning South Africa for its illegal occupation of the Namibian territory and threatened Pretoria with mandatory economic sanctions. According to that resolution, Pretoria's refusal to cooperate with the international community would force the Security Council to gather immediately and adopt appropriate measures such as an end to new investments in South Africa, the re-examination of maritime and air connections with Pretoria and the banning of the South African currency on the world market. While the UN Security Council gathered in New York, the South African President scolded the USA for their potential interference in South Africa's domestic policy.²²

On 21 June 1985, the UN Security Council condemned the South African regime for the third time in a row. Indeed, the 15 members of the Security Council adopted a resolution project from non-aligned countries that vigorously condemned the South African raid in Gaborone. The day before, the UN Security Council called for selective voluntary sanctions that were aimed at forcing Pretoria to grant independence to Namibia without

²⁰ *Le Monde*, 2/3 June 1985.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 16/17 June 1985.

²² *Ibid.*, 21 June 1985.

delay and on 19 June, the same Security Council condemned South Africa's aggressions against Angola and called for the withdrawal of Pretoria's troops from that country.²³

Pretoria's violence not only affected neighbouring countries like Botswana, but also Black South Africans. Indeed, in reaction to the new constitution and other measures that kept them living under difficult conditions, the Black majority continued to agitate. On 9 July 1985, the police in the Kwathema Township riots killed seven black protestors.²⁴ At the same time, the French government was once again under international spotlight. In fact, at the initiative of the International Council of Churches (ICC), a study revealed that French and other Western European commercial banks granted loans to South Africa between 1982 and 1984 worth US \$ 4, 2 billion. The study revealed that South Africa increased its borrowing due to the increase of its military expenditures. Three major French banks nationalized in 1982 by the socialist government granted a total of US \$ 1, 095 billion to Pretoria.²⁵

7.2 France's decision to adopt economic sanctions against Pretoria and the role of French anti-apartheid movements.

In South Africa, the acceleration of social riots throughout the country and the difficulties experienced by the police to restore order led the South African government to declare a partial state of emergency on 21 July 1985 in 36 districts.²⁶

On 22 July 1985, the French government expressed its deep concern at the escalation of violence in South Africa and stated that state of emergency adopted by Pretoria would only bring more difficulties with the ongoing repression.²⁷ Consequently, the French Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius made a public declaration on 24 July in relation to the state of emergency in South Africa. He announced that the French government had chosen to take three important measures against the South African government. Firstly, the French government decided on the same day to recall its ambassador to Pretoria.

²³ *Le Monde*, 23/24 June 1985.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 July 1985.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 25 July 1985.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 23 July 1985.

Secondly, Paris used the UN Security Council for a proposed resolution condemning South Africa and proposed a series of precise measures to the international community. Thirdly, the French government immediately suspended new French investments directed at the South African economy.²⁸ However, ongoing contracts at the time would run out normally. The French decision meant a total embargo on nuclear power plant contracts and petroleum products. It also meant an end to French imports of uranium from Namibia.²⁹

As Pretoria continued to disregard international efforts and propositions to end apartheid, the French government was also under growing pressure from local anti apartheid organisations that called for total rupture of relations with Pretoria. Consequently, with the implementation of the partial state of emergency, the French government was forced to take tougher actions against Pretoria, as by that time French relations with South Africa became a French political issue as parliamentary elections were scheduled for 1986.

France was the first Western power to take such drastic decisions against Pretoria even though on 14 June of the same year, the Reagan administration had already recalled its ambassador in Pretoria for consultation after the SADF raid in Botswana. Fabius hoped that several countries would join the French initiative in order to restore justice and peace in Southern Africa. On 24 July, the UN Security Council publicly announced that a resolution had been proposed by the French government. The French resolution proposed against South Africa had seven points, which called inter alia for the immediate suppression of the state of emergency, condemnation of massive arrests and the immediate liberation of all political prisoners and firstly Nelson Mandela. It also asked all UN state members to take drastic measures against Pretoria such as suspension of new investments in South Africa, prohibition of Rand and gold imports, ban of new nuclear contracts and computer-related-technologies that could be used by the SADF or the Police.³⁰

²⁸ *Le Monde*, 26 July 1985.

²⁹ *The Star*, 17 January 1986.

³⁰ *Le Monde*, 26 July 1985.

The Paris decision followed a promise made by Laurent Fabius almost two months before when he declared that France would adopt economic sanctions against Pretoria within a period of 18 months to two years if Pretoria continued its discriminatory measures against the South African population. In fact, before the establishment of the state of emergency in South Africa, Paris did not believe in the efficiency of economic sanctions against Pretoria as a means to bring peace and justice to Southern Africa in general and South Africa in particular.³¹

Finally, on 26 July, the French resolution was adopted by 13 countries of the UN Security Council while the USA and Britain abstained once again. The French resolution was adopted after slight changes of the original version. Thus, with regard to the economic sanctions against Pretoria, the UN Security Council proposed voluntary sanctions to be adopted by each UN member state. The adopted resolution recommended six measures among which the suspension of new investments in South Africa and a new sanction on sport and cultural ties was also added.³²

Despite Washington and London opposition to the French initiative, the adoption of Paris' resolution could be seen as a diplomatic victory for France as she obtained from them the non-use of their right of vetoes during the session. In addition, despite Washington's refusal of economic sanctions against Pretoria, the Reagan administration asked the Pretoria government to immediately lift the state of emergency as the violence and killings did not bring positive results.³³

The international community pressures on Pretoria did not prevent the continued spread of violence across South Africa. Thus, in August 1985 as party leader and as promised in January before Parliament, P W Botha arranged to travel to each of the four 1985 NP provincial congresses to advocate that the NP formally abandon Verwoerd's partition model in favour of consociationalism.

³¹ *Le Monde*, 26 July 1985.

³² *Ibid.*, 28/29 July 1985.

³³ *Ibid.*

When P W Botha's speech failed to deliver majoritarian democracy in accordance with raised overseas expectations, a massive outflow of foreign capital took place, the Rand collapsed against other currencies, and international pressure increased for sanctions.³⁴ Yet, after Botha's speech in Natal, the United Nations Pension Fund, which had investments amounting to US \$ 250 million in May 1985 in 30 different firms operating in South Africa, speeded up the withdrawal of its funds in South Africa, which by 6 August represented only US \$ 100 million in ten firms.³⁵

As a result, London and Washington could not hold on to their position of "constructive 'engagement policy'" towards South Africa as they faced strong public opinion that called for tougher sanctions against the Pretoria government.³⁶ Indeed, as violence rose during 1985, President Reagan became more critical towards Pretoria and listed South Africa among countries where human rights were breached. The US Congress moved to approve a sanctions bill against Pretoria as 'constructive engagement' became less and less of a practical strategy.³⁷

In Paris, the left-wing organisations such as "Action Directe," which was opposed to the apartheid and Franco-South African interests in France, counterattacked through an explosive attack on the UTA (the French carrier that linked Paris and Johannesburg twice a week) and the "Chargeurs Réunis" (a maritime company) offices in Paris. The "Action Directe" bombing attack was the fourth in one week after those that targeted "Antenne 2", "la Maison de la radio" and the headquarters of "la Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel"; all French media centres. In their claim, "Action Directe" asked the French government to stop the supply of South African coal in France through "les Chargeurs réunis" as well as the interruption of UTA flights towards South Africa. By the mid-1980s, the French government was also under internal pressure for its links with the apartheid state as left-wing organizations such as "Action Directe" opted for violent

³⁴ P E Louw: *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, p. 72.

³⁵ *Le Monde*, 10 August 1985.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 17 August 1985.

