

A Critical Analysis of President Ronald Reagan's Shifting Policy towards Apartheid in South Africa: A Humanitarian Impetus or Supremacy Calculus?

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Received: 16/03/2022

Accepted: 30/05/2022

Published: 04/06/2022

Abstract:

This paper examines the tacit calculations that prompted President Ronald Reagan to favour racial equality in the face of the apartheid crisis in South Africa in his second term, in contrast to his first term's pro-apartheid stance, based on Putnam's Two-Level Game theory. It aims to prove that the Reagan administration's seemingly steadfast backing to Pretoria's practice of apartheid was largely due to its complicity with Pretoria's aims, in order to protect America's Cold War strategic and economic interests. The sudden shift in Reagan's policy assumption, on the other hand, was largely due to a post-Cold War estimate of Pretoria's disutility following the fall of Communism and the rise of America as the world's lone superpower.

Keywords: Apartheid; South Africa; Pretoria; U.S. foreign policy, President Ronald Reagan; supremacy; human rights, Putnam; Two-Level Game.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the twentieth century, the issue of apartheid in South Africa has spilled much ink among political analysts and human rights' activists. American diplomacy in regard to such an issue was for the most part of the century identified with its acquiescence to Pretoria's systematic violation of the majority of its residents' human rights. Ironically, apartheid's basic concept challenged the value of freedom championed by Washington, DC, while also exacerbating the country's sensitivity to race issues. Hence, the Reagan administration's ostensible favouritism to human rights' promotion was hardly surprising. This shift occurred during President Reagan's second term in office. This paper puts under question this sudden shift of U.S. foreign policy's tendency, backing the work's argumentation with Robert D. Putnam's political theory known as the Two-Level Game.

Therefore, this study investigates the nature of the tacit calculations which pushed President Ronald Reagan, in his second term in office, to opt for a sudden favour to the racial equality tendency vis-à-vis the apartheid crisis in South Africa, contrary to his first term's pro-apartheid tendency. It aims to prove that the seemingly steadfast U.S. backing to Pretoria's practice of apartheid was mainly attributable to the Reagan administration's complicity with Pretoria's aims, for the sake of protecting America's strategic and economic interest during the Cold war. Because both nations had had overlapping interests, the two-level game's win-sets were maximized resulting in a web of plans to make apartheid persist. Chief among those plans was muting the voice of anti-apartheid activists. However, this paper argues that the sudden shift in the Reagan administration's policy assumption resulted from a cluster of calculations.

Firstly and chiefly, it was part of the post-Cold War calculation of Pretoria's disutility following the demise of Communism and the emergence of America as the sole world's superpower. This made the divestment strategy safe. Secondly, anti-apartheid voices were on the rise and reached the height of their power during the second term of the Reagan administration. Consequently, an inevitable shift in the latter's

administration policy assumptions had to occur, affecting the destiny of South Africa forever. Thirdly, public opinion played an important role in changing the tide of events to the anti-apartheid bias's favour. As a result, the U.S. statesman's win-sets had been minimized, pushing him into a change of policy.

2. Apartheid in South Africa: A Historical Background

South Africa is a country characterized by a plenteousness of natural resources, chief among which distinctive mineral resources and prolific farmlands. Well known is the fact that South African mines are among the world leaders in diamonds and gold production, added to strategic metals such as platinum.

In the seventeenth century, both the Dutch and the English colonized South Africa. Settling at the Cape in 1652, as part of the Dutch East India Company commanded by Jan van Riebeeck, the Dutch intended the settlement simply as a stepping stone for India-bound ships. Van Riebeeck needed more, however, as cattle was necessary to supply the ships with meat. Consequently, this engendered an inescapable clash with the San and with the Khoi—the main but not the only groups inhabiting southern Africa starting from the first century A.D onward—who possessed a myriad of cattle herds and who resisted Dutch infringement in their lands (Anti Apartheid Movement, 1974, p. 6). Within a few years, the problem of land, which was to torment relations between white and black for generations to come, had manifestly placed itself on the scene.

Khoi resistance failed leading many to be enslaved as a result. Marriages and liaisons between the Dutch and the Khoi gave birth to a generation that was either absorbed in what was to become the Afrikaner community, or with the descendants of slaves from the East Indies. Together, they formed the bulk of the two million Coloureds in South Africa today. New diseases killed many Khoi while others established new communities (Anti Apartheid Movement, 1974, p. 6).

