



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER TWO DECADES

Vineyard Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

Date of publication: May 2014

Rapporteurs: Mark Paterson and Kudrat Virk of the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa

Editors: Adekeye Adebajo and Mark Paterson of CCR

2 DIXTON ROAD, OBSERVATORY 7925, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA ■ TEL: +27 21 689 1005

FAX: +27 21 689 1003 ■ E-MAIL: mailbox@ccr.org.za ■ WEBSITE: www.ccr.org.za

[f](#) CCR Cape Town ■ [t](#) CCR_Africa

21

POLICY BRIEF

Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, hosted a policy research seminar in Cape Town, from 28 to 30 July 2013, on “Post-Apartheid South Africa’s Foreign Policy After Two Decades”.

The meeting convened about 50 leading practitioners, scholars, and civil society activists from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and North America to explore and enhance the potential leadership role that South Africa can play in promoting peace and security, as well as regional integration and development in Africa. It also focused on Tshwane’s (Pretoria) interlocking bilateral and multilateral relationships on the continent and beyond.

1. Two Decades of South Africa’s Foreign Policy: Progress, Problems, and Prospects

In 1993, a year before he became South Africa’s first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela outlined six pillars for the country’s foreign policy in the post-apartheid era: the centrality of human rights; the promotion of democracy; just relations between states based on the rule of international law; the peaceful resolution of disputes; the centrality of Africa; and greater regional and international cooperation to support economic development. In 2001, president Thabo Mbeki identified five key foreign policy goals: the need to restructure the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC); reform of international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the World Bank; hosting major international conferences; promoting peace and security on the continent and in the Middle East; and nurturing ties with the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialised countries, while devising a strategy for the “global South”. Since 2009, president Jacob Zuma has continued these policies, but has more aggressively pursued a leadership role in SADC, the African Union (AU), and the UN; and more openly championed investment into South Africa as the “gateway” to the continent.

Successive South African governments have been sensitive to a need to overcome the legacy of the regional destabilisation policy pursued by the previous apartheid regime



THEN-SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT, NELSON MANDELA, MEETS ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT, ROBERT MUGABE, DURING A STATE VISIT TO ZIMBABWE IN MAY 1997.

Image source - Uliza Links

<http://www.ulizalinks.co.ke/10-iconic-photos-of-fallen-hero-nelson-mandela-meeting-with-world-leaders-and-celebrities/>

Since 1994, successive South African governments have been sensitive to a need to overcome the legacy of the regional destabilisation policy pursued by the previous apartheid regime, and to transform South Africa from a pariah state into a “responsible” African power. Tshwane has thus played an active peacemaking role on the continent. In April 2014, 2,186 South African peacekeepers were deployed to UN missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Darfur, and South Sudan. South Africa had earlier led peacemaking efforts in Lesotho, Burundi, the DRC, and Côte d'Ivoire between 1997 and 2006.

However, institutional capacity constraints have resulted in “diplomatic overstretch”, with the result that Tshwane’s engagement with the continent can often seem poorly coordinated. In addition, South Africa’s embrace of an African identity has been widely questioned across the continent, particularly in the aftermath of xenophobic attacks in May 2008 in which 62 African immigrants were killed and 100,000 displaced.

21

POLICY BRIEF

South Africa is playing a key role in the development of a rapid-reaction brigade by the Southern African Development Community as part of an African Standby Force to be deployable by 2015



SOUTH AFRICAN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS SECURE THE LANDING SITE FOR A UN HELICOPTER IN THE EASTERN CONGO, IN FEBRUARY 2009.

Photo - Reuters/Finbarr O'Reilly
Image source - Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/12/23/us-congo-democratic-un-idUSTRE5BM-3DG20091223>

2. South Africa's Domestic and Security Imperatives

Post-apartheid South Africa's diplomacy has sought to contribute to national reconciliation; domestic democratic consolidation; and the country's own socio-economic development. However, South Africa remains the world's most unequal society and has an unemployment rate of about 40 percent. Failure to increase economic opportunities, particularly for youth, has contributed to rising levels of crime, violence, and protest. Skills development and strengthened bureaucratic capacity are therefore essential to ensure that Tshwane meets its domestic and foreign policy objectives.