³⁷ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 308.

actions aimed at forcing Paris to stop any relations, even commercial ones, as no report of French military links with Pretoria were reported.³⁸

On 13 November, Laurent Fabius announced new economic sanctions against Pretoria as a result of Benjamin Moloïse's execution and Pretoria's decision to censor the media by banning their access to townships. Fabius decided to reduce French imports of South African coal by 1986. Thus, from the position of first supplier of coal to France with 1/5 of French imports, South Africa would in 1986 become the fourth or fifth supplier of France's coal.³⁹

The collapse of the South African economy and the increase of good prices, especially fuel, as well as the increase of interest rates by the South African government led French car manufacturers Peugeot and Renault to stop their production lines in South Africa. In the meantime, violence continued to spread across townships and on 21 November, the Police in Mamelodi Township near Pretoria killed 13 people.⁴⁰

By the end of November 1985, the Botha government decided to reinforce repression throughout townships. The SADF and the Police were sent into townships and Pretoria decided to ban media access to townships where violence continued, killing close to 80 people in a few weeks. By the end of 1985, no solution to the crisis was found by the Botha government and the next parliamentary session was scheduled for the end of January 1986.⁴¹

The establishment of the partial state of emergency in South Africa was a result of Botha's unsuccessful political reforms and the rise of domestic violence. Despite the international condemnation of the spread of violence by Botha's regime due to a lack of concrete political changes, the global community in general and France in particular stood up against Pretoria, as Paris was the first major Western power to propose economic sanctions against South Africa. However, those initiatives did not give the

³⁸ *Le Monde*, 20/21 October 1985.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 November 1985.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 24/25 November 1985.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 29 November 1985.

expected results, forcing the international community and the French socialist government to adopt tougher economic measures against Pretoria.

7.3 France takes a strong stand.

The French socialist government, which was determined to be the campaign leader of Western countries against the South African government, announced new commercial restrictions against Pretoria. Thus, by Ministerial decree on 8 January 1986, Paris decided to apply EEC recommendations, which were voluntarily imposed by EEC member states on 10 September 1985. Those suggestions obliged an embargo on arms supplies, ban of new nuclear contracts, oil supplies as well as sensitive equipment intended to the SADF or the Police.⁴²

However, the French decision did not affect the import of South African uranium as in 1984 it represented FF 1, 2 billion of the FF 5, 95 billion of all French imports from South Africa of that year. Paris could rely on Niger and Gabon uranium production, which were to represent more than 79 percent of all France uranium's imports from Africa.⁴³ Yet, the French decision would only affect few big French firms still operating in South Africa such as Total, L'Air liquide, Merlin Génin, CGEE-Alsthom and Rhône-Poulenc, while Peugeot and Renault were already out of the South African market. The French resolution was to affect mostly a group of 23 French financial circles and banks which invested a total of US \$ 3 billion in a country that decided to delay its repayments on a debt amounting to US \$ 24 billion.⁴⁴

The immediate effect of the French government adoption of EEC recommendations came on 16 January 1986 when Paris asked Pretoria to recall its Military Attaché who was requested to leave the French territory before the end of January as Paris had already recalled its Military Attaché in October 1985. Nevertheless, London indicated that the

⁴² D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a comparative analysis*, p. 337.

⁴³ G Martin: 'Uranium, a Case-Study in Franco-African Relations' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4, December 1989, p. 630, at <http://www.jstor.org> on 24 September 2007.

⁴⁴ *Le Monde*, 10 January 1986.

British government did not intend to expel the South African Military Attaché in London as Brussels, Luxembourg and Paris did.⁴⁵

With the French decision to expel the South African Military Attaché, it became obvious that the French socialist government was determined to break any military link with Pretoria when no political solution was found by Botha's government and people continued to die in township riots. Indeed, Paris' decision was to force Pretoria to change its apartheid policy in such a way that political and economic turmoil could be stopped soon. Other areas affected by France's decision to abide by the Luxembourg agreement included a ban on the import and export of certain mechanical spares, arms, some police equipment, and ammunition. The expulsion of the South African Military Attaché Brigadier General E O de Munnik marked the end of a military connection with France which, during the 1960s and the 1970s, saw South Africa with a military mission and procurement board totaling about 100 personnel in France.⁴⁶ The departure of Brigadier General de Munnik left the South African embassy in Paris with Air Attaché Colonel D Kirkland and Naval Attaché Commander R Ræur that were highly likely to be expelled too.⁴⁷

During the first months of 1986, Botha's government failed to find a solution to the township rebellion and the international community went on with calls for more economic sanctions against Pretoria. Indeed, during the unprecedented cycle of internal repression that marked the period 1984 to the beginning of 1986 that elicited such strong and widespread international condemnation, the French anti-apartheid movement became increasingly mobilized. As the end of this period coincided with the run-up to the closely contested legislative elections in France, apartheid gained currency as an election issue, as it prompted the socialist government to re-launch its vociferous anti-South African campaign in a bid to recapture the "tiers-mondiste" constituency which had become progressively disillusioned by Mitterrand's failure to take more definitive steps towards

⁴⁵ *Le Monde*, 18 January 1986.

⁴⁶ *The Star*, 17 January 1986.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Pretoria. The result was that significant measures were rapidly taken by the socialist camp in an attempt to halt growing public criticism.⁴⁸

It should be mentioned that on 25 July 1985, Jacques Chirac, then leader of the opposition party Rassemblement Pour la République (RPR), approved the adoption of economic sanctions against South Africa even though he had confessed the year before that he had trouble understanding the ostracism that the French government had directed towards South Africa, which “deserved to be treated with greater consideration”. Consequently, in March 1986, the socialist Party lost the French legislative elections and a Conservative-led government took office in April which, at the start of the two-year cohabitation period, was to maintain its predecessor’s attitude towards Pretoria, albeit in a rather less strident fashion.⁴⁹

On 28 April 1986, Laurent Fabius, who lost his position as Prime Minister after the March elections, visited South Africa on a two-day trip with Jacques Lang, former French Minister of Culture, at the invitation of Bishop Desmond Tutu. The two French visitors rejected the offer of meeting Pretoria’s officials as proposed by the South African Foreign Affairs Ministry. Fabius and Lang were welcomed by an official of the French embassy in South Africa as the ambassador was recalled in Paris in July 1985. During their two-day visit which started in Cape Town, they met with some opposition political leaders such as Bishop Allan Boesak, the founder of the United Democratic Front (UDF), two leaders of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and Van Zyl Slabbert, former leader of the PFP who resigned from Parliament just some time before. The next day, they were to meet with anti-apartheid activists such as Winnie Mandela in Soweto.⁵⁰

After the socialists lost the French parliamentary elections, Jacques Chirac, leader of the RPR, a right-wing opposition party, became Prime Minister. Chirac believed that the policy of cutting diplomatic ties with Pretoria would not work to bring the Botha government to the negotiating table with the opposition. As a result, it was said that the French ambassador to South Africa who was recalled by Fabius’ government in 1985,

⁴⁸ C Alden & J-P Daloz: *Paris, Pretoria and the African Continent*, pp. 76-77.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁵⁰ *Le Monde*, 30 April 1986.

was about to return to Pretoria.⁵¹ In the meantime, the spread of violence continued throughout South Africa and on Workers Day eight people were killed as a result of the most important strike movement ever observed by the black population at that time.⁵²

The period of cohabitation between Mitterrand and Chirac allowed greater latitude to the traditional Gaullist networks that characterized the Franco-South African relations in the 1960s and 1970s, notably the Groupe d'Amitié Parlementaire France – Afrique du Sud which reappeared in 1986 after Chirac became Prime Minister. Tensions between Paris and Pretoria were somewhat relieved when diplomatic relations resumed with the return of the French ambassador to Pretoria after an absence of 11 months.⁵³

Despite the French decision to implement EEC recommendations against Pretoria and the expulsion of the South African Military Attaché from France, the spread of violence continued throughout South Africa and Southern Africa. The collapse of the South African economy in the 1980s did not help Botha's regime to implement his reform agenda and the poverty conditions that the black majority faced. As a result, more and more violence occurred and the ANC and other anti-apartheid organisations took advantage of the domestic chaos to increase their pressure on the Botha regime. At the same time, the arrival of a Conservative government in France in March 1986 was about to give Pretoria some two years respite in terms of speeding the implementation of EEC recommendations against the apartheid government. In fact, the two-year cohabitation period between socialists and Gaullists would reopen traditional pro-South African lobbies within the French political circles after being dismantled by President Mitterrand in 1981. However, the rise of the domestic violence and the declaration of a national state of emergency in South Africa would bring a positive change of mind to Pretoria's traditional friends. At the same time, French anti-apartheid movements were to start an anti-apartheid campaign throughout France to force Paris to break all relations with the apartheid government.