The San, too, found their culture intensely put at stake by the Dutch. When they resisted, thousands were unreluctantly exterminated by the Dutch, only keeping children as slaves who later intermarried with the

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Coloured servant community. The lucky few San fled into the northern deserts.

When the British eventually took control of Cape Colony in 1806, many of the Dutch settlers felt offended by this imposition of strangers' rule accompanied by the enforced usage of English as the official language. The final blow came in 1834, when slaves in southern Africa, just like their counterparts in the whole British Empire, could be set free. As slavery was a cardinal aspect of the Dutch settler society, this law had the smell of an attempt to erode the life they had built for themselves. In reaction to this, they made a journey in 1837 known as the Great Trek.

The thing which set the South African situation apart from that in any other African colonies was the industrialization which ensued the discovery of gold and diamonds. The latter led waves of new immigrants from Europe to pour into South Africa to make their fortunes. A few became millionaires but the majority joined the powerful new white labour force. Due to this, Europeans laid claims to great parts of the land in southern Africa and many Africans, in consequence, became landless individuals questing after employment (Anti Apartheid Movement, 1974, p. 21).

Moreover, the fresh colonies of Transvaal and Orange Free State establishment was a direct consequence of English rule over the Dutch descendants—known as Boers or Afrikaners. Around the year 1900, the detection of diamonds in these lands resulted in an English conquest that culminated into the Boer War. Following independence from England, The two groups' uncomfortable power-sharing dominated the scene until the 1940s, when the Afrikaner National Party could win a strong majority. This party's strategists came up with apartheid "as a means to cement their control over the economic and social system." Apartheid's application purpose was basically to maintain white authority together with enlarging racial segregation. Starting in the 1960s, "a plan of Grand Apartheid was executed, emphasizing territorial separation and police repression" ("The History of Apartheid," para.2).

2.1 White Dominance and the Prologue to Uproar

With the enactment of apartheid laws in 1948, as has just been mentioned, racial discrimination was institutionalized. Both phases of Blacks' intimidation followed by racial inequality laws rendered the life of Blacks in South Africa so hard. Indeed, unfair racial laws touched every single facet of social life, including "a prohibition of marriage between non-whites and whites, and the sanctioning of white-only jobs" ("The History of Apartheid," para.3). In 1950, for instance, the Population Registration Act was introduced to racially classify all South Africans into one of three categories: black African, white, or coloured of mixed decent.

Interestingly, it was quite hard for a person to be classified as white if one of his/her parents were originally non-white. The confirmation that a person was "obviously white" had to take into consideration "his habits, education, and speech and deportment and demeanour" ("The History of Apartheid," para.3). A black person was compulsorily asked to carry "a pass book" that includes a photo, a fingerprint, next to information on non-black areas' entry permission. The citizenry classification responsibility was given to a government bureau called the Department of Home Affairs. All non-conformity with the race laws had serious consequences like arrest, beatings and sometimes, death.

In 1951, an ethnic government basis in African reserves, known as "homelands", was established under the terms of the Bantu Authorities Act. Those homelands were considered as independent states to which the government used to direct every single African based on the record of origin—which was at times imprecise. Any African's political rights, uppermost voting, were limited only to the specified homeland. The central idea behind this was that once they become citizens of the homeland, this would deprive them of both their South African citizenship and any entitlement of connection with the South African Parliament, which enjoyed full hegemony over the homelands ("The History of Apartheid," para.4). This infuriated the homeland administrations, which did not accept the nominal independence, and exerted pressure for political rights within the whole country. Nevertheless, passports were required for the Africans

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living in the homelands to have access to South Africa. In clearer terms, they were merely seen as aliens in their home country.

Thereafter, both the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Public Safety Act came in 1953 to empower the declaration of states of emergency by the government and extend penalties for complaining about or bolstering the repeal of a law. The penalties comprised of fines, imprisonment, and beatings. A famous incident occurred in 1960 in Sharpeville, when a sizeable group of blacks rejected to carry their passes. As a result, a state of emergency was declared by the government. The emergency was kept for 156 days, ending with the death of 69 people and the injury of 187 others (“The History of Apartheid,” para.5).