Since its controversial 1998 intervention in Lesotho, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has been deployed in peace operations in the DRC; Burundi; Comoros; Sudan; Central African Republic (CAR); Côte d'Ivoire; Eritrea/Ethiopia; Liberia; and Uganda. South Africa is also playing a key role in SADC's development of a rapid-reaction brigade (SADCBRIG), as part of an AU-coordinated African Standby Force (ASF) to be deployable by 2015. However, concerns have been raised that South Africa's military is not adequately trained or equipped to undertake peacekeeping interventions, as highlighted in March 2013 by the death of 13 South African soldiers in a botched operation in CAR. The South African Defence Review 2014 sought to balance the peacekeeping role of the country's armed forces in the rest of Africa with domestic responsibilities for the military that include controlling South Africa's borders and providing protection against international criminal gangs and terrorists.

3. South Africa's Human Rights Role and Corporate Expansion

South Africa played key roles in negotiating the 1998 Rome Statute that founded the International Criminal Court (ICC); and in the creation of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2005. However, Tshwane supported the AU's call for deferring the ICC's prosecution of Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Since 1994, South African companies have expanded across Africa in a range of sectors, including mining; banking; telecommunications; and retail. However, in Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria, some South African firms have been criticised for mercantilist behaviour and for exporting apartheid-era labour practices. While South African mining companies in the DRC, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have helped create jobs and government revenues, a few have also been accused of illicitly exporting minerals, while some South African retail firms have been criticised for importing basic products like eggs from South Africa rather than sourcing them locally.

4. South Africa's Bilateral Relations in Africa

Under Jacob Zuma's leadership since 2009, Tshwane's most important strategic relationship in Southern Africa has been with oil-producing Angola.

21

POLICY BRIEF

If the bilateral relationship can be institutionalised, it could revive SADC and provide a powerful ally for South Africa on the continent. Prolonged domestic political instability and punitive sanctions have weakened Zimbabwe's economy, with bilateral trade – worth R26 billion in 2013 – heavily skewed in Tshwane's favour, and the presence of an estimated one million Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa further complicating ties between the two countries. Mozambique strongly supported South African-led SADC mediation efforts in Zimbabwe between 2007 and 2013, and provided peacekeepers to the South African-led AU mission in Burundi between 2003 and 2004.

Since 1994, South Africa has sought to export its own “model” of conflict resolution – an interim government of national unity leading to constitutional reform and national elections – to the Great Lakes region. In the DRC, mediation efforts led by Thabo Mbeki resulted in a 2003 peace deal. In Burundi, South African diplomacy helped to end a war by 2005. Bilateral tensions have, however, been evident in relations with Rwanda.

South Africa's potentially most strategic relationship on the continent is with Nigeria, which is its biggest import partner in Africa. However, the “special relationship” between Tshwane and Abuja appeared to have been downgraded under the Zuma administration since 2009, with South Africa identifying Angola – its second largest import partner on the continent – as its key strategic ally. Nigeria, with an economy worth over \$510 billion in 2013, has overtaken South Africa, which had an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of \$340 billion, as the continent's largest economy. Elsewhere in West Africa, South African companies have established a strong presence in Ghana's economy – particularly in gold mining – and are seeking a greater foothold in Côte d'Ivoire.

South Africa's potentially most strategic relationship on the continent is with Nigeria, which is its biggest import partner in Africa



SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT, JACOB ZUMA, WITH NIGERIAN PRESIDENT, GOODLUCK JONATHAN, DURING A STATE VISIT TO NIGERIA IN APRIL 2013.

Image source - YNaija.com
<http://www.ynaija.com/photos-president-zuma-meets-with-president-jonathan-at-aso-rock/>

In Eastern Africa, Tanzania has worked closely with South Africa to address the security challenges in the DRC. Meanwhile, historical tensions between South Africa and Kenya have been exacerbated by a bilateral trade imbalance that favours Tshwane. South Africa's Thabo Mbeki has sought to mediate the dispute between Sudan and South Sudan, while African National Congress (ANC) deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa was seeking to mediate between the parties in South Sudan in 2014.