⁵¹ *Le Monde*, 6 May 1986.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ C Alden & J-P Daloz: *Paris, Pretoria and the African Continent*, p. 77.

On 12 June 1986, Pretoria declared a national state of emergency prior to the tenth anniversary of the 1976 Soweto riots. Consequently, the UN Security Council immediately called on Pretoria to withdraw the declaration and asked for tougher economic sanctions against South Africa, but Washington and London were still opposed to such measures. In France, trade unions and left organizations joined the international community in protesting against the national state of emergency in South Africa. Meanwhile, the French socialist Party, now in opposition, asked for new sanctions against Pretoria while the communists asked for the recall of the French ambassador who had returned to Pretoria less than a month earlier.⁵⁴

On 16 June, the twelve EEC member states met in Luxembourg to find a compromise over new sanctions against Pretoria's regime, as it remained undisturbed. As a result, an Amsterdam proposal backed by Paris asked for an importation ban on South African fruit, vegetables and wine. Denmark chose a total embargo on South African foodstuff by 15 June and Ireland banned the import of fruit and vegetables from Pretoria.⁵⁵ Bonn and London were still opposed to economic sanctions against Pretoria while in the USA the bank of America, the second largest US bank, decided to stop financial loans to the South African private sector. The same bank had sometime before taken a similar decision against the South African government and its parastatal organisations.⁵⁶

As violence continued to spread across South Africa, the international community held a world conference on apartheid in Paris from 16 to 20 June 1986. The delegates called for global and mandatory economic sanctions against Pretoria. The USA, Britain and West Germany did not take part in the conference while Paris attended as an observer.

As Britain and the USA remained the main opponents to economic sanctions against Pretoria, public opinion and opposition parties in these countries as well as the rest of the international community kept pressure on Washington and London to force them to take severe actions against the Botha government. As a result, despite its opposition to sanctions against Pretoria, the Thatcher cabinet yielded to its detractors, both in Britain

⁵⁴ *Le Monde*, 17 June 1986.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

and worldwide when the ANC President met the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Lynda Chalker on 25 June 1986.⁵⁷

During the course of July 1986, French anti-apartheid movements announced the launch on 11 October, during the International Day of Solidarity towards political prisoners, of a campaign against the French company Total which still had numerous activities in South Africa.⁵⁸

On 23 October, the French government announced that P W Botha would pay a private visit at Longueval on 11 November for the inauguration of the monument erected in the memory of South African soldiers who died on French soil during World Wars I and II. The French Prime Minister's spokesperson, Denis Baudouin, specified to the media that 'P W Botha would not be received by French authorities during his visit'. The French socialist Party reacted by saying that 'Jacques Chirac backed the apartheid government by allowing Botha to come in France at the time that the international community called for more international isolation of the Pretoria regime'.⁵⁹

On the following day, the new French Minister for External Affairs in Chirac's government, Jean-Bernard Raymond, presented his department budget before the National Assembly. Regarding South Africa, he said that 'Chirac government had double objectives towards South Africa. One was to maintain chances of a dialogue that would open a coexistence of all South African communities while at the same time, the French government had to put pressure on the Pretoria government to open political talks with the other actors'. That was why Chirac government was keen for restrictive measures adopted by the 12 EEC countries. However, he said the new French government did not believe in mandatory sanctions against Pretoria because such measures would ruin any chance of dialogue.⁶⁰

On 6 November, a number of public demonstrations against P W Botha's visit to France took place in Paris and provinces. The most significant ones were organized in Paris

⁵⁷ *Le Monde*, 25 June 1986.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11 July 1986.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1986.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

under the leadership of the French communists and one of France's most important Trade Unions, the Confédération Générale des Travailleurs (CGT). Yet, other demonstrations in Paris were called by the French Socialist Party (FSP) and other French Trade Unions that gathered in front of the South African embassy in Paris for the same reasons.⁶¹

Despite public demonstrations calling for the cancellation of P W Botha's private visit to France, the South African President arrived in Paris on 10 November and was welcomed by a senior official of the French External Affairs Ministry at Orly airport. Botha was due to leave the French territory on 12 November after the inauguration ceremony. He was accompanied by more than 300 people among whom veterans, journalists, senior civil servants, Pik Botha and some other Ministers. At the ceremony, the French government was represented by a sub prefect.⁶²

While Botha and his delegation opened the museum in the memory of South African soldiers dead in France during WWs I and II, the French anti-apartheid movement "Action Directe" claimed responsibility for three explosive attacks in Paris. The attacks targeted the Peugeot, Total and Pechiney-Ugine-Kulhmann groups for their economic ties with South Africa. The three attacks also aimed at protesting against the French government 'constant' support of the apartheid regime. With these attacks, the total number of "Action Directe" actions in Paris and its region amounted to 11 since the beginning of 1986. In its communiqué, the anti-apartheid movement denounced what they described as Mitterrand and Chirac's first class collaboration with the apartheid state.⁶³

On 19 November, another French anti-apartheid movement, the "Mouvement Anti-Apartheid" (MAA) in association with 20 Political, Humanitarian and Trade Union organisations, opened a campaign calling for the withdrawal of the French group Total from South Africa. According to the organizers, the French state was an accomplice of Total owing to the fact that it put up 40 percent of Total's capital. For the MAA, Total played a major role in the prolongation of apartheid because its South African subsidiary,

⁶¹ *Le Monde*, 8 November 1986.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 12 November 1986.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Total-South Africa, produced fuel from coal, enabling the Pretoria government to overcome the OPEC oil embargo on South Africa. The French firm received 13, 5 percent of the South African fuel distribution. Moreover, apart from its shares in coal mines, Total detained, through another of its subsidiaries, Minatome, ten percent of the Roessing mine in Namibia. The French anti-apartheid hard-line campaign against Franco-South African interests throughout the French territory aimed at forcing the French government to adopt more drastic economic and diplomatic measures against Pretoria as a mean of ending apartheid.⁶⁴

As the political situation worsened and the international community as well as public opinion called for more sanctions against Pretoria, George Shultz, US Secretary of State received Oliver Tambo in his office in Washington DC on 28 January 1987. It was the first time that a US Secretary Of State had talks with a senior member of the ANC. During their meeting, the two men agreed on the importance of the Reagan cabinet putting more pressure on Pretoria to open political talks before it became too late for any pacific solution to the social and political turmoil that the RSA faced. The meeting was a major victory for the ANC as the Reagan cabinet broke its constructive engagement policy, which tried not to interfere in South Africa's domestic policy.⁶⁵

Yet, by receiving the ANC leader, the USA officially recognized the Nationalist movement as representative of the black population for any upcoming talks. As a result, Shultz and Tambo agreed that contacts between the ANC and the Reagan cabinet could be carried on in Lusaka between the US embassy there and ANC representatives, as the Zambian capital was the ANC headquarter at the time.⁶⁶