The apartheid policy was extremely unfair. The White population constituted about a quarter only of the whole population ; it, however, benefited of three-quarters of the share of national income. Political protests were quite a natural outcome. Yet, the punishments inflicted upon political complaints, even non-violent ones, were severe. All those who were tried were either banished, sentenced to death, or imprisoned for life (“The History of Apartheid,” para.5). The latter was Nelson Mandela’s fate.

The United States of America played no small part in producing misery to Apartheid South Africa. Indeed, throughout the 46 years of apartheid, U.S. aggressive rhetoric’s effectiveness was intentionally diluted by a lack of action. When it came to tackling Pretoria, deeper analysis reveals a U.S. policy that was insufficiently engaged and too readily distracted from its human rights concerns by a pursuit of strategic and economic imperatives. An attempt to balance these three groups of interests left Washington DC fatally vulnerable to charges that its rhetoric was merely playing lip service to opposing apartheid. Exhaustive analysis to Washington DC’s both diverging rhetoric and converging actions is set about in the following paragraphs.

3. Ronald Reagan’s Shift in Policy vis-à-vis Apartheid in South Africa: An Analysis of Conflicting Actions and Rhetoric

Africa was not prioritized in American foreign policy in the second half of the twentieth century. Senior Cold War strategists were diverted to

other tasks. While the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Korea, the Middle East, Cuba, and East-West ties in general are frequently mentioned in the memoirs of former presidents and secretaries of state, African issues are rarely mentioned (Thomson, 2008, p. 1). African countries were, in sum, just a small consideration in the Cold War's U.S. calculations.

Interestingly, South Africa was a notable exemption to this reality. During the Cold War, this country received the most sustained attentiveness from the U.S. compared to any other African country. During this time, the Union, and later the Republic, drew constant attention from low- to medium-level power holders in the executive branch. This was the result of Pretoria's persistent systemic racism. South Africa's endeavours to maintain a social order the basis of which was racial discrimination in the post-colonial era garnered severe criticism (Thomson, 2008, p. 1). Consequently, apartheid remained on the international community's agenda for the whole 46 years of the Cold War.

Apartheid did, in fact, pose a problem for the U.S. administration. In regards to South Africa, Washington DC had a number of apprehensions that looked mostly insurmountable. The South African government seemed to be an excellent partner for the U.S. in many ways, like assisting it in safeguarding its interests on the African continent. Apart from Pretoria's deep historical and cultural connections to the West, South Africa was strategically and economically important throughout the bipolar Cold War. Pretoria's administration portrayed itself as a barrier against communism's growth. It was also strategically placed on the crucial Cape sea route, had rare mineral reserves, and was home to a slew of American multinational corporations that saw the South African market as lucrative (Thomson, 2008, p. 2).

These good characteristics, however, were not the only factors of the United States' foreign policy toward South Africa. The issue of apartheid remained unresolved. As long as this programme of social engineering was in place, no natural relationship based on shared interests could exist between the two governments. Ironically, apartheid's basic concept challenged the value of freedom championed by Washington, DC, while

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also exacerbating the country's sensitivity to race issues. In this sense, Pretoria's systematic violation of the majority of its residents' human rights ran counter to the above-mentioned strategic and economic benefits.

The foreign policy that resulted from attempts to adjust these strategic, economic, and human rights issues is examined in this section. The latter employs those three interests as a mechanism for charting the ebbs and flows of the United States' reaction to apartheid. Indeed, successive United States' officials endeavoured to register American objection to apartheid while retaining reciprocal strategic and economic links with Pretoria. In this regard, this article gives particular attention to the presidency of Ronald Reagan as his administration's policy vis-à-vis South Africa is highly significant for the aim of this study, and is analyzed in turn.

Prior to President Ronald Reagan, consecutive post- Second World War U.S. administrations battled to strike a balance between strategic, economic, and human rights goals in South Africa over time.

Although Truman and Eisenhower actively maintained Cold War collaboration with Pretoria, later administrations—namely the administrations of Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter—kept their distance from it. The general tendency was for the U.S. to progressively lessen its strategic ties with Pretoria in order to bolster the country's human rights stance. This was quite clear in their rhetoric.

However, it was the Ronald Reagan's administration that established the most systematic U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis South Africa. From Reagan's inauguration in 1981 to the summer of 1984, the United States' approach against apartheid was marked by unparalleled coherence. This latter can be attributed in large part to a plan devised by the State Department's Africa Bureau. A policy of "Constructive Engagement" was implemented under Reagan's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker in 1981 as America's official policy (Thomson, 2008, p. 111).

