Collapse of Apartheid
Changes to apartheid in the early 1980s

1978: Policy of ‘Total onslaught-Total strategy’

1. **Total Onslaught**
   - Govt believed there was a communist plot
     - From 1975, communist govs in Mozambique & Angola (Mugabe in Zim)
     - SWAPO seen as threat
     - ANC supported/ funded by the USSR
   - Propaganda about communist plot against SA
     - SABC news, films schools/ education
     - Similar to USA & other countries
   - Military attacks (MK) & international criticism

2. **Total Strategy**
   - Mixture of repression and reform
     - Aim: To fight communist threat by military, political, economic, psychological means

   **Repression**
   - Military build-up & continued repression
   - Limited reform to win support from black middle class
     - Attempt to create divisions between black classes
   - Increasing militarisation of SA
   - State Security Council advise govt on repression of resistance
     - Military titles for police
   - Military conscription of 2 years for all white males
   - Massive increase in military spending
     - 1974: R700m – 1981: R3000m
     - Presence in townships
   - Armscor to produce weapons locally
     - Arms ban in 1960s by UN
     - Couldn’t buy arms, had to produce
     - Very successful, exported

   **Reform**
   - Limited reforms to win over black middle class:
     1. **Legal recognition of black trade unions**
        - Large growth in number of trade unions
     2. **Policy of job reservation relaxed**
        - Allowed black people to do more skilled labour
- Economy needed more skilled labour

3. **Some apartheid laws repealed**
   - Mixed marriages, relationships
   - Wasn’t fundamental policy, didn’t cause mass change

4. **End to strict segregation of some public amenities**
   - Hotels, restaurants
   - Mainly for diplomatic reasons, didn’t have a large effect
   - Most public amenities still segregated

5. **Mixed private schools allowed**
   - Private schools could choose from early 1980s
   - Public schools still strictly segregated

   - Substantial reform, freedom of movement

7. **Introduced tri-cameral parliament**
   - Separate parliaments for white, ‘coloured’ and Indian representatives
   - Africans excluded (over 80% of population), Govt regarded them as citizens of homelands
   - Non-white parliaments had no real power

**Pressure on government in the 1980s**

**Internal Pressures**

**Protests**
- Nationwide protest against new constitution
  - Formation of UDF
  - Umbrella organisation of apartheid opposition
  - 1st campaign: Boycott tri-cameral elections
  - Adapted Freedom Charter, labelled communist, had 3 million supporters

- Township uprising
  - Started in Vaal triangle as school boycotts, rent boycotts, worker stay-aways and escalated
  - State of emergency declared, army in township

**Economic Pressures**

Business leaders concerned:
- Effects of political instability on economy
  - Workers not going to work, therefore no production

- SA’s international image
  - Images of violence not good for business

- Increasing support for sanctions

- Wanted more meaningful reform to silence critics

- Botha rejected significant reforms & international pressure
  - ‘Rubicon speech’

The Consulting Students – [http://consultingstudent.wordpress.com](http://consultingstudent.wordpress.com)
Financial crisis
- Overseas loans cancelled
- Rand collapsed (lost ⅓ of value)
- JSE forced to close
- Support for sanctions grew and economy declined

**Armed Struggle**
- Support for ANC increased
- MK attacked high-profile targets
  - Eg. Koeberg power station, Sasol oil refinery, Dockyard at Durban
- MK increased units & attacks on police stations

**Govt response to the internal pressures**
1985: Govt declared a State of Emergency
- Gave itself powers to crush resistance
- Thousands of leaders detained & tortured (some died in detention)
- Freedom of media to report on ‘unrest’ crubed
- Activities of organisations restricted, others banned
- Meetings banned
  - Even non-political meetings
  - Couldn’t t/ didn’t ban funerals (became source of political demonstration)
- Some opponents of govt charged with treason
  - Means of getting people out of the way
- Govt also intervened in township unrest
  - Supported and supplied vigilantes against anti-apartheid protesters
  - Supported Inkatha against UDF in Natal
  - Propaganda about ‘black on black’ violence (“Look what will happen...”)
- Govt also intervened in neighbouring countries
  - Wanted to stop support for liberation movements
  - Launched cross-border raids on suspected ANC bases
  - Assassinated SA leaders in exile (Ruth First)
  - SADF supported RENAMO in Mozambique against socialist FRELIMO
  - Supported UNITA in Angolan civil war