During the credentials ceremony on 11 May, US President Ronald Reagan told the new South African ambassador in Washington, Piet Koornhof, that the American people could no longer tolerate racism in any part of the world, especially in South Africa, which claimed to be part of the Western world. He told the Pretoria representative that his government had to create a favourable atmosphere to begin negotiations with the Black

⁶⁴ *Le Monde*, 21 November 1986.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 30 January 1987.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

opposition – one that would lead to a political system with a totally democratic constitution that guaranteed rights for the majorities, minorities and individuals – and that Washington was ready to help because it was in its interest that South Africa became strong and democratic.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the leader of the French communist Party Georges Marchais wrote a letter to President Mitterrand asking him to bring irrefutable proof that French military equipment would no longer be supplied to the apartheid state. Marchais' motivation came from the US Department of State confidential report that denounced the continuing supply of military equipment by several western countries including France despite international pressures on Pretoria.⁶⁸ Yet, the spokesperson of the Elysée Palace announced the postponement of the credentials ceremony of the new South African ambassador in Paris by the French President in protest against the illegal incarceration for eight months of Pierre-André Albertini in Ciskei as the agitation for the release of the French volunteer mounted in France. Indeed, Albertini was found guilty and sentenced to four years on 20 March by the Ciskei magistrate court because he refused to testify against ANC activists there. The French President's decision was welcomed by the FCP leader because he believed that Paris could put more pressure on Pretoria which was able to put an end to such an illegal incarceration.⁶⁹

As a result, Pretoria denounced the French attitude and said that Paris had to deal with the Ciskei government in that matter. Thus, Pretoria recalled for consultation its ambassador to Paris, Hendrik Geldenhuys. Pik Botha declared that 'the South African diplomat would not join his post till further notice' and added that 'he played the middle man between France and Ciskei during several occasions'.⁷⁰

The truth of the matter was that South Africa could pressurize Ciskei authorities on the matter owing to the fact that Pretoria granted "independence" to that homeland and maintain an upper hand over its authorities. Furthermore, France could not negotiate openly with the Ciskei government as Paris and the international community did not

⁶⁷ *Le Monde*, 15 May 1987.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 21/22 June 1987.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 18 July 1987.

recognize the independence of the homeland. It was obvious that Pretoria wanted to use Albertini's affair to bring French authorities to change their mind regarding the anti-apartheid campaign that they openly started and led on the international scene.

The tense situation was finally defused in 1987 by a spectacular exchange involving five states (South Africa, France, Holland, Angola and Mozambique) and more than a dozen hostages, an achievement mainly arranged by Jean Ollivier, a consultant for large French firms operating in Southern Africa and a key person in the "parallel" relations between Paris and Pretoria, through the rallying of the traditional Gaullist network.⁷¹ Indeed, in June 1986 as the new French Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac decided to reopen the Franco-South African Parliamentary Groups that Mitterrand closed in 1981. Consequently, the South African issue was delegated to the Gaullist network under the leadership of influential Gaullists like Charles Pasqua and Jacques Foccard who had strong relations with most African Presidents. The Albertini affair was handled by one of the 'African' Gaullist networks at the request of the French government as French negotiators could influence their African partners.⁷²

After the positive outcome of the Albertini affair, diplomatic relations between Paris and Pretoria remained cool for the rest of the decade. Yet, despite the prohibition on new investments in South Africa, collaboration and cooperation between the two countries continued in several instances involving armaments, nuclear energy, petrol, bank loans, commerce, coal, computer technology, tourism, sport and culture. For instance, French nationalized banks alone accounted for 65 percent of all loans to South Africa up to 1989.⁷³

Pretoria's decision to implement a national state of emergency brought increased concern about the future of the country as violence continued to spread despite the use of combined police and armed forces to crush the internal rebellion. Worldwide public opinion and anti-apartheid campaigns throughout the world started to bear some fruit when Washington started to publicly condemn the Botha government as other Western

⁷¹ C Alden & J-P Daloz: *Paris, Pretoria and the African Continent*, pp. 78-79.

⁷² D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud: Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 242.

⁷³ C Alden & J-P Daloz: *Paris, Pretoria and the African Continent*, pp. 78-79.

countries such as France and her European partners took the resolution to put more weight on Pretoria. Indeed, France almost broke its diplomatic relations with Pretoria with the Albertini Affair. However, the use of traditional Gaullist channels during the cohabitation period became important in the maintenance of diplomatic relations between Paris and Pretoria, as they succeeded freeing Albertini in 1987. It was also believed that despite Paris' adoption of certain economic sanctions against Pretoria, cool relations on other fields were maintained between the two countries. Yet Botha's failure to deliver political changes and the continuing domestic turmoil in South Africa started to create an inner opposition within the NP as Botha became increasingly unpopular nationally and internationally.

Franco-South African military relations in the late 1980s were no longer taking place, according to official French statements. Nonetheless, despite those declarations, there were reports of the French government's continuous supply of military technology to South Africa by other means than the traditional network that existed prior to 1977. Thus, for instance, South Africa and France jointly financed the development of certain high-tech equipment in such a way that the two countries could share the benefits and the property rights of the equipment produced. And supply networks of French equipment to South Africa continued to exist mainly through private initiatives.⁷⁴

Thus, Israel and Indonesia were cited as intermediary countries through which French military equipment (Puma helicopters) continued to be supplied to South Africa throughout the 1980s. French military personnel and technicians continued to visit South Africa on a private basis. Big French firms operating in the electronic and missile sectors continued to assist South African firms with the concept, development and adaptation of military equipment. The French aircraft industry reportedly continued to assist South Africa almost openly and it was believed that the French played an important part in building South Africa's combat helicopter.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ D C Bach: *La France et l'Afrique du Sud: Histoire, mythes et enjeux contemporains*, p. 254.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

7.4 The political turmoil continues; Botha's growing unpopularity within the NP and internationally.

By the end of 1987, the ANC became a major political player in South Africa while the UDF was banned and owing the fact that two secret meetings between Pretoria and ANC representatives took place the same year, the apartheid state opened an assassination campaign against ANC cadres and members outside South Africa to weaken the Nationalist movement. Thus, on 29 March 1988, the ANC's Paris representative Dulcie September was shot dead in front of her office allegedly by Pretoria's agents. Several other officials – including Secretary General Alfred Nzo and Treasurer General Thomas Nkobi – had escaped assassination attempts in six foreign countries between January and March 1988. September's death brought to ten the number of ANC officials killed in “mysterious circumstances” outside South Africa's borders.⁷⁶

Most of the ANC officials killed by Pretoria outside its borders were targeted with bombs and bullets. The international community widely believed that September was killed by Pretoria's agents. The same year, there was an attempt to bomb the ANC office in Brussels.⁷⁷

In reaction to September's assassination in Paris, it was reported that Mitterrand called the South African ambassador in his office as he blamed the murder on Pretoria's agents. Meanwhile, Chirac's right-wing government believed that the September's death was an ANC inside job. Mitterrand even asked his Prime Minister about the eventuality of calling back the French ambassador to Pretoria as a way of showing French disapproval of the killing campaign of ANC officials worldwide by Botha's agents. Mitterrand's request did not enjoy Chirac's approval as, according to the French constitution, the French President had the authority to recall a foreign diplomat without the government's approval, but could not recall one of his ambassadors to come back without the External Affairs Ministry's go-ahead. Moreover, at the time of September's murder, France was in a period of cohabitation between a socialist President and a Conservative government. Therefore, Mitterrand's request did not receive the response it might have enjoyed under

⁷⁶ *Business Day*, 30 March 1988.