It called for an open dialogue between the U.S. and South Africa's white-minority government in Pretoria, which would strengthen trade

relations and allow the U.S. to influence the country's decision to end apartheid. Simultaneously, the Sullivan Principles were embraced to impose a set of norms for American-based companies in South Africa, like non-segregation of employees in work facilities. Constructive engagement and the Sullivan Principles, taken together, aimed to end apartheid in South Africa while maintaining the diplomatic status quo between the two countries to safeguard American strategic and economic interests in the area ("Anti Apartheid Movement", para.1). However, due to the loose rhetoric and soft actions adopted by the U.S. at that time, both policies failed to stem the violence apartheid caused in South Africa and received wide criticism. Further, these policies provided a convenient rhetoric for Americans who supported the white-minority government and its business opportunities.

Events in the mid-1980s, however, specifically a fresh wave of upheaval in the Republic's townships, undercut these attempts at quiet engagement. By 1986, the situation had fallen into disrepair where the United States Congress felt the obligation to act. The federal legislature passed a package of severe economic sanctions, culminating in the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) in October 1986, overriding a presidential veto (Thomson, 2008, p. 111).

Although the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act was a watershed moment in U.S. anti-apartheid activism, it did not represent the entirety of U.S. policy toward South Africa after October 1986. The final period of Washington DC's response to apartheid was defined by the sanctions generated by this legislation and the requirements for their removal. Increasingly, each government after Reagan had some success in forging ties between the United States and the Republic's black community. This aided the Bush and Clinton administrations much when it came time to communicate with all sides during the constitutional negotiations sparked by President F.W. de Klerk's arrival (Thomson, 2008, p. 149).

By and large, following the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, all U.S. presidents up to President Ronald Reagan's first term criticized apartheid on a regular basis. The continuous supervision of U.S-funded

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development and “empowerment” programmes among the Republic’s black people reinforced this rhetoric. However, a state’s adherence to human rights in the global setting must be more than merely rhetorical if it is to be effective. Words, like any other aspect of foreign policy, must be backed up by actions.

As one may perceive, the effectiveness of U.S. aggressive rhetoric was purposefully diminished by a lack of action. President Ronald Reagan’s “soft” actions were not different in effect. As this study argues, when it came to dealing with Pretoria, a closer look reveals an insufficiently engaged U.S. strategy that was too easily side-tracked from its human rights concerns by geopolitical and economic obligations. In an attempt to strike a balance between these three groupings of interests, Washington DC became fatally open to accusations that its rhetoric was only providing a lip service to the fight against apartheid. The tiny but growing empowerment projects in the United States did little to dispel these accusations of expediency. Hence, many opponents believed that Washington DC was pleased to maintain the status quo in South Africa as a result of their continual strategic and economic cooperation.

The abrupt change of Washington DC’s policies vis-a-vis Pretoria’s apartheid by the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, however, is a major question asked in this paper and constitutes one of the cardinal points around which this study revolves. Why did the U.S. all of a sudden sacrifice its economic and strategic ties with Pretoria and overturn its previous neglect to human rights issues and weigh Blacks’ rights?

This paper argues that the U.S. sidelining with the Black community in South Africa, which marked the end of the apartheid game in the country, was a product of the same reasons decades earlier it had kept close ties with Pretoria for—namely the national interest game. Indeed, it had a direct relationship with the Cold War’s closure after which the United States remained as the globe’s lone superpower. As a result, Pretoria’s help to halt the communist expansion in the continent became insignificant. A foreign policy that promotes humanitarianism seemed a more adequate option for U.S. policy-makers in the twentieth century’s last decade. For the sake of

providing a strong argumentation platform in favour of this study's aim in regard to the aforementioned calculations prioritized by the U.S. in its shifting behaviour vis-à-vis Pretoria, Putnam's Two-Level Game Theory will be utilized.

