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Leif Egeland

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Dr. Leif Egeland has been National Chairman of the South African Institute of International Affairs since 1957. He is also Chairman of the Smuts Memorial Trust. Dr. Egeland was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for the Union of South Africa to Stockholm in 1943. Three years later he was transferred to the Netherlands. In 1946 he was a South African delegate to the San Francisco Conference, and also to the first UN Assembly. He was later appointed South African High Commissioner to London.

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It should be noted that, as the Institute is precluded by its Constitution from itself expressing an opinion on any aspect of international affairs, opinions expressed in this paper are solely the responsibility of the author and not of the Institute.

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Jan Smuts House
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Leif Egeland

All around us are the signs of the technological revolution - in communications, transport, industry, weapons and much else. But there have also been vast changes in the international political and economic order, especially since the Second World War. The ending of the colonial system has been one factor which has had a profound impact on the world order, and this has affected Africa in particular. Not only has the face of the continent itself changed, but the addition of so many newly-independent states to the international community has influenced the policies and relationships of older states, including those of the Western world - not always, alas, for good.

Our own region of Southern Africa has, of course, felt the dramatic impact of these world changes, especially since the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule in Africa in 1974. The problems of Southern Africa have now become a world issue, and the region has, in a sense, become a focal point of the so-called North/South division between the underdeveloped (or "have not") states and the industrialised countries, and also the focal point of East/West competition. The outside involvement and interference has complicated the problems, but ultimately the secure future of our region will still be determined by the people who live here, black and white.

More than ever before, we are today faced with the stark realities of our problems, but fortunately we also have many assets in this region of Africa - many opportunities to exploit, which should serve as an incentive for all our peoples to overcome these problems.

I do not wish to touch on the problems, which are very real, as we hear and read enough about them every day. Instead, I should like to concentrate on some of the factors which draw the different parts of this region together, and which will inevitably act as a counter-force to those political factors which tend to push us apart. There is a very real interdependence in Southern Africa, which has been developing over the years, and whose further development can only be to the benefit of all.

Interdependence in Southern Africa can be said to be based primarily on transport links between the different countries in the subcontinent, power generation, trade, labour links, the Southern African Customs Agreement and the intrinsic strength of the South African and Rhodesian economies which serve the constellation of poorer states around them.

The transport sector is an important link between all the states. As far as South Africa is concerned, S.A. Railways are assisting to maintain the rail links with Maputo. Zambia has also recently re-opened links with South Africa - an action which underscores the importance of the transport sector in South Africa and its ability not only to move goods internally, but also to assist other countries to bring their goods to efficient ports.

The Rhodesian rail system is similarly extensive and consists of connections to Zambia (through the Victoria Falls crossing), two lines to Mozambique, a line through Botswana to South Africa (owned and operated by Rhodesian Rail) and a recently constructed line direct to South Africa through Beit Bridge. The rail link through Botswana provides an example of neighbours who have fallen out nevertheless being forced to co-operate through their interdependence on transport.

Malawi's rail system is largely concentrated in the south of the country, and it has two rail connections to the sea ports of Beira and Nacala, which join at Nkaya. But there is also a planned rail link between the new capital, Lilongwe, and the Zambian border.

Of all the countries in the south, Zambia is the most sensitive to political interference with her rail links. At the time of independence, Zambia relied totally on the links through Rhodesia, with use also of the Benguela line through Angola later. The economy is critically dependent upon copper, and this fact, together with its transport problems, was the main reason why the Zambian Government favoured détente with South Africa in 1975 (when the copper price was low). The economy was hard hit by the oil embargo against Rhodesia and the closure of the mutual border, because the other route - the Benguela line - was by then also closed. This latter fact was vital, because it has been estimated that in early 1975 as much as 40% of Zambian exports and imports were moving along the Benguela line. Since the closure of the Rhodesian border and Benguela, Zambia has had problems of survival, let alone growth, and the alternative routes are extremely costly and slow. The Dar-es-Salaam road is grossly over-stretched at this stage and the situation is aggravated by inadequate road haulage capacity. Similarly, the Tanzam line has proved something of a disappointment, and cannot possibly carry all of Zambia's commercial traffic. The Malawi route, likewise, is inefficient, because goods have to be moved by both rail and truck. On the positive side, however, the Zambian rail service has, with the help of a Canadian management team, overcome many of its earlier inefficiencies.

The closure of the Benguela line also highlighted the dependence of Zaire on this facility, and Zaire has more and more been forced to make use of the South African connection.

Mozambique also has important rail links with South Africa. Historically, the Maputo line has played a major role in moving goods from South Africa, and still does, although the Republic has latterly shown signs of wishing to diminish its degree of dependence on this facility. For instance, the expansion of the Richards Bay facility in order also to handle "clean cargo", in addition to its original purpose, and the abandonment of schemes to develop a deep water port at Ponto Debelá, near Maputo, are clear indications of this. Closer home, on the eastern side, S.A.R. operates more than three thousand miles of line in Namibia, and the two ports, Walvis Bay and Luderitz, are connected by rail links to all the major centres. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are also tied to South Africa by road and rail links which are gradually being extended. For instance, Swaziland can now transport much of her produce virtually directly to Richards Bay on a recently completed line.

