BACKGROUND

- On assuming power in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev launched the Soviet Union on a dramatic new course.
- His dual programme of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* introduced major changes in economic practice, internal affairs and international relations.
- In the 1980s the SA govt faced a transformed world order.
- The African continent was no longer controlled by Europeans and SA had become isolated.
- By the end of 1989 the Soviet Union was beginning to disintegrate.
- The communist regimes in Easter Europe were collapsing and the Berlin Wall had fallen.
- This contributed to the end of the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

GLASNOST AND PERESTROIKA

- Perestroika was the reshaping of the Soviet economy to allow more profit making by individuals and to reduce control by the govt.
- Glasnost meant more openness about govt and more freedom of speech. Criticism of govt policy would be allowed and corruption by govt officials would be stopped.

THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL AND ITS IMPACT

- The fall of the Berlin Wall was one of the most significant events of the 20th century because it marked the end of the Cold War and was a catalyst for change in many countries.
- The Berlin Wall was the most powerful symbol of the Cold War division of Europe.
- The collapse of the Berlin Wall marked the climax of the revolutionary changes sweeping through Eastern Europe.
- Throughout the Soviet Bloc, reformers took control and ended more than forty years of dictatorial communist rule.
The collapse of communism in east central Europe and the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE SOVIET UNION AFFECTED THE ANC AND NP NATIONAL PARTY

- The NP govt portrayed the ANC as a communist organization that was directed by the Soviet Union and they blamed the communists for uprisings such as Sharpeville Massacre and Soweto Uprising.
- The NP’s claims that it is protecting Southern Africa against from communism became unrealistic because of Gorbachev’s policies.
- The collapse of the Soviet Union made the govt’s claim to be protecting South Africans form a communist onslaught unrealistic.
- The SA govt could no longer use the threat of communism as a means of generating support.
- It could no longer rely on Western backing for this anti-communist stance.
- The NP’s fear of a communist-controlled ANC also diminished, as communism lost ground in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and for the first time it was prepared to negotiate with the ANC.
- The Western dominated world powers supported the move in South Africa to look seriously at resolving its problems peacefully and democratically.
- Many influential white leaders realised that Apartheid was not the answer to the needs of white capitalist development and reform was necessary.
- They were aware that the introduction of drastic economic reform would significantly undermine its support base, and therefore reform had to be moderate.
- They realised that the continued repression of black people would not ensure political stability.
- They began to believe that any forms introduced also needed to include the development of a strong black middle class.
- A growing number of influential businessmen, clergyman, academics, politicians and journalists began to believe that talks with the ANC were necessary in order to end the turmoil in SA.
- The security forces and the successive states of emergency implemented by PW Botha did not stop township revolts.
ANC

- The collapse of the Soviet Union also affected the ANC.
- The Soviet Union and its allies had close links with the ANC.
- They provided education and military training for SA refugees in Soviet Union and Frontline States.
- They were the main suppliers of arms for ANC’s military wing, MK.
- The Soviet Union had supported the liberation movements after they were forced into exile in the 1960s.
- For a while the ANC received most of its financial and military support from the Soviet Union.
- The collapse of Soviet Union removed an important source of backing.
- The ANC was ready to negotiate.

THE IMPACT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SADF FROM THE BATTLE OF CUITO CUANAVELE

- The battle of Cuito Cuanavale laid the foundations for the withdrawal of the SADF from Angola
- The siege of Cuito Cuanavale changed the military balance in Southern Africa.
- The involvement of external forces on the sides of MPLA and UNITA in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale created military stalemates that helped the search for political solutions.
- The stalemate, the end of the Cold War and the dismantling of the apartheid regime influenced both Cuba and SA to rethink their positions.
- The fact that the National Party had to negotiate with communists over the independence of Namibia made it easier to talk to the ANC.
- The peaceful transfer to majority rule in Namibia encouraged both the NP govt and the ANC.
- The govt saw that majority rule did not necessarily mean the introduction of communism or major economic changes.
1989

- It was a significant year in both world and South African politics.
- The Berlin Wall came down in November 1989 - this symbolized the fall of institutionalized communism.
- PW Botha suffered a stroke and was succeeded by FW de Klerk - he adopted a different stance to Botha re. Apartheid.
- De Klerk at this time said that he would have been a fool not to take the gap that fall of the Berlin Wall gave him.
- 3 months after the fall of the Berlin Wall, he essentially declared the end of Apartheid.
- He unbanned the ANC and other political parties, political prisoners were freed, Nelson Mandela was released.
- Gorbachev's reforms was the greatest international influence that led to the unravelling of Apartheid.
- It eased the phobia that a black struggle against Apartheid was actually a conspiracy directed from Moscow.
- Moreover, it enabled De Klerk to justify the new approach he wished to adopt by engaging in discussions with the ANC.