4. Putnam's Two-Level Game Theory

When introducing his theory of diplomatic negotiations in 1988, Robert D. Putnam argued that international (Level 1) and domestic politics (Level 2) could not be separated, and that international negotiations should be conceptualized as a two-level game. Interest groups and constituents at the national level—such as labour unions and activist groups—chase their interests by lobbying the government to support policies that benefit them. At the international level, governments strive to balance the pressures and expectations of their home constituents with the minimization of potential repercussions of foreign events (Bjola & Manor, 2018, p.6). The interplay between the two levels is demonstrated by the fact that a leader who either ignores domestic pressures or prioritizes domestic politics over international matters would fail to ratify or negotiate a treaty respectively. Therefore, as Putnam (1988) contends, “the political complexities for the players in this two-level game are staggering” (pp.433-434).

According to Putnam (1988), the debate regarding if domestic politics affects foreign politics more or if it is the reverse is a useless debate. In his view, both policies affect each other to a similar degree and the questions regarding this debate should instead be about when and how they affect each other (p.427). At both game boards, each country's political leader emerges. His foreign counterparts sit across the international table, while diplomats and other international advisors sit at his elbows.

Behind him, at the domestic table, sit “party and parliamentary figures, spokespersons for domestic agencies, representatives of key interest groups and the leader's own political advisors” (Putnam, 1988, p.427). The two-level game is built on the recognition that domestic politics can be utilised to influence the outcomes of bargaining made internationally and

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that internationally made moves can help achieving domestic goals (Varga, 2012, p.7).

The negotiation is divided into a couple of stages: the bargaining phase where “the statesmen bargain with each other to reach international agreements”, followed by the ratification phase where “the domestic constituents in each country decide whether to ratify and implement the agreement”, formally or informally (Varga, 2012, p.7). The strategy a statesman chooses, how the statesman influences his own as well as his counterpart's domestic politics, can define how the outcome of an international negotiation may look. For example, by gaining control over information or resources, the statesman can open new possibilities for bargaining advantages in the negotiation.

Besides, the concept of “win set”—which refers to every Level 1 agreement that could be approved by Level 2 constituents—is a crucial component of Putnam's paradigm. For him, a Level 1 agreement can only be reached if the negotiating sides' win sets converge. Level 1 agreements are more likely when there are large win sets. Small win sets, on the other hand, enhance the likelihood of a negotiation failure. The wider one's win set, the more the leader can be forced into making concessions during negotiations. The smaller the win set, on the other hand, the more he may try to force others into making concessions (Putnam, 1988, pp.435-441).

Three factors, according to Putnam, affect the size of the win sets. Firstly, the size of the win set is determined by the distribution of power, preferences, and potential coalitions among Level 2 constituents (Putnam, 1988, pp.442-443). Added to the previous factor, the nature of the ratification process is the second factor that defines the size of the win set. For example, if a special parliamentary majority is required to ratify a treaty, such as two-thirds majorities in the United States Senate, the win set is smaller (Varga, 2012, p.7). Finally, the size of the win set is determined by the leaders' political strategies (Varga, 2012, p.7).

Boyer's Chief of Government model—or COG—illustrates the role of public opinion in the two-level model by demonstrating that Level 1 negotiators are continuously conscious of their popularity ratings and that if

a treaty deals with sensitive issues, they must neutralize domestic public opinion. Peter Trumbore proved in 1998, using polling data spanning three decades, that the public would be more likely to participate in Level 1 negotiations if the treaty dealt with topics that were believed to be accompanied by large gains or losses. Political actors could use framing strategies to highlight potential gains or losses, thus mobilizing the public (Varga, 2012, p.7). Hence, domestic constituents are believed to affect the negotiations at the international level, and to explain differences in influence.

In order to make the argumentation set forth in this study solid and reasonable, the next section analyzes the reasons behind U.S. shifting backing to Pretoria during the Reagan administration and the affect it has had on the persistence of apartheid from the view point of Putnam.

5. Ronald Reagan's Shifting Support for Pretoria and Putnam's Theory

In the Reagan years, Pretoria never stopped lobbying the U.S. government's conservative agencies. Pretoria's parallel diplomacy targeted in particular both the Defence Department (the CIA) and the National Security Agency. South African officials proposed a "tacit trade-off" through which regional cooperation would be exchanged for the U.S. effort to downplay apartheid. This is why during Ronald Reagan's first term, meetings between the U.S. administration and South African representatives, tightening this strategic agenda, were a regular occurrence.