⁷⁷ *The Star*, 31 March 1988.

a socialist government, as it came on the eve of the 1988 French presidential elections, in which both Mitterrand and Chirac were candidates.⁷⁸

September's assassination came at the time that the presidential campaign was already opened and the FCP, anti-apartheid movements, opposition political parties as well as the French public opinion called for French diplomatic and economic embargoes against Pretoria. However, Mitterrand refused to break diplomatic and economic relations with South Africa, as he did not believe in their ability to end apartheid. It should be mentioned that Paris lost its influence towards Pretoria since the French decision to stop supplying arms to the apartheid state according to the 1977 UN mandatory embargo terms.⁷⁹

On 15 June 1988, with Mitterrand's reelection and the return of a socialist government led by Michel Rocard, the South African ambassador to Paris, Hendrik Geldenhuys, was called to the French External Affairs Ministry. The French government expressed its concern that six Black people had received the death sentence for the killing of a black municipal counselor some years before. The French government followed the affair closely as the Pretoria Supreme Court refused to reopen the case. Paris pleaded with Pretoria for clemency towards the six Blacks sentenced to death.⁸⁰

However, Pretoria still played an important role in supplying Paris with the strategic raw materials needed for her stockpile programme which was renewed in 1986. Despite French opposition to apartheid and French calls for more drastic measures to end apartheid, South African coal continued to be imported by France. Indeed, France continued to depend on Pretoria's coal officially and under fraudulent imports. When the Fabius government decided to adopt the economic embargo against Pretoria at the end of 1985, he specified that "current contracts were to be respected".⁸¹

Thus in 1987, France officially imported 780 000 tons of coal from South Africa. At the same time, a special investigation led by the French Ministry of Trade and Industry

⁷⁸ *Le Monde*, 4 April 1988.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 6 April 1988.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 June 1988.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 22 November 1988.

revealed that fraudulent imports of South African coal took place between 1986 and 1988 during the cohabitation period. Thus in 1986, 300 000 tons of coal were imported, reaching 500 000 tons in 1987 and 150 000 tons in 1988. All of these imports came from Belgian ports, as the country did not adopt the embargo against South Africa. It was reported that when the coal reached Belgium ports, the South African import notes were changed into Australian and then the coal was sold to French importers. These fraudulent imports of South African coal took place during the two-year cohabitation period between socialists and the Right-wing government led by Jacques Chirac during which the South Africa-France Friendship Group and other Gaullist traditional networks were reopened in the French National Assembly and Senate.⁸²

Botha's failure to deliver on the domestic ground and the continuation of the uprisings opened growing tensions within the NP which started to see PW Botha as a "danger" for the state and the NP itself. Indeed, Botha continued to refuse to open a political dialogue with Black movements, as towards the end of 1980s it became clear that powerful Black opposition led by Black trade unions and other anti-apartheid organizations maintained the violence throughout the country. However, Botha could be happy with the SADF involvement in the Angolan conflict as by the mid-1980s Pretoria forces launched devastating military incursions into Angola. The SADF military campaigns into Angola were to reach their height during the 1987/1988 final operations that would end the long lasting conflict in Southern Africa.

7.5 Pretoria's final military campaigns: the end of the regional conflict and the implementation of Resolution 435, 1987-1990.

During 1985-1986, increasing support from the USSR and Cuba substantially amplified the striking force of the Angolan army. By 1986, Angola possessed over 100 Russian Mig jet fighters and 125 Soviet and French helicopters. In 1987, the Angolans were able to grant the aerial cover their land forces needed. Consequently, in August 1987 14 Angolan and Cuban contingents under a Soviet commandant began a large-scale attack

⁸² *Le Monde*, 22 November 1988.

on UNITA. The SADF ran to the rescue of Savimbi forces by using tanks for the first time since WW II.⁸³

The fighting that raged to the north of Mavinga had been described as the greatest clash to date in Africa south of the Sahara. The SADF, supported by UNITA, halted the Angolans' progress on the Lombo River, and then drove them back towards Cuito Cuanavale, where the Angolan soldiers dug in and resisted obstinately. They also began to get growing support from their air force whereas the SAAF started to lose air power, leading the SADF to leave Cuito Cuanavale in Angolan control due to the high loss lives it would have necessitated.⁸⁴ During the fights, over 500 Angolan/Cuban combatants died and no less than 33 tanks were captured. The great loss of life and equipment resulted in a marked lack of desire for violence from that point onwards. Nevertheless, the military operation reached its ultimate stage with victorious attacks by UNITA, the SWATF and the SADF on Angolan/Cuban locations on 13 and 14 January, and again on 25 February 1988, during which the entire Luanda force, excepting a FAPLA presence east of the Cuito River, were driven back across the river. The final fights occurred at Tumpo on 23 March 1988, without altering the situation.⁸⁵

According to General J Geldenhuys, the Chief of the SADF, between September 1987 and April 1988 the SADF/UNITA/SWATF force lost 31 fighters, three tanks, five Ratels and two Mirage F1 aircraft among their equipment. As far as Luanda/Cuban/Soviet forces, the loss amounted between 7000 and 10000 men with a great quantity of military equipment, among which 94 tanks, 100 armoured troop carriers, 389 logistic vehicles, 9 Mig-21 and Mig-23 aircraft and nine helicopters.⁸⁶

Nonetheless, Cuito Cuanavale was a decisive moment in the history of Southern Africa. The deadlock there led all protagonists to reconsider the situation. It was patent to everyone that success was not a prospect and that to carry on war would lead to huge fatalities. Pretoria found it increasingly more complicated to justify the massive expenditure on the conflict in Angola, totaling as it did more than R 1 million a day.

⁸³ B J Liebenberg and S P Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 536.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ M Malan: *My life with the SA Defence Force*, pp. 281-282.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

Above all, the broadening record of young men dying in Angola and the growing militarisation of South Africa were arousing increasing antagonism. Simultaneously Angola hungered for peace in order that her war-damaged economy, infrastructure and human relations could be restored.⁸⁷

Therefore, the Angolan government opened a strong diplomatic effort in the second half of 1987 designed at gaining membership of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Western support for strategies to revitalise the economy through aid and foreign investment. Luanda's foreign debit reached US \$ 4 billion in 1986, and its financial system was badly affected by oil-price falls and UNITA attacks on the diamond fields in the northeast. At the same time, Angola also suffered financially with regard to the war effort. In fact, its defence spending more than doubled throughout the first half of the 1980s, from US \$ 502 million in 1982 to US \$ 1,147 million in 1985 as some 43,7 percent of government income was used on defence.⁸⁸

The USSR under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev was becoming more reluctant to be involved in Angola any more. The military arsenal, which the Soviets had provided to Angola for over a decade, had not brought them any payments. It was high time that the parties began to negotiate.⁸⁹

Under the guidance of the US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, a succession of meetings to talk about peace started in London and were attended by delegates from Angola, South Africa and Cuba in early May 1988. Additional talks took place later in May in Brazzaville and in Cairo in June, where players were raised to Foreign Ministers rank.⁹⁰ The global conjecture had obviously changed in favour of a resolution of the Angolan and Namibian issues, as Crocker desired a positive outcome for the Reagan administration before it left office in January 1989. The Soviet Union was in the course of reviewing its regional obligations against the background of improved relations with the West with its fresh spirit of 'glasnost'. Even though not openly

⁸⁷ B J Liebenberg and S P Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 536.

⁸⁸ J Cock & L Nathan (Ed): *War and Society, the militarisation of South Africa*, p. 129.

⁸⁹ B J Liebenberg and S P Spies: *South Africa in the 20th Century*, p. 536.