Together with South Africa and Nigeria; Algeria, Libya, and Egypt contribute 75 percent of the AU's regular budget. Under Algeria's Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algiers has been a reliable partner for Tshwane in its continental diplomacy. South Africa strongly opposed the “regime change” that was implemented by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Libya in 2011; and its relations with the new government in Tripoli have subsequently been adversely affected. Following the end of Hosni Mubarak's 30-year-old autocracy in Egypt in 2011, Tshwane supported the elected government of Mohamed Morsi, and was swift to condemn the coup that ousted him in 2013.

5. South Africa's Multilateral Relations in Africa

South Africa has promoted the establishment of African sub-regional and continental mechanisms. After Tshwane joined SADC and the OAU in 1994,

21

POLICY BRIEF

it led successful efforts to outlaw unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. Following the inauguration of Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo as the presidents of South Africa and Nigeria respectively in 1999, the two leaders worked closely together to transform the OAU into the African Union, shaping the new body's security mechanism and promoting African peacekeeping efforts on the continent. Tshwane was instrumental in establishing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001; the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2003; and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in 2004, though all remain fledgling institutions. South Africa has further played an important role in SADC's efforts to resolve political crises in Lesotho, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe between 1998 and 2013. However, apprehension has mounted that national economic advantages provided to Tshwane's neighbours under SADC and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) may be threatened by South Africa's drive to create a new tripartite free trade area (FTA) comprising SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the East African Community (EAC).

Under the presidency of Jacob Zuma since 2009, Tshwane has increasingly "deployed" its own officials within the African Union - including Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as Chair of the AU Commission in 2012. South Africa has also adopted a more militaristic approach to peace processes in the Great Lakes region, leading a 3,000-strong SADC armed intervention into the eastern Congo in 2013 with Tanzania and Malawi.

6. South Africa's Bilateral Relations: The United States (US), Britain, and France

After 1994, the United States sought to build a new trade and investment partnership with South Africa, following Washington's earlier support for the apartheid regime. However, the Bi-National Commission (BNC) between the two countries was reviewed after George W. Bush became US president in 2001, and Washington's "war on terror" continues to shape American policy towards Africa under Barack Obama. Nevertheless, civil society links between the two countries remain strong, building on the African Diaspora's historic role in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Reversing Britain's previous support for apartheid governments, prime minister, Tony Blair, strongly backed Thabo Mbeki's continental initiatives, particularly NEPAD. However, under David Cameron's government since 2010, the focus has been on reinvigorating economic relations, even as London's importance has declined as a trading partner for Tshwane. French engagement with post-apartheid South Africa has been increasingly ad hoc. Gallic interventions in African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and CAR have generated tensions between Paris and Tshwane, although economic relations have been less adversarial, with over 300 French companies present in South Africa in 2014.

7. South Africa's Bilateral Relations: China and Japan

South Africa's economic engagement with China and Japan offers an alternative to trade with traditional European and American partners, potentially strengthening the bargaining position of African governments. However, Tshwane is concerned

“Tshwane has increasingly “deployed” its own officials within the African Union – including Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as Chair of the AU Commission in 2012”



FORMER SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER, NKOSAZANA DLAMINI-ZUMA, WAS ELECTED CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION IN JULY 2012.

Image source - Haybad
<http://haybad.com/gudoomiyaha-midowga-afrika-oo-kenya-kala-hadashay-arrimaha-soomaaliya/>

21

POLICY BRIEF

about the structure and balance of trade with Beijing and Tokyo, which remains skewed towards Chinese and Japanese interests in importing raw materials and finding a ready market for their finished products. In the multilateral arena, South Africa's diplomatic credentials have been enhanced by its increasingly close ties with Beijing which supported its membership of the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) bloc in 2011. By contrast, Tshwane has often opposed Tokyo in discussions in fora such as the Group of 20 (G-20) and the WTO, where South Africa seeks to promote the interests of the "global South".

8. South Africa's Global Multilateral Relations: the UN, the European Union (EU), and the BRICS

As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2007-2008 and 2011-2012, South Africa advocated a more efficient division of labour between the UN and Africa's regional bodies in maintaining peace and security on the continent; and addressed the funding and logistical challenges faced by African peacekeeping operations. During its first term on the UN Security Council (2007-2008), South Africa was, however, criticised for voting against resolutions that sought sanctions against Myanmar and Zimbabwe. Tshwane argued that these cases belonged within the purview of the UN Human Rights Council rather than in the Security Council.

