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PEACEMAKING
AND DEMOCRACY
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA: AN
AMERICAN VIEW

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This paper is based on the text of the talk he delivered at the Witwatersrand Branch of the Institute on 23 October 1991.

It should be noted that any opinions expressed in this article are the responsibility of the author and not of the Institute.

**PEACEMAKING AND DEMOCRACY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA:
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1. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

It is often said that South Africa is a long way from anywhere else. In reviving that observation I in no way mean to slight South Africa or its neighbours. Instead, I seek to dismiss this cliché and stress that South Africa's geographic position no longer provides any measure of insulation from the winds of change sweeping the rest of this continent and the world.

The post-World War II international order has obviously changed dramatically. After 43 years the Cold War is no more, brought to a sudden end by the undeniable failure of communism to satisfy human needs and the internal collapse of the Soviet system. Confronted with the bankruptcy of Marxist thought, the majority of Moscow's former clients and satellites are experiencing dizzying intellectual and economic turmoil as they begin pursuing freedom and democracy. As a result, the East-West rivalry - which has dominated international relations for the past half century - has lost its driving tension. And in Africa, 29 of 51 sub-Saharan states have begun to embrace multiparty democracy.

These changes have occurred with startling speed. Situations in the world which we thought frozen indefinitely - such as the divided Germany, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and, yes, South Africa - suddenly came unstuck in the short space of a few months. As in the rest of the world, much of the change in southern Africa has been recent. So rapid and unexpected has been this fundamental international upheaval, in fact, that the West currently faces difficult questions: what is the new role for NATO? What are the political and economic implications for the EC, at whose door an increasingly large crowd is clamoring for entry? What is the future of newer organisations such as SADCC, or the CSCE, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe? Can such organisations react to the changes taking place and reduce the risks of conflict inherent in the collapse of the old order?

The immediate response of Western governments to the disintegration of the Soviet empire has been to look to existing alliances and multilateral structures as a way of managing risks and opportunities which we know lie ahead but don't yet fully comprehend. Paradoxically perhaps, as empires collapse and some states fall apart from within under vigorous nationalistic or ethnic pressures, other governments try even harder to forge international partnerships and linkages. In this light, we have recently witnessed:

- * the unification of Germany;

- * plans for an enlarged European Community in 1992;
- * the US, Mexico and Canada working towards the creation of an enlarged free trade zone;
- * the "five tigers" of the Pacific rim continuing to strengthen ties in what is a de facto trade and investment block.

In many ways, one premise underlying all these groupings is the apparent conviction that security in the new post-Communist, post Cold War world order might rest more on economic cooperation than military alliance.

II. SOUTHERN AFRICA: GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM

"Where", you might ask, "does South Africa - for that matter Southern Africa - fit in this new international order?" There are some who argue that without a sense of an international order into which Southern Africa can be slotted, Western public opinion will feel little future responsibility for the economic and human disasters they see in the area. Others suggest that any resulting international inattention to southern Africa's problems will be a decided blessing; according to these thinkers, Africans are better placed to understand their own problems than outsiders who are invariably tempted to impose their visions of reality on other states.

I frankly don't subscribe to these lines of thinking. In my own view, there are strong grounds for hope and optimism in southern Africa. Moreover, the United States is not losing interest in the area and there is much evidence to suggest Southern Africa can avoid being "marginalised", to use the new buzzword. At no time previously has the area had such a fortuitous set of circumstances: a favourable and promising global backdrop; a nascent regional framework; and a healthy confluence of forces and elements domestically in South Africa, the flagship of southern Africa. This remarkable combination of world, regional and local developments offers South and southern Africa at long last the promise of peace and democracy.

In turning our attention to the possibilities for stronger, more effective regional cooperation in southern Africa, I must admit at the outset that African efforts at regional cooperation to date have not been encouraging:

- * The 16-member ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)

grouping has never lived up to its economic mandate or promise, although ironically it has begun to assume a peacemaking role in Liberia;

- * UDEAC (Central African Customs and Economic Union) has remained essentially a customs union and achieved little meaningful economic integration;
- * and the East African Common Market was a stillbirth, with cooperation collapsing virtually at its inception.
- * Much the same disappointment is felt regarding most of the other regional and sub-regional organisations strewn across sub-Saharan Africa.

III. DYNAMIC FACTORS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: PEACE MAKING

Having mentioned these regional failures, I wish to argue that southern Africa at present offers Africa its greatest prospect for a functioning, even vibrant, region in the short to medium term. I say that regional cooperation has an opportunity to succeed in southern Africa – although it has largely failed elsewhere in Africa – because of a twin dynamic that is at work here: peacemaking and democratisation. These two developments are far more advanced in the ten-state region south of Zaire and Tanzania than they are anywhere else on the African continent.

Southern Africa's record in peacemaking over the past two decades is much better than generally acknowledged, and it is one in which outside powers ultimately abandoned post-colonial Cold War tactics to play a constructive role. Many governments, including my own, have been working quietly but assiduously in this area to help knit together a regional framework within which the peace and democratisation process could begin to work:

- * British mediation, for instance, was essential to ending the Rhodesian civil war and bringing Zimbabwe to independence. The Commonwealth policed the ceasefire and helped guarantee the transition process, although obviously it was the Zimbabweans themselves who finally negotiated an end to the bloody internal strife which followed.
- * In Namibia, international mediation, including the work of Chester Crocker in particular, was a catalyst in helping secure the South African withdrawal from the territory and the departure of Cuban expeditionary forces from

Angola. In a marvelous example of international cooperation, the United Nations supervised the Namibian transition and saw the country to independence.

- * In Angola, the Portuguese – with strong US and Soviet assistance – brokered a peace settlement between the government and UNITA. The ceasefire appears to be holding, troops of both sides are moving into assembly points, international monitors are taking up their positions and an election calendar is being drawn up. Jonas Savimbi is back in Luanda, and senior MPLA officials have toured Jamba. In a significant statement, UNITA president Jonas Savimbi, when in Washington this month, acknowledged that the peace process in Angola is irreversible. Savimbi's pledge was that whatever happens henceforth in Angola, his struggle will be confined to the political arena.
- * Mozambique admittedly remains a problem and the war continues there. But even in Mozambique, there may be light at the end of the tunnel. Negotiations are taking place under Vatican and Italian mediation, with strong support from the US and others. The far-reaching reforms initiated by the government of Mozambique have opened the way for RENAMO to press its claims peacefully rather than on the battlefield. Everyone, I believe, welcomes the agreement signed in Rome by the government of Mozambique and RENAMO on October 18, an agreement which lays out important mutual political guarantees and which is a significant step forward in the negotiations underway. It remains now for RENAMO to formulate more clearly its demands, articulate the future it sees for Mozambique and bring these ideas to the negotiating table. There it will have the opportunity of presenting its case. All of us, South Africa included, have a role to play in convincing RENAMO that the war in Mozambique is a struggle that no one can win militarily but that, at the negotiating table, everyone emerges a