

- 106 Within the security establishment, the growing influence of the military was evident in the rise to power of PW Botha. Through a series of manoeuvres involving the intelligence structures of the SADF, information about the Department of Information was leaked to the press, precipitating the 'Infogate' scandal<sup>3</sup> and the demise of both Vorster and Van den Bergh. On 28 September 1978, PW Botha became Prime Minister and moved rapidly to implement a policy soon dubbed the 'total strategy'.
- 107 The late 1970s saw a regrouping following the bannings of Black Consciousness organisations in 1977 and the growth of independent black trade unions. It also saw the emergence of local community organisations involved in mass mobilisation and campaigns on basic issues such as housing, rents, electricity, and transport. These structures initially adopted a strategically low political profile, while more explicitly political organisations such as the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and student organisations such as Azanian Students' Organisation (AZASO) and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) articulated a more strongly political perspective. Rivalry and conflict developed, however, between activists aligning themselves with Black Consciousness and those increasingly supportive of the ANC.

### **1979–1984: The 'total strategy', regional destabilisation and resistance**

- 108 'Total strategy' was based on the premise that South Africa was the object of a total onslaught, supported or even co-ordinated by the Soviet Union. The objective of this onslaught was to overthrow the government of South Africa. In a graphic illustration of this, at a briefing to the Commission, a former secretary of the SSC described a scene in the government's operations room in the 1980s. A large map filled the wall. A series of markers and labels linked activists in a local township to larger co-ordinating structures nationally. From there a line was drawn linking exile structures in Lusaka to the offices of the KGB in Moscow.
- 109 The government understood the onslaught as being in the tradition of guerrilla warfare. This type of warfare is characterised by the relative unimportance of military operations in the sense of combat operations carried out against opposing armed forces. Rather, the aim of the revolutionary forces is to gain control of government by gaining the support of the people through a combination of intimidation, persuasion and propaganda.

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<sup>3</sup> The Department of Information had been engaged in a massive and extremely costly propaganda drive both inside and outside the country, attended by instances of self-enrichment and corruption.