⁹⁰ C A. Crocker: *High Noon in Southern Africa, Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, pp. 392-394.

represented at the Cairo debates, top Soviet delegates were on hand to facilitate discussions.⁹¹

Military battles took place again straight after the Cairo talks between the SADF and Angolan/Cuban forces. Nevertheless, the debates continued in New York in July and in Geneva in early August, followed by other summits the next months in Brazzaville, Geneva and New York. At last, after a final meeting in Geneva in mid-November, which occurred after Georges Bush's election, an agreement was finally achieved on a twenty-seven-month departure timetable.⁹² The date of 1 April 1989 was set for the beginning of the execution of Resolution 435 which would show the way to elections for a Namibian constituent assembly seven months later, and SADF staff had to be decreased from an expected above 50 000 to 1500. A separate accord between Luanda and Havana was accomplished for the departure of the entire 50 000 Cuban troops from Angola by July 1991.⁹³

With the signature of the peace treaty in New York on 22 December 1988, the ANC declared on 8 January 1989 from its Lusaka headquarters that its instruction facilities were to be closed with the intention of removing any justification for Pretoria to obstruct the Namibian self-determination process. It was reported that ANC decision to depart from Angola was taken following discussion between the ANC, the Angolan government and a number of other African countries.⁹⁴

By December 1988 Pretoria achieved the desired military results with regard to its military involvement in the Angolan conflict after 23 years. Then, the NP could then concentrate its energy on finding a solution to the long lasting domestic uprisings, as Botha's reforms were unsuccessful. Yet, with Pretoria's agreement to implement UN Resolution 435 for Namibian independence, the international community continued to press Botha's regime to open talks with Black Nationalist movements in order to dismantle apartheid in South Africa.

⁹¹ J Cock & L Nathan (Ed): *War and Society, the militarisation of South Africa*, p. 131.

⁹² C A. Crocker: *High Noon in Southern Africa, Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, p. 394.

⁹³ J Barber & J Barrat: *South Africa's Foreign Policy, the search for status and security 1945-1988*, p. 344

⁹⁴ *Le Monde*, 10 January 1989.

Furthermore, Botha's refusal to negotiate with the ANC and other anti-apartheid actors to find a peaceful outcome to the South African political turmoil led him to become increasingly unpopular within his own party and internationally. As a result, he could no longer control the domestic situation and he became a threat to the survival of the NP and the white community interests, leading the party to replace him with Frederic Willem de Klerk on 18 January 1989, after he suffered a stroke.

The political change within the NP also brought some good intentions towards the settlement of the Namibian independence when Pretoria announced on 28 April that South Africa would respect the independence calendar of Namibia after the joint commission composed of Cubans, Angolans and South Africans held two-day talks in Cape Town.⁹⁵ At the same time, the French government asked Pretoria to recall three of its diplomats after the French authorities arrested two British and one American national involved in the selling of spare parts of British air-soil Blowpipe missiles to a South African diplomat in a Paris hotel. It was believed that Paris remained an important location for the traffic of Pretoria's military equipment despite the embargo.⁹⁶

F W de Klerk's intentions towards the Black majority were soon materialized with the release of seven ANC and one PAC political prisoners, among them Walter Sisulu, all of them having spent at least 25 years in jail.⁹⁷

In February 1990, under ever-increasing international pressure, de Klerk officially unbanned the ANC, SACP and PAC; released Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and opened negotiations with the ANC to create a new political dispensation in South Africa.⁹⁸ Mandela's release from jail in February 1990 and the ongoing negotiations between the ANC and the NP were to bring an end to apartheid, thus marking the end of the SADF campaigns in Southern Africa and their late involvement in South Africa's political structures in the 1980s.

⁹⁵ *Le Monde*, 2 May 1989

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17 October 1989.

⁹⁸ P E Louw: *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, p. 103.

With the official signature of the peace treaty between Cuba, Angola and South Africa in December 1988, ending the 23-year SADF military involvement in Angola, it became obvious that the apartheid regime was doomed to failure in the near future. Furthermore, the end of the Angolan conflict was justified by the international changes that were to affect the world in the late 1980s with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War in 1989. Thus, the Western powers that backed Pretoria over the years could no longer do so as at the same time, Angola, SWAPO and the ANC could no longer benefit from Moscow's military aid. Pretoria's approval of the UN independence plan for Namibia in return for a Cuban withdrawal from Angola marked the end of the SADF's importance in the survival of South Africa as a western ally in Southern Africa. The release of Nelson Mandela from jail in February 1990 and the de Klerk government's future recognition of all political parties brought an end to apartheid.

As far as the Franco-South African military relations were concerned, the French Socialist Party succeeded in stopping French military supplies during the 1980s. However, international accusations were held against Paris for allegedly continuing the delivery of military equipment to Pretoria through secret channels, allegations that Paris denied. The expulsion of high South African military personnel could be seen as the end of the SADF's official relations with France. After reaching their peak in the 1960s and 1970s particularly through the delivery of licensed productions of the Mirage jet fighters, among other items, military relations between France and South Africa became almost nonexistent in the 1980s. By that time Chile, Taiwan and mostly Israel became the most precious arms providers to the Pretoria regime. In fact, after the imposition of the Security Council's arms ban against South Africa in 1977, Israel became the major licensor, allowing South Africa to manufacture its Reshef-class fast-attack craft, among other weapons.⁹⁹ In 1986 the US administration approved the comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, which prohibited US arms transactions with South Africa, unless certain severe clauses were met. Meanwhile, France, with other major countries, endorsed measures to make compulsory a ban on military exports to South Africa in 1985. As a result, in 1987 Israel, Pretoria's last remaining main arms provider, followed suit leading

⁹⁹ D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a Comparative Analysis*, p. 530.

the then Defence Minister Magnus Malan to confess in September 1987 that South Africa was totally cut off from imported weapons.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ D Geldenhuys: *Isolated States, a Comparative Analysis*, pp. 506-507.

Conclusion

The emergence of a new world order at the end of WW II symbolized by the Cold War facilitated a rapprochement between Paris and Pretoria as soon as 1949, with the elevation of diplomatic relations to embassy level. The same year signifies the establishment of NATO, an organisation in which France was a member state and South Africa had tried to join in vain as Washington rebuffed all its attempts.

Despite growing French interests in South Africa at the end of the 1940s, relations between both countries were kept at a minimum for several years until the late 1950s when General de Gaulle was returned to power in 1958. Indeed, de Gaulle's opposition to a western dominance as defined by Washington and London brought South Africa into France's plan to oppose the growing Anglo-Saxon hegemony. De Gaulle knew the strategic importance of South African minerals for his planned reconstruction of the French economy. By 1958, the USA and the USSR already possessed the Atomic bomb and Britain was on the verge of joining the club under Washington's guidance. At the same time, the nuclear programme in France was taking longer as the country faced a shortage of uranium after the North Americans refused to renew the supply of the needed raw material to France in 1957. As a result, South Africa as the other main Western supplier of uranium, agreed to supply France with the strategic mineral that would enable Paris to enter the nuclear club in 1960.

De Gaulle was firmly convinced that the only way to achieve his reconstruction of the French economy and restore France's lost prestige was through the acquisition of the supreme weapon that would enable France to be recognised as a world power in the international political arena. Thus, the Force de Frappe became de Gaulle's key asset in achieving his goals.

In the meantime in the international political arena, France and South Africa became increasingly criticised by the international community through the UN over their

respective domestic issues in the late 1950s. But, Paris and Pretoria denied to the UN's authority over domestic issues of member states. The fact that France was granted a right of veto at the United Nations was of a major importance for the Nationalist rulers in Pretoria, as they were determined to lessen their dependency on Britain and the USA. Thus, French and South African delegations at the UN backed each other during debates pertaining to their respective domestic issues, namely apartheid and the Algerian War. At the time of de Gaulle's return to power, France had become heavily dependent on American economic and military aid for her survival. De Gaulle was determined to change that.