The European Union has identified South Africa as one of its ten strategic partners globally. However, Brussels has limited Tshwane's access to the trade and aid benefits offered to other members of the 79-member African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group. The consequent duality of market access arrangements in Southern Africa has complicated region-building efforts, and soured South Africa's relations with Europe as well as with some of its smaller sub-regional neighbours. Tshwane's support for the creation of the SADC-COMESA-EAC tripartite free trade area represents a response to the Balkanising effect of the economic partnership agreements (EPAs) that the EU is negotiating with four of Africa's sub-regions.

South Africa's membership of the BRICS group, which accounts for about 25 percent of global GDP, has leveraged Tshwane's political influence and complements the country's economic diversification. However, not only is South Africa's trade with China and India mainly based on exporting primary products, its share of the other members' markets also remains relatively small. Furthermore, the political impact of the BRICS on global politics has so far been limited.

“Tshwane is concerned about the structure and balance of trade with Beijing and Tokyo, which remains skewed towards Chinese and Japanese interests in importing raw materials and finding a ready market for their finished products”



UNDERGROUND DRILLING AT GREAT NOLIGWA GOLD MINE, SOUTH AFRICA.

Photo - VisualMedia
Image source - The Daily Telegraph
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsby-sector/industry/mining/8311622/South-Africa-will-not-nationalise-its-mines-says-minister-Susan-Shabangu.html>

Policy Recommendations

The following 10 policy recommendations emerged from the Cape Town policy research seminar:

1. South Africa must strengthen bilateral relations with key African "anchor states", particularly Nigeria, Angola, the DRC, Algeria, and Tanzania, in pursuit of a more effective leadership role on the continent. Tshwane should also consult more closely with its key African partners on how it can promote Africa's interests more effectively within the G-20 and the BRICS;

21

POLICY BRIEF

“ In order to build support for an expanded United Nations Security Council, Tshwane should coordinate with key African countries such as Nigeria and Algeria to review the Ezulwini Consensus of 2005 ”



THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS IN MARCH 2014.

Photo - Andrew Burton/Getty Images
Image source - Getty Images
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/getty/article/ALeqM5g9XXd1yIWIQ7jVXzckleHLWc-fdw?docId=476527477>

2. South Africa's political leadership must build a broader domestic constituency for its foreign policy, particularly its prioritisation of Africa; this should include explaining the historical anti-apartheid contributions of African countries to its population, as well as the benefits that may accrue to South Africa from its engagement in multilateral organisations such as SADC and the AU;
3. Tshwane must seek to develop an enforceable code of conduct for South African companies operating in the rest of Africa that addresses issues related to accountability; economic development; employment; environmental impact; and community investment;
4. South Africa should leverage the role that it played in the creation of the ICC, and help to rebuild the Court's relationship with Africa; it must draw attention to the contradiction inherent in the ICC's predominantly African docket, and campaign for a more universal jurisdiction;
5. Tshwane must create an effective tripartite SADC-COMESA-EAC free trade area in order to strengthen its impact as an instrument for promoting regional integration and economic development;
6. South Africa should continue to promote the relationship between the UN and Africa's regional organisations, and support peacekeeping missions in Africa coming under a UN umbrella; it should also continue to back the urgent creation of an African Standby Force;
7. In order to build support for an expanded UN Security Council, Tshwane should coordinate with key African countries such as Nigeria and Algeria to review the Ezulwini Consensus of 2005 which calls for two permanent seats with veto power for Africa on the council to add to its existing three non-permanent seats;
8. South Africa must use its diplomatic resources to support African solidarity at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD); South African and other African universities should also seek to offer bachelor and higher degrees on East Asia to boost Africa's diplomatic capacity in its relations with China and Japan;
9. South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), its departments of defence and trade, and its parliament, must create a more sustainable engagement with academics and civil society actors to help improve policymaking; and
10. Tshwane should expand its engagement with international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in order to help the country leverage its voice and influence on human rights issues at the UN, as well as in other multilateral fora.