In this interview, held in November 2007, former National Party (NP) chief negotiator Roelf Meyer discussed the influence of external factors on the collapse of the apartheid state.

In what ways did sanctions and pressure on the South African government contribute towards the negotiations process that began in 1990?
The decision by the leaders on both sides of the divide to embark* on a process of negotiating a settlement resulted from pressure and various incentives* that were offered over time … Internally, unrest was increasing and grassroots resistance organisations began to emerge in the black townships, while increasingly militant student protests triggered new waves of turmoil* and violence.
… Externally, the United Nations decided on punitive* measures towards the country. International sanctions were activated in the fields of finance, trade, industry, sport, media and communications, not only by the UN but also … by South Africa’s main trading and economic partners. By the mid-1980s many of the world’s largest companies had divested from South Africa …

What kind of an impact did external pressure make on the country?
In the latter half of the 1980s the pressure was really felt. Even South Africa’s closest economic partners were abandoning it. The USA, for instance, instituted* a wide-ranging sanctions bill during 1986 which had a major effect on all US companies who remained in South Africa … Their forced withdrawal from the South African economy … had a significant negative impact on the economy, which was more dependent on international trade and investment then than now. The sports sanctions can’t be underestimated either – South Africans are mad about sport and sanctions had a major impact on the psyche* of the whites in South Africa.

How did this build-up of pressure influence key decision-makers?
South Africa was ostracised*, and as a result the business community started to mobilise* to influence the government to engage in a process of change …


* embark – start or take part in
* incentives – reasons to motivate someone to do something
* turmoil – period of unrest
* punitive – punishing or disciplinary
* instituted – introduced
* psyche – mentality or state of mind
* ostracised – excluded and disliked
* mobilise – organise
SOURCE B  This is an extract from an article by an historian commenting on the role of sanctions in the collapse of apartheid.

Nelson Mandela ... believes the results from the Anti-Apartheid Movement sanctions were effective. On the side that believes the Anti-Apartheid Movement had no ... impact on the dismantling* of apartheid is the former South African President, FW de Klerk. ... De Klerk mentions the conflict and violence that had pervaded* South Africa as his considerations for the ending of apartheid ... (Paragraph 1)

... If nothing more, the economic sanctions were certainly the final straw in the campaign against the apartheid government. While a handful of South Africans began to draw links between the economic climate and political change, many dismissed the effectiveness of sanctions. In retrospect*, however, many see these comments as simply propaganda ... (Levy 418–419) (Paragraph 2)

While the exact effectiveness of the international sanctions that arose from the Anti-Apartheid Movement against the National Party in South Africa on an economic scale can be debated, the praise ... for the Anti-Apartheid Movement must be taken into account as well. Both Bishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela made statements to this extent ... the psychological impact of international isolation* could be viewed as just as important as the economic impact ... (Levy 418) (Paragraph 3)

Alternate views of the fall of the National Party's apartheid stem from outside events that did not include sanctions ... While the timing of the Soviet collapse certainly played a role in the changes in South Africa, for De Klerk to say that sanctions had no impact in policy making would be dismissing the effectiveness of the Anti-Apartheid Movement as a whole ... (Paragraph 4)

... De Klerk, in his own book, gives credence* to the overall international movement. He notes that never before in history had a country had to deal with the "comprehensive* international campaign" against the country (De Klerk 114). Not only were the economic stresses demanding, the restrictions on travel, notably on fly-over and landing rights for South African airlines, and the cold shoulder* many white South Africans received while traveling abroad in the 1980s all contributed to the isolation* ... the political and overall isolation felt by South Africans, which was manufactured by the global anti-apartheid campaign, made up for the lapses* in economic sanctions ... (Paragraph 5)


* dismantling – taking apart or destroying
* pervaded – spread across
* retrospect – in hindsight or in review
* isolation – separation
* credence – credibility
* comprehensive – widespread or full
* cold shoulder – unfriendliness
* lapses – failures
SOURCE C

This is an Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) poster printed in Britain during the 1980s.

[SOUTH AFRICAN GOODS INCLUDE: fresh fruit and vegetables; canned and dried fruit; wines and spirits; clothing and textiles; tinned meat and fish; knitting wools and yarns; shoes; furniture; cooking utensils; furs; Ford pick-up trucks.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, write to Sheffield Anti-Apartheid Movement, c/o MP’s Office, 54 Pinstone Street, Sheffield 1.

SOURCE D  This is an extract from a South African history website discussing an Anti-Apartheid Movement campaign.

... a campaign demanding the release of all political prisoners was launched in South Africa and abroad. The campaign was titled 'Release Nelson Mandela' and, together with the campaign for economic and other sanctions against South Africa, became the symbol of the international Anti-Apartheid Movement. For several decades it was the largest social movement in the world.


SOURCE E  This photograph shows an Anti-Apartheid Movement protest held in Durham, England in 1988.

SOURCE F

This is an extract from a speech given in London by British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, on 11 November 1985.

... I detest* apartheid ... Apartheid is wrong and it must go. Major changes are taking place in South Africa. We should welcome and encourage them ... The right way to deal with legitimate* grievances* is not by violence but by a ... dialogue* between the South African Government and the black community ... Economic sanctions are not the way to promote peaceful change. Sanctions do not work. Indeed they make problems worse. They would be a blow to all those firms and people who are in ... efforts to end apartheid by giving black Africans more jobs and greater opportunities.


* detest – hate
* legitimate – real and valid
* grievances – a cause for complaint, especially unfair treatment
* dialogue – negotiation and discussion

SOURCE G

This is an extract from a book by British historians, David Welsh and Jack Spence, in which they comment on sanctions and the collapse of apartheid.

The pro-sanctions lobby* argued that the cumulative* effect of growing economic isolation produced by massive disinvestment ... together with the denial of key markets for exports ... and the loss of new technologies, led to a fundamental reconsideration* of government policy ... But, it was too easy to draw the conclusion that sanctions alone had the desired effect ... The impact of sanctions varied ... a variety of factors ... other than the ... direct pressure of sanctions must be taken into account for an understanding of what moved the ... government away from apartheid ... The South African economy was in severe difficulties for much of the 1980s well before major sanctions were launched. What sanctions did ... was to make a bad situation worse ... It was a combination of private sanctions and public pressure from the Anti-Apartheid Movement and its NGO* allies which provoked* the crisis in the mid-1980s and weakened the capacity of the South African state to hold on indefinitely* ... If nothing else, sanctions served as a potent* symbol of the world’s disapproval of the apartheid regime.


* lobby – a group of supporters
* cumulative – increasing
* reconsideration – review
* NGO – non-governmental organisation
* provoked – triggered
* indefinitely – forever
* potent – powerful
SOURCE H This is an extract from an interview with former Free South Africa Movement coordinator, Cecelie Counts, for the *New York Times* on 27 January 2013.

The apartheid regime’s brutality* reached a new level in 1984, and one response came when the Free South Africa Movement engaged people from all walks of life in daily demonstrations and in civil disobedience for more than a year. Shantytowns sprung up on college campuses that had not yet divested and an international campaign against Royal Dutch Shell was launched in 1986. The groundswell* of opposition to apartheid led Congress to override* President Reagan’s veto of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. Divestment began to affect South Africa as corporations let apartheid leaders know that it had become too expensive to continue operating there. Some would argue that many corporations simply shifted to indirect investments, but when banks began to refuse to renew loans it caused some real pain as the value of the rand fell.


* brutality – violence and cruelty
* groundswell – wave or rise
* override – overrule