France's involvements in colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria from 1946 onwards as well as the growing reputation of its military equipment in Third-World countries were among the reasons that led Pretoria to seek for French military assistance. Indeed, those wars gave the French army a certain experience with guerilla warfare as well as the opportunity for French manufacturers to improve their products. The fact that France, under General de Gaulle was the only Western country that was able to resist an American-British "diktat" in the early 1960s was another important consideration shared by Pretoria.

When Pretoria opted for independence in 1961, the Nationalist government knew that defence arrangements between London and Pretoria reached through the Simon's Town agreement in 1955 were no longer guaranteed. At the same time, the Cold War had reached a boiling point, with South Africa and Southern Africa being one of the main targets of the Soviet Union's expansion strategy to dominate the globe. Because South Africa's Cape sea route and its abundant mineral resources were key assets for Western industry, all Western countries knew that if they were to lose control over South Africa, the USSR would be the ultimate victor of the West-East struggle.

General de Gaulle's firm decision to supply armaments to South Africa rested on several grounds, as by the end of 1962 de Gaulle was firmly in power having succeeded in defeating a socialist-communist traditional opposition that dominated France's political arena for decades. De Gaulle knew the strategic importance of the Cape sea route in times

of war, principally during WW II, as well as the abundant mineral riches of Southern Africa in general and South Africa in particular. Therefore, South Africa's position as a main supplier of crucial minerals such as uranium and gold to the West was also of considerable importance in de Gaulle's decision.

Yet, NATO did not cover the African continent in terms of defence commitments. As France had the bulk of her former empire in Africa, de Gaulle saw in South Africa a reliable military partner that could look after her former colonies, principally those in the Indian Ocean, namely Madagascar, the Comoro Islands, Reunion Island and Mauritius since there was a growing communist presence in the region. De Gaulle did not forget the role played by Pretoria in keeping Madagascar a French colony during WW II when France remained under German occupation.

De Gaulle remembered well the treatment that he received from London and Washington during most part of WW II when the Allied leaders failed to recognize him as the legitimate leader of Free France. De Gaulle carried a bitterness about Anglo-Saxons that he would use to get his revenge on Washington and London. In addition, France did not adopt the 1963 UN arms ban as the country ran the risk of scarcity of crucial minerals for its industry. At the same time, the departure of British and Americans from the South African military market offered the possibility to French manufacturers to step in and increase their share of that lucrative market, since Pretoria adopted a vast military programme in the early 1960s.

During the Gaullist presidencies, France supplied South African with most of her military equipment and provided the technical know-how in the building of Pretoria's domestic arms industry. Thus, Paris enabled Pretoria to become the strongest army of the sub-Saharan region if not Africa as a whole.

Franco-South African military relations also opened opportunities for French companies to get involved in the economic development of South Africa. Right from the start, having noticed the potential and opportunities of the South African market, French industrialists, businessmen, bankers as well as influential former politicians with interests in South Africa implemented efficient networks in France that helped to promote Franco-

South African relations in all possible spheres. At the same time, their South African partners opened similar networks in South Africa. Thus, apart from the official representations at embassy levels and parliamentary friendship groups, private initiatives played a crucial role in developing relations between Paris and Pretoria, especially during the Gaullist tenure of office when they enjoyed the government's trust. Yet, de Gaulle's and Pompidou's Southern African policies were mainly expressed through South Africa alone.

However, the growing denunciation of Franco-South African military relations by the international community over the apartheid issue and the unexpected death of Georges Pompidou in office would lead to a progressive shift of Franco-South African relations when France elected a new President in May 1974. Despite the fact that the new French leader was a pro-Gaullist, international issues were to bring a huge shift of Paris' policy towards South Africa, as by that time apartheid became an electoral issue in France.

Indeed, under Giscard d'Estaing, relations between the SADF and French firms were to meet more difficulties as the new French President was determined to end French military supplies to South Africa. Yet, the new President wanted to expand France's Southern African policy to other countries as well and not only to South Africa alone as his predecessors did. Nevertheless, some supplies took place at the beginning of his term with the delivery of light military equipment to the SA Army and the SAAF.

The escalation of international condemnation of the apartheid policy after the Soweto riots led the French government to change its attitude towards Pretoria. Thus, Giscard d'Estaing's government announced its decision to abide by the November 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa after canceling ship contracts with the apartheid government. At that time the French policy towards apartheid shifted to the Namibian question when France became part of the Contact Group. France's involvement was a result of its growing economic links with the apartheid state, as French firms were still operating in Namibia despite international condemnations.

Within the Contact Group, French initiatives for an acceptable international settlement of the Namibian question were very often overshadowed by American opposition to

economic sanctions against Pretoria. By the end of Giscard d'Estaing's presidency, Pretoria could still rely on the supply of military spare parts thanks to active Franco-South African lobby groups that appeared after the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. During Giscard d'Estaing's presidencies France adopted two military arms embargos against South Africa as a result of international pressures that the government faced. However, despite the French involvement in the Contact Group, no solution was found by the end of Giscard d'Estaing presidency. Relations between Paris and Pretoria under Giscard d'Estaing shifted from "total military embargo" to lucrative trade relations between the two countries symbolised by the Koeberg nuclear deal. Thus, Pretoria played a major role in supplying Paris with vulnerable raw materials that its industry lacked, especially after 1975 with the implementation of the French stockpile programme for non-fuel minerals.

The arrival of François Mitterrand at the Elysée palace in May 1981 was to bring a drastic change in relations between South Africa and France, particularly in the military field. In fact under Mitterrand's leadership, the first government formed by socialists and communists was particularly active on the international scene regarding the continuation of apartheid and Pretoria's growing military involvement in Southern Africa, especially in Angola. During Mitterrand's tenure of office, no official supply of French military equipment to South Africa took place. However, Pretoria could still rely on its domestic arms industry, as by the beginning of the 1980s Armscor developed world-class weapons based on French designs and licences. Yet, with the strengthening of the military arms embargo and Pretoria's military campaigns in Southern Africa during the 1980s, Armscor played a vital role in the SADF successes in the region especially in the late 1980s.

In the meantime, under growing pressure from the French communist Party, the Afro-Asian block, French non-governmental organisations as well as the rest of the international community, Mitterrand's government was forced to officially recognize the ANC and SWAPO, which were not recognized by the previous government. The escalation of violence in Southern Africa and the hard-line domestic repression of the Botha regime during the 1980s led France to officially "end its military cooperation" and adopt economic sanctions towards Pretoria based on EEC recommendations.

Nevertheless, despite Paris' involvement in the search for an international solution to the Namibian question, some French firms remained active in South Africa and Namibia as the French government failed to take drastic economic sanctions against Pretoria.

Still on Franco-South African military relations, the socialist governments succeeded in stopping French military supplies during the 1980s. However, international accusations were made against Paris for allegedly continuing the delivery of military equipment, especially spare parts, to Pretoria through secret channels - allegations that Paris denied. The expulsion of high South African military personnel could be seen as the end of South Africa and France official relations. However, after the collapse of the apartheid government in the late 1980s, relations between the two countries were to resume as the SAAF planes helped to evacuate French and other Western nationals from Gabon, a former French colony in May 1990.

The SADF's successful campaigns in Angola in the late 1980s led to the signature of the peace treaty between South Africa, Angola and Cuba in December 1988. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 also helped to achieve Namibian independence in 1990 and consequently the stability of the Southern African region. Under Mitterrand's presidency, the French government refused to break diplomatic relations with Pretoria and adopt total economic sanctions, as they were aware of the economic weight that South African minerals continued to play in French industry. In fact, despite the official position of French politics towards the apartheid government, French financial circles remained active on the South African market as French nationalized banks alone accounted for 65 percent of all loans to South Africa up to 1989.