In spite of the fact that the Reagan administration attempted to confront Congress over its suggested comprehensive sanctions, internal administrative disagreements impeded this lobbying attempt. Therefore, the State Department's efforts to resurrect Constructive Engagement failed. Reagan's speech at the time did not succeed to express any feeling that the U.S. sincerely wanted the Republic to be free of white minority rule, nor did it express any compassion for the plight of black South Africans. Looking back on this period, as Chester Crocker lamented, "the President tended to discredit his case by sounding so much like the government from

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which he was so reluctant to distance himself” (Thomson, 2008, p. 147). Albeit a surprising shift occurred at the end of his presidency, making this period significant for the purpose of the present study, mobilizing propaganda for apartheid in the U.S. was strong.

5.1. The 1980s and Pro-Apartheid Propagation in the U.S.

During the Reagan years, the South African government maintained a large diplomatic presence in the United States, which served as a platform for its propaganda efforts. Added to its embassy in Washington, D.C., South Africa had not only consulates in Chicago, New York, Houston, and Beverly Hills, but honorary consuls in Phoenix, Seattle, Mobile, Salt Lake City as well. U.S. State Department data from 1988 showed that these offices had a total of 236 workers, the majority of whom were South African citizens, comprising 80 diplomatic officers, all of whom served as agents to facilitate Level 1 negotiations. South African Information Offices were situated in the consulates of Chicago, New York, and Beverly Hills. Moreover, there were offices for the South African Tourism Board in Chicago, New York, and Beverly Hills (Leonard, 1989, p.10).

Indeed, several of these offices' operations were propaganda-related, advocating apartheid regime policies and standing against sanctions overtly or covertly. Embassy officials in Washington, D.C. had connection with members of the administration, other government officials, and Congress members, next to the news media and private organizations. All those links would positively serve the bargaining phase described by Putnam. South African officials developed communication with local officials, commercial, civic, and academic organizations, as well as the news media, in a plenty of other cities (Leonard, 1989, p.10).

Conservative think tanks with Reagan ties, chiefly the influential Heritage Foundation, Georgetown University's Institute for Strategic and International Studies, the American Enterprise Institute, and Stanford University's Hoover Institution, were mostly responsive to Pretoria's policies and claims (Leonard, 1989, p.10). Additionally, the larger conservative power in the U.S. media during the Reagan era aided Pretoria's propaganda projection.

Therefore, Lobbying and public relations firms in the United States were significant vehicles for distributing propaganda for the South African government and corporate interests in the United States. These companies were required to register with the U.S. Department of Justice and declare activity on behalf of foreign principals as well as monies received from them. The South African regime spent more than \$3 million in the United States hiring agents in 1988, higher than the \$2 million in 1985. As part of its propaganda campaign, the regime committed about \$1.5 million per year on tourism promotion in the United States. In 1988, South African commercial interests spent at least \$500,000 on American agents (Leonard, 1989, p.10).

On the other hand, while agents for South African business in the U.S. used to emphasize their refusal to apartheid, they stood with the regime in attacking sanctions and divestment. This stance is significant for the present work. Indeed, South African business leaders claimed for decades that economic prosperity will dismantle apartheid and that sanctions will disproportionately harm black South Africans. Despite this, the administration responded to internal aspirations for reform by intensifying violence and repression, eventually leading to the declaration of a state of emergency.

Additionally, when comprehensive sanctions against South Africa were being debated in Congress in 1988, such as the wise amendment prohibiting federal oil, gas, and coal lease agreements to oil companies conducting business in South Africa, a bloc of American corporations initiated a massive lobbying campaign to reject sanctions. The National Foreign Trade Council, based in Washington, D.C., organized the corporate coalition and asked for \$5000 contributions from corporate backers. About 20 companies—including Texaco and Union Carbide—were among the first supporters (Leonard, 1989, p.19). All this invites the suggestion that the U.S. government's support to Pretoria was strongly tied up to its economic interest concerns, which themselves enlarged the Reagan administration's win-sets.

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Likewise, the religious right in the United States emerged as one of the most powerful and effective supporters of the South African regime and policies. Despite the fact that conservative religious groups renounced getting active help from the South African government, the message they delivered reflected Pretoria's positions. Leaders of religious right-wing organizations had visited South Africa as guests of the South African Tourist Board or South African Airways.