But transport is not the only thing which the countries of Southern Africa have in common. There is a constant movement of labour from one part of the region to the other. In South Africa, for instance, the role of foreign workers in the gold mines has become a vital factor in the intra-regional trade pattern. The numbers of foreign workers, though declining in absolute terms, are nevertheless still substantial. More than 300 000 miners hail from countries as diverse as Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Transkei and Bophuthatswana, as well as Rhodesia. Mozambique still enjoys a healthy income from the labour of her citizens on gold mines in South Africa.

While the importance of South African and Rhodesian trade with the rest of black Africa has often been overstated, trade links within the region are still expanding. South Africa has been a catalyst in this regard, and there is no doubt that the potential for enormous growth is there, if conditions of peace prevail. The South African Government has for political reasons not, since 1963, published a breakdown of African trade on a country by country basis, but an analysis of the overall trading pattern nevertheless shows that the bulk of

South African trade is with countries in the southern region.

The trade connection in the constellation of countries which make up the Southern African Customs Union Agreement is particularly important. Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Namibia all benefit from association with South Africa in this agreement which has created a free trade area benefiting from the customs and excise duties imposed by South Africa. The advantages are such that it is unlikely that even adverse political developments within the group will lead to the dismantling of the agreement - if anything, the agreement has already proved to be a moderating factor in relations between these states.

Vast power projects, such as Kariba and Cabora Bassa, which have been undertaken in Southern Africa, will increasingly have the effect in future of cementing even further the economies of states in this region. Certain parastatal bodies, e.g. Soekor (prospecting) and the Electricity Supply Commission, have been involved in ambitious ventures outside South Africa's borders - Escom was one of the leading forces behind the late Dr. van Eck's brainchild, Cabora Bassa, and there are still plans for an eventual power grid to include thermal stations in Swaziland, the Oxbow scheme in Lesotho and the Kunene scheme in Namibia. This Kunene hydro-electric and irrigation scheme is vital to Namibia's development plans. By March 1976, to give you some size of the overall project, South Africa had already spent more than R100 million on the works at Gové, Calueque and Ruacana, and another R65 million on transmission lines and the Van Eck thermal station at Windhoek. The total outlay, once the project is completed, is expected to cost some R225 million, and South Africans are confident that in the end, agreement will be reached with the MPLA in Angola, despite political differences, on the mutually profitable joint use of the project. Likewise, the giant Cabora Bassa scheme in Mozambique can only be viable if the Frelimo regime sells the power it generates to South Africa.

There are other examples of interdependence and co-operation. One thinks briefly of assistance given by South Africa in particular to neighbouring countries in the medical and veterinary fields and different aid projects which have benefited countries such as Malawi to the tune of millions. Recently South Africa's Minister of Health pleaded for the establishment of a regional council for health co-operation in Southern Africa, and only a few days ago the Prime Minister, Mr. P.W. Botha, suggested a meeting of Southern African countries to confer on common problems.

The relatively free movement of capital in the south is also a factor in the interdependence of the different nations. As far back as 1971, for instance, the Afrikaans industrialist, Dr. Anton Rupert, mooted the idea that later became a reality, for a bank for the development of Equatorial and Southern Africa (EDESA), designed to foster trade and investment between black Africa and South Africa.

Many multinational companies, some of them South African, have also played an enormous role in the development of mining interests in Southern Africa, and the free flow of technical expertise from one centre of operations to another has also had the effect of emphasising the region's common interests.

It can thus be seen that the historic trade and transport links between the countries in the subcontinent have not been severed simply because of the political problems of the region. It is also true to say that, because of this degree of interdependence, political upsets and factors in only one of the countries in Southern Africa must affect, and have affected, as history has

shown, the entire fragile base of their mutual and respective economies.

There is some hope that the interdependence of the region's various economies on one another will prove to be a more durable influence in the long run on the overall direction of Southern Africa than the ephemeral political attitudes of today. There are indications that this interdependence has already exercised a restraining influence on political actions which certain of the newly independent countries might have been expected to take. Mozambique, for instance, under Frelimo, cannot be counted as a friend of South Africa - and yet the traditional links between the two countries have probably made it impossible for the Frelimo Government to take the sort of steps in support of South African "liberation" groups that one might have expected it would have taken under different circumstances. There is considerable evidence, dating back at least to the Victoria Falls Bridge Conference, that Zambia needs a pacific settlement in Rhodesia in its own interests. Without transport and trade links its own survival is at stake. Even though Angola has no large historical trade links within the region, the Kunene scheme could well become the catalyst for a better understanding between the MPLA and South African Governments - if it has not already done so.

There can be no doubt that the traditional interdependence of the countries of Southern Africa on one another has, in spite of their political differences, led to some reciprocal understanding of the complexity of the problems which each of them has to face. While some will argue that the creation of the economic and transport bonds which made this interdependence possible in the first place, were an expression of old style imperialism and consequently led to the problems of today, I personally believe that we share a common economic destiny that has nothing to do with imperialism. There is nothing sinister in this. The destiny we share is not some sort of neo-colonialism. Rather it is based on a common economic environment inhabited by us all and upon which we all depend for our existence.

Whilst the growing factors of interdependence cannot be relied upon to shape or materially influence political or racial attitudes, they can at least induce a sense of heightened realism, and make for that reciprocal understanding to which I have referred. The infrastructure is largely in place - all we need is peace to make an explosion of economic growth in the entire sub-continent of Africa possible. The fundamental interests of all these states who are so dependent upon one another cry out for the attainment of political settlements that will stabilise the region.