The overall success of Franco-South African military relations resided in the stability of both regimes for quite a long period. In fact, from 1948 onwards the National Party ruled South Africa as the only major political force whereas the Gaullist Party and later a pro-Gaullist Party ruled France between 1958 and 1981 without major opposition. Franco-South African relations could be defined as a win-win partnership for both countries due to the fact that Paris and Pretoria were able to challenge most of the decisions of Washington and London on international issues.

Yet, despite growing international pressure, Paris could not wish South Africa away for the simple fact that Pretoria remained the most important market for French goods on the African continent for decades. South Africa also played a crucial role in restoring France's financial strength against the world dominance of the American dollar. In fact, Pretoria used its abundant gold to acquire some important commodities such as weapons from France. That situation helped France to reduce her financial dependency vis-à-vis the USA as in the late 1960s Paris held 1/8 of the Western world's monetary gold.

This study gives a better understanding of Franco-South African relations, principally the military connections, within the international context of political and economical considerations of the period. Thus, the success of military relations between the two countries was characterised by their ability to oppose the interference of Washington and London in their respective domestic issues. Yet, the fact that Paris and Pretoria kept their military deals as secret as possible, also characterised the success of such a cooperation within the general context of growing international condemnation of their military partnership. This study adds a major contribution to the existing knowledge on Franco-South African relations as it is the first study that combines an almost equal use of French and South African primary and secondary sources on the topic.

Furthermore, this study exploited crucial primary sources from the French military archives that were kept closed to public knowledge until now. It also provides a better understanding of a one-man vision to oppose a Western hegemony dictated by Washington and London. To some extent, De Gaulle's personal involvement in Franco-South African relations helped the apartheid government to resist growing pressure from its traditional partners for decades as the French leader was determined to oppose the Anglo-Saxon hegemony at all costs.

Appendix 1

Strategic South African raw materials to the West during Cold War

Mineral	RSA's production and Reserves	Western Use
Gold	RSA produces more than 70% of world's gold, and has the world's greatest reserves of gold	World's monetary system.
Diamonds	50% of the world's gem diamonds were mined in the RSA and SWA. The RSA had 50% of the world's reserves and 60% of Western reserves.	Gem and industrial diamonds.
Coal	RSA had 2% of the world's known coal reserves – 12 000 million tons – and 5% of the West's reserves.	
Uranium	RSA produced 16% of the free world's uranium and had 25% of the world's reserves and 30% of the West's reserves.	Nuclear power.
Iron Ore	RSA had vast, high quality resources. Of the Known world reserves of iron ore with 60% iron, the RSA possessed 6% - 5 000 million	

	tons – and 8% of the West’s reserves.	
Vanadium	World’s largest known source existed in the RSA.	High grade steel.
Manganese	RSA was world’s second largest producer after Russia, and produced very high quality manganese. Exports represented 15% of world production. RSA had world’s largest reserves.	Manufacture of Ferro-alloys.
Asbestos	Crocidolite asbestos and amosite asbestos were found only in the RSA. RSA had about 14% of world’s proven asbestos reserves, 16% of the West’s reserves and produced 10% of world supplies.	Asbestos cement products.
Chrome	RSA’s chrome production was second only to that of the Soviet Union and it had about $\frac{3}{4}$ of world’s and Western reserves.	Manufacture of steel.
Platinum	RSA was the world’s largest producer and exporter. Had 83% of world’s reserves.	Cars exhaust systems, fertilizers and jewellery.
Copper	One of the world’s top copper producing mines was at Phalaborwa in the RSA. Held 2% of world’s and 4% of the	Electrical and other copper products.

West's reserves.		
Fluorspar	RSA had the largest deposits of fluorspar in the world – 34% of world's reserves.	Steel production.
Antimony	RSA produced more than any other country in the world. Had 7% of world's reserves.	Batteries, white metal bearings, ceramics, etc.
Vermiculite	RSA had the second largest known reserves of the best quality in the world and production was second highest in the world – 39, 4%.	Heat and sound insulation.
Titanium	RSA had very large deposits and would soon make an impact on world markets.	Manufacture of aircraft engines and fuselages.
Nickel	RSA had the largest deposits in Africa and ranked 6 th as far as the world reserves were concerned.	Steel production.
Baddeleyite(Zirconium and hafnium oxide)	A strategic mineral which was at the time commercially available only in South Africa.	Atomic reactors and special steel.
Ferrochrome	Largest producer in the world. – 12, 5% of world production. Production was expected to increase.	Stainless steel.

Phosphate	The only large producer in the world. RSA was soon to become a major exporter of phosphoric acid. RSA had enormous reserves and the product was of the highest quality.
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Tin	RSA ranked 12 th out of a total of 40 world producers. The production was small by world standards, but the world's major tin reserves were located either in communist countries or in areas of relative political instability.
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Lead and Zinc	Discoveries at the time in the N.W. Cape could have made South Africa one of the greatest producers in the West.
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Source: White paper on Defence 1977, pp 38-39. See also L H Gann and P Duignan: *South Africa, War, Revolution or Peace?* pp. 15-16.

Appendix 2

Ships passing the Cape of Good Hope in one month (February 1974)

Flag	Freighters	Tankers	Total ships	% of grand total
United kingdom	118	69	187	19.20
Rest of Western European countries (Netherlands, West Germany, France, Italy, Portugal & Spain)	114	53	167	17.2
Liberia	45	84	129	13.00
Greece, Panama & India	103	21	124	12.78
Communist nations	105	7	112	11.55
Scandinavian countries(Norway, Denmark & Sweden)	49	57	106	10.94
Miscellaneous	63	8	71	7.32
Japanese	24	9	33	3.40
South African	-	23	23	2.37
United States	16	2	18	1.86
Totals	637	333	970	100.00
Daily Averages	22.75	11.89	36.64	-

Source: L H Gann and P Duignan: *South Africa, War, Revolution or Peace?* p. 11.

Appendix 3

Summary of French licence agreements with South Africa for local manufacture (1961 – 1968)

Licensor	Item	Date	Related Purchases
Panhard Levassor	AML 245 armoured car	1961	100 complete & parts for assembly of 800
DTAT	90mm DEFA Gun and Turret & Ammunition for 90mm Gun	1964	150 & 33 000 respectively
DTAT	60mm B/L Mortar & its Ammunition	1965	450
Hotchkiss Brandt	37mm & 68 mm SNEB Rocket & Launcher	1962	154 412 & 5 256 respectively
Hotchkiss Brandt	60mm M/L Mortar & its Ammunition	1963	236 & 115 000 respectively
Hotchkiss Brandt	81mm Mortar & its Ammunition	1966	92 & 155 000 respectively
SAMETO	50 kg Practice Bomb	1964	
Direction des Poudres	Propellants for SNEB Rockets, 60 & 81mm Mortars and 90mm Ammunition	1964	Sample quantities
Direction des Poudres	T.T. Powder for ALKAN Initiator	1968	
ALKAN	1.28 Initiator	1968	
Cartoucherie Française	Squib for ALKAN Initiator	1968	
CFTH	CACTUS	1968	
MATRA	400kg Bomb & Parachute Attachment		3 360

Source: Armament Policy, File No. MAP/TS/70/15 Vol.1, DOD, Documentation Centre, Pretoria.

Appendix 4

South Africa's military expenditure 1960-87

Fiscal year	budget (In Rand million)
1960-61	44
1961-62	72
1962-63	129
1963-64	157
1964-65	210
1965-66	229
1966-67	255
1967-68	256
1968-69	252
1969-70	271
1970-71	257
1971-72	321
1972-73	335
1973-74	472
1974-75	692
1975-76	970
1976-77	1350
1977-78	1654
1978-79	1899
1979-80	1972
1980-81	1970
1981-82	2465
1982-83	2668
1983-84	3093
1984-85	3755
1985-86	4274
1986-87	5123
1987-88	6680

Source: S Landgren: *Embargo Disimplemented, South Africa's Military Industry*, p. 25.

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