Equally important, in a 1984 study, 19 textbooks and 5 yearbooks that were regularly utilized as information sources in school libraries were assessed for their treatment of South Africa. According to the findings of the survey "the depiction of South Africa in most of the texts and almanacs contained elements that were misleading, inaccurate or racist" (Leonard, 1989, p.14).

More importantly, to regulate the transmission of information about the country's conditions and events, South Africa practiced censorship and media restrictions. As a result, they distorted South Africa's image in order to influence public opinion and foreign government policy, much like propaganda (Leonard, 1989, p.33).

The key aspects of the limits were summarized in a statement testifying on behalf of the Committee to Protect Journalists during congressional hearings in March 1988 by John Oakes, former senior editor of *The New York Times*:

No news or comment concerning "unrest" or security force actions may be printed or transmitted without official authorization. No "subversive statements" may be printed or transmitted. No systematic or repeated publication of "revolution-supportive" material is permitted. No unauthorized reports on conditions of detainees, or on strikes, boycotts or other forms of nonviolent protests, may be printed or transmitted. (Oakes, 1988)

In sum, the propaganda promoting apartheid in the U.S. was strong, not only because the South African lobby was having agents in almost all sensitive domains and governmental departments, but also because the

Reagan administration was complicit with Pretoria's aims, for the sake of protecting America's economic and geostrategic interests. Because both nations had had overlapping interests, the two-level game's win-sets were maximized resulting in a web of plans to make apartheid persist. Chief among those plans was muting the voice of anti-apartheid activists. On the contrary, however, anti-apartheid voices were on the rise and reached the height of their power during the second term of the Reagan administration. Consequently, an inevitable shift in the latter's administration policy assumptions occurred, affecting the destiny of South Africa forever.

5.2. Anti-Apartheid Propaganda and the Shift in the Reagan Administration's Policy Assumptions

In spite of the pro-apartheid propaganda, the anti-apartheid movement in the United States received a wake-up call when Ronald Reagan won the presidential election in November 1980. The "new right" was gaining influence, with the goal of reversing liberal policies both at home and abroad. The new administration was openly supportive to southern African white minority regimes as shown earlier. While movement activists blamed the Carter administration for failing to act against apartheid, there were still ties to officials who were perceived as favourable to liberation (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.787). Liberal and radical activists alike realized they had little chance of getting into policy-making circles under Reagan.

Nonetheless, Minter and Hill explained, this was the period during which the anti-apartheid movement achieved its biggest triumph, having won 'people's sanctions' against South Africa in cities and states across the country, as well as enforcing meaningful national sanctions on South Africa through law, overturning a presidential veto (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.787). This accomplishment was a key step in persuading the apartheid regime that its time had come to an end, and it was a major source of pressure on the regime as it started discussions with liberation groups.

Even among several conservative Republicans, explicit support for apartheid had become discredited by the conclusion of the Reagan

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presidency. When Nelson Mandela landed in the United States for the first time after his release from jail in 1990, as Minter and Hill highlighted, politicians from both parties vied for a spot on the platform alongside him (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.787).

Multiple causes contributed to this transition in the United States. During this time, there was a surge of resistance within South Africa, as well as the African National Congress's (henceforth the ANC) rise to prominence as the clear leader of the liberation forces in the country. Nevertheless, it also evolved out of the consolidation and expansion of anti-apartheid and solidarity forces in the United States, particularly their friends in Congress. The ongoing growth of the divestment campaign, public demonstrations spurred by the Free South Africa Movement, and strategic action by anti-apartheid leaders in the United States Congress, particularly in the House of Representatives, were all evidence of this expansion.

Indeed, during the Reagan administration, the anti-apartheid campaign achieved substantial success in changing the conversation about South Africa. However, the far-right won the most significant successes in South Africa's regional wars, securing a large escalation of official U.S. military assistance for the Angola conflict. The campaign was able to obtain media attention and political momentum when the issue was placed in the basic and dramatic terms of clear racist repression, apparent on television screens. However, when opponents were able to phrase the issues in typical Cold War terms, the solidarity movement had little success in getting broader public amplification of its viewpoints.

In the context of apartheid, the years 1983 to 1986 witnessed the confluence of ongoing divestment initiatives with the unique public presence of the Free South Africa Movement, culminating in the anti-apartheid coalition's final win in the United States Congress. As domestic and international pressures on the apartheid state grew, the U.S. administration began its first tentative moves toward planning for a transition in South Africa, which might include the ANC playing a key role.

