

**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**

believe "that tomorrow's nuclear states are likely to do to one another what today's nuclear states have not done."

Why does nuclear deterrence work so well? Primarily because it so vastly raises the stakes that any potential benefits of victory are outweighed by the possible costs. In a nuclear exchange, even the winner would be severely punished. A small deterrent force is sufficient, since an attacker can never be certain of destroying *all* of the defender's nuclear weapons.

The danger of "irrationality" may be exaggerated. In the past, even "irrational" Third World rulers, notably Uganda's Amin or Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi, have backed down when faced with the threat of superior conventional enemy force; there is no reason to think that, armed with "nukes," they would be less pragmatic when faced with the sobering prospect of a nuclear exchange. "In the desperation of defeat, desperate measures may be taken," Waltz concedes, "but the last thing anyone wants to do is make a nuclear nation feel desperate."

Weaker nuclear states, Waltz believes, are less likely than the global superpowers to "break the nuclear taboo"; because they have only vital local interests to defend, their nuclear deterrents become all the more credible to potential adversaries.

"Nuclear weapons, responsibly used, make wars hard to start," Waltz argues, and there is no reason to think small nations will act less responsibly than big ones. The gradual spread of nuclear weapons gives their new owners time to adjust to them, and is "better than no spread and better than rapid spread." Six or seven nations—the United States, Soviet Union, France, Britain, China, India, and probably Israel—now have nuclear weapons, and more than 40 have the ability to build them. The alternative for some Third World regimes (e.g., Pakistan) is a far more expensive conventional arms race.

*A Voice Unheard*

"Silence Is Not Golden" by John Dugard,  
in *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1982), P.O. Box  
984, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737.

Just as South Africa started to ease enforcement of its harsh apartheid laws, the United States relaxed its pressure for reforms there.

The Carter administration, contends Dugard, a professor of law at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, deserves some credit for the South African government's willingness during the late 1970s to ease racial discrimination and political repression. When black leader Steve Biko died under suspicious circumstances in a South African jail in 1977, the United States issued stern protests and sent official representatives to Biko's funeral. That year, the Carter administration also denounced a South African decree aimed at suppressing dissident organizations and newspapers, and it supported a UN resolution calling for an embargo on selling arms to the country. South Africa's ruling National Party made political hay out of Carter's criticism. Accusing America of working against the interests of South African whites,

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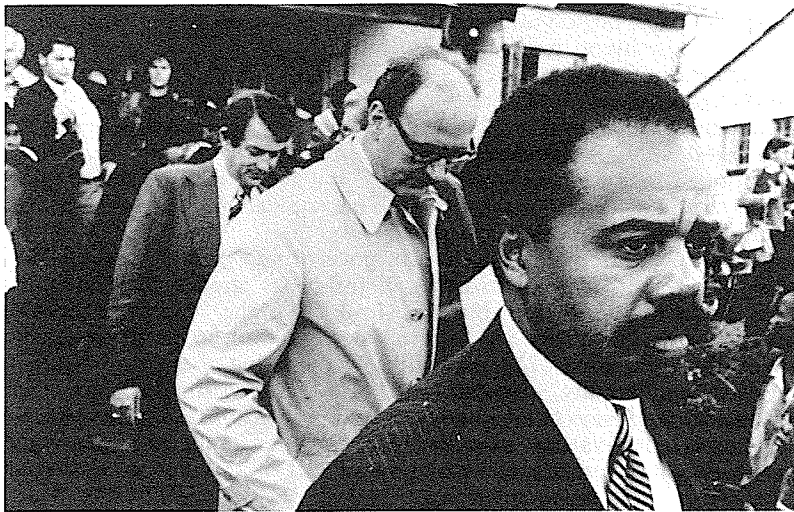
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the National Party increased its parliamentary majority in 1977.

Yet, in response to American criticism, says Dugard, the government did ease its repression. Security-law enforcement was revised, and new rules for treatment of detainees were introduced. Biko's death was the last such fatality under security laws until 1982, when Neil Aggett, a white labor leader, died.

"Quiet diplomacy" may have been appropriate in the early days of the Reagan administration, when Pretoria still seemed committed to reform. And the strategy did succeed in resurrecting talks with South Africa on the UN plan for independence of its territory, Namibia. But quiet diplomacy, says Dugard, does nothing to help moderates within the National Party. It fails to prod South African businessmen toward job reforms. And it feeds black African suspicions about the U.S. stand on racism. In short, quiet diplomacy may spell "long-term disaster" for U.S. interests.

The Reagan administration should not push specific solutions to South Africa's internal problem, writes Dugard. But America should speak up clearly—and on occasion loudly—for an end to legalized racial discrimination. Rightly or wrongly, he warns, "the Reagan administration's quiet diplomacy is [already] widely construed as support for the status quo."



*Courtesy of Wide World Photos (Associated Press).*

*Donald McHenry (right), U.S. Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations, and William Bowdler (center), U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, leave the home of black leader Steve Biko's grieving family in 1977.*