







states from waging war for ten years or more.

Can South Africa win the war against Swapo conclusively? There are two vital factors to take into consideration. Firstly Swapo has a serious demographic weakness. Namibia is underpopulated. Most of the recruits from Swapo are Ovambos who altogether total only half a million people. It has limited resources. If it loses 5 000 men it is badly hit. If the South African state deals severe blows to the main body of Swapo it has to go on the defensive, to low intensity war.

Secondly, South Africa uses the method of hot pursuit into foreign territory which gives the South Africans much more freedom to manoeuvre than western colonial powers had. All in all, South Africa is not winning but nevertheless has succeeded in weakening Swapo; it is preventing Swapo from winning.

*Giliomee: To come back to the ANC. Why would the ANC be so drastically affected if South Africa can make the same kind of agreement work with Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and perhaps even Angola?*

*Chaliand:* The South Africans have devised a new technique in counter-insurgency warfare. This is the technique of using guerilla warfare against powers who give sanctuary to guerillas targeted against it. Renamo in Mozambique has no popular support inside but it does not need it. Using that kind of guerilla technique one just engages in hit-and-run operations and sabotage in order to weaken the state and to destabilise it. One forces the state to engage in perpetual mobilisation, politically and militarily. This is a lesson which the United States most probably learnt from South Africa. It is now applying it in Nicaragua.

At least South Africa is innovative somewhere . . . if one can be forgiven for some black humour. The Nkomati agreement, if it can be enforced, is a very serious blow to the ANC. It is not possible to overestimate its importance. The ANC faces a crisis. It has to redefine what it realistically can do now in a quite new ball game.

*Giliomee: What would the main options of the ANC now be?*

*Chaliand:* Only two options are available. The most probable is low intensity terrorism. That is not too difficult to generate. You do not need much money or many men. The second option is working within legal institutions — if the state makes any credible institutions available to blacks. This option is crucially dependent on the kind of support the ANC can get if they go for entering the government's legal structures.

*Giliomee: Is there any precedent of liberation movements transforming themselves into a non-violent, legal movement?*

*Chaliand:* (Pause) I don't recall any.

*Giliomee: What does it do to a state, if it attempts to engage in successful anti-insurgency warfare? Is it possible to maintain civil liberties at home?*

*Chaliand:* It depends on the intensity of the

struggle. In low-key guerilla war many of the civil liberties can be maintained. But no state which uses torture can condemn terrorism, especially if the target is selective, that is, not against civilians as the ANC has done most of the time. Torture also corrupts the state. When it becomes known it creates widespread feelings of guilt and uneasiness among the part of the population on which the state depends for support. In South Africa, by the way, I see little sign of guilt, except in rather small circles.

What the state tries to do is to have exceptional measures against the insurgents and to keep civil liberties for its own population.

*Giliomee: Can one maintain this kind of border line in one political system? Is it not too tempting just to waive civil liberties aside?*

*Chaliand:* The South African state has been quite successful in keeping a western democracy for whites and something quite different for blacks. But, if the threat becomes larger, states almost automatically proceed to harsher measures. To force your newspapers and television station not to report on the insurgents and not to report on the crimes committed by the security forces is already a victory for the other side. It all depends on how important democracy is for a society.

*Giliomee: Looking at the other side, it has been the tendency (if one leaves out the Pretoria bomb) of the ANC to engage only in selective terrorism. Would it not be better for them to escalate terrorism in order to polarise South African society? Is the ANC policy perhaps related to a statement you make in one of your books that a revolutionary war should be convincing and meaningful by itself?*

*Chaliand:* The ANC has chosen to exercise low intensity pressure through sabotage. It has made a strategic choice. It has not antagonised whites by killing whites indiscriminately, which I find a wise policy.

Indiscriminate violence tends to only occur when the insurgent movement is firmly established and has got a strong internal organisation and when the war is already in an advanced stage. Nothing of that exists in this country as far as the ANC is concerned. All that can be achieved by random terrorism is to escalate oppression — which will take a heavy toll from blacks. So I think the ANC has been extremely sensible and acting in its own interests not to engage in random terror.

For a guerilla organisation, at this early stage in South Africa, it makes more sense to weaken the country in its basic resources — energy, bridges, communications, industries. This also is serious business for the state. It requires mobilisation and money on the part of the state to guard all those things that can be hit. Industrial and infrastructure sabotage is very spectacular and it scares off foreign capital. It is more effective to do this than to engage in random terror which creates martyrs on one hand and victims on the other. *USA*

*Destabilisation, an innovative technique in counter-insurgency warfare, forces hostile states into perpetual political/military mobilisation*

*The ANC has two options after Nkomati: continued low-key terrorism or transformation into a non-violent, legal movement*

*The use of torture corrupts the state itself and creates widespread feelings of guilt among government supporters*

*Indiscriminate violence occurs only at an advanced stage of war when the insurgent movement is firmly established internally*