Richard Knight of ACOA stated that, by 1990, "people's sanctions had been adopted by 28 states, 24 counties and 92 cities." These triumphs

were made possible, first and foremost, by the huge increase in African-American political representation in the late 1960s and 1970s. Willard Johnson, the leader of Boston's TransAfrica branch and a key figure in the MASS DIVEST movement, pointed out that "after the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the emergence of substantial legislative and executive power among African Americans," not in Washington only, but also at the state and local levels around the country, "there emerged a capacity to enact change in a limited domain" (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.792).

Besides, the Free South Africa Movement arose from an interconnection of numerous factors, such as the intensification of protest and suppression in South Africa, anger at the prospect of four more years of a Reagan presidency, and new energy among African-American progressive forces and their allies, sparked by Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign in 1984 (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.795).

Hence, the couple of years from 1984 to 1986 were the pinnacle of the anti-apartheid struggle in the United States and around the world. The events in South Africa had a rapid impact in North America and Europe due to extensive media coverage. And actions made by the United States Congress and enterprises had an immediate impact on business confidence in South Africa, as well as among European and South African investors.

Transitions in public opinion and Congress, as well as the unfolding situation in South Africa, had a significant impact on Reagan administration views by 1987. Secretary of State George Shultz formed a South Africa advisory council at the end of 1985, co-chaired by former IBM CEO Frank T. Cary and William T. Coleman Jr, an African-American Republican who served as Secretary of Transportation under President Gerald Ford (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.806).

When ANC President Oliver Tambo met with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz in January 1987, this shift was glaringly noticeable. The meeting, which took place despite the opposition of many right-wing Republicans in the administration and Congress, was dubbed "a diplomatic coup" by TransAfrica (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.808),

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and was the first of its type between a U.S. secretary of state and a movement labelled “terrorist” by the American ally South Africa.

Ensuingly, the context for the anti-apartheid solidarity movement in the United States profoundly shifted between 1989 and the first majority-rule election in South African history. The discussions that began in South Africa in the lead up to Nelson Mandela’s release, as well as the difficult adjustment that followed over the next four years, were mirrored in relationships on the other side of the Atlantic. In May 1989, George Bush, the new president, met with Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, and Beyers Naudé. The next month Albertina Sisulu, co-president of the United Democratic Front, was invited to the White House. Sisulu’s husband, Walter Sisulu, and six other top political prisoners were released by white South Africa’s new president, F.W. de Klerk, in October 1989. Eventually, the ANC inaugurated its first office in Washington, DC in November (as cited in *South African Democracy*, 2008, p.813).

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper probed the nature of the tacit calculations which pushed President Ronald Reagan, in his second term in office, to opt for a sudden favour to the racial equality tendency vis-à-vis the apartheid crisis in South Africa, contrary to his first term’s pro-apartheid tendency. It reached the conclusion that the seemingly steadfast U.S. backing to Pretoria with its infamous system of apartheid in the first term of President Ronald Reagan’s administration was mainly attributable to the latter’s complicity with Pretoria’s aims, for the sake of protecting America’s strategic and economic interest during the Cold war. Because both nations had had overlapping interests, the two-level game’s win-sets were maximized resulting in a web of plans to make apartheid persist. Chief among those plans was muting the voice of anti-apartheid activists.

However, the sudden shift in the Reagan administration’s policy assumption came as a result of a cluster of calculations. Firstly and chiefly, it was part of the post-Cold War calculation of Pretoria’s disutility following the demise of Communism and the emergence of America as the

sole world's superpower. This made the divestment strategy safe. Secondly, anti-apartheid voices were on the rise and reached the height of their power during the second term of the Reagan administration. Consequently, an inevitable shift in the latter's administration policy assumptions had to occur, affecting the destiny of South Africa forever. Thirdly, public opinion played an important role in changing the tide of events to the anti-apartheid bias's favour. Hence, from a Putnam's theory perspective, the COG model proved right. Indeed, in this case, contrary to the successful negotiation process it had achieved earlier in its first term in office, the Reagan administration failed this time to achieve success on both Level 1 and Level 2 tables, for the latter objected to the ratification of the former's bargaining phase. As a result, President Reagan's win-sets had been minimized, pushing him into a change of policy.

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