**External pressures**
1. **Pressure from the UN**
- Ban on sale of arms
  - Started in ’60s, gradually extended to other countries
- SA expelled from many international organisations
  - WHO, Olympic movement (last games: Rome 1964)
2. The effects of sanctions

- Growing support for economic sanctions against SA influenced by:
  - ANC in exile putting pressure on government
  - Calls by prominent South Africans (eg. Tutu, govt called him a traitor)

a. USA

- Growing support from liberals & African-Americans for sanctions in spite of opposition from Regan govt

- 1986: Congress passed Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act
  - New investments and loans banned (Didn’t have to disinvest)
  - SA planes banned from using US airports
  - Some SA imports banned (Not everything, minerals still needed)
  - Institutions sold shares in companies with SA connections
  - Large corporations disinvested (Many sold to SA businessman, renamed, others closed)
  - US banks cut loans to SA

b. Commonwealth countries

British PM, Margaret Thatcher, opposed to sanctions, but support for them grew:

- Some British companies disinvested
  - Eg. Barclays Bank – people protested by closing accounts in England

- Many people refused to buy SA products

- Cultural boycott by British Actors’ Union

- SA sports team barred from international competition (after Gleneagles Agreement)

1986: Commonwealth Eminent Person Group (EPG) visited SA

- Aim was to persuade govt to negotiate with ANC

- Mission unsuccessful due to attitude and actions of SA government
  - Sent bombing raids into Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana

- Led to increased calls for tougher economic sanctions

3. Pressure from ANC in exile

- Headquarters in Lusaka in Zambia
  - Leader: Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki & Joe Slovo

- UN and OAU recognised ANC as official representatives of SA

- ANC representatives in many overseas capitals

- Many S Africans recognised importance of ANC:
  - 1985: Delegation of prominent business leaders met ANC leaders in Lusaka (Led by Anglo-American chairman Gavin Relly)
  - 1987: Delegation of liberal Afrikaners met ANC leaders in Dakar in Senegal (Led by Van Zyl Slabbert)
  - ANC increasingly viewed as government-in-exile
- Secret meetings between government and Mandela since 1985
- But Mandela rejected offers of conditional release ( Wanted him to renounce violence of armed struggle )

4. The impact of the situation in Namibia
- South West Africa under SA control since 1920
- 1960s: SWAPO launched armed struggle to free Namibia
- Massive SA military build-up to crush opposition
- Thousands tortured or killed in attempt to stop for support for SWAPO

SWAPO set up bases in Angola
- SWAPO guerrillas supported by Cuban forces
- SA invaded Angola to destroy SWAPO bases
- Fighting between SADF and Cuban forces
- SA defeated at Cuito Cuanavle in Angola
  - Realised they were not as strong as they thought
- 1988: SA accepted UN plan for Namibia:
  - SA to withdraw forces and administration from Namibia
  - Cubans to withdraw from Angola
  - UN to supervise elections in Namibia
  - ANC bases would close
- 1989: Namibian elections and independence under SWAPO government
- Defeat and withdrawal from Namibia an added pressure on SA govt

Government response to external pressures

Internal pressures within the NP
- By 1989: Govt facing crucial decision
  - Greater repression or meaningful reform ( Caused split in government )
- 1989: PW Botha forced to resign after stroke
  - Replaced by FW de Klerk ( who realised need for urgent change of policy )
- 2 February 1990: FW de Klerk announced dramatic changes
  - Unbanning of ANC, PAC, Communist Party and others
  - Unconditional release of political prisoners ( including Mandela )
  - Easing of restrictions, bannings, censorship ( Lifted State of emergency )
  - Suspension of death penalty
  - Willingness to negotiate change

Reasons for National Party’s change of policy
- Wanted to control pace of change, retain some power

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• Believed the ANC was weak after 30 year ban
  - Underestimated ANC support

• Security forces unable to crush resistance
  - MK attacks more frequent and smaller

• Economy badly affected by sanctions and disinvestment
  - Inflation incredibly high
  - Critical skills shortage due to Bantu Education and school boycotts

• Military defeat in Angola led to reassessment of military strength
• Collapse of communism in USSR – ‘Total onslaught’ no longer valid
  - Lost support of Britain and USA as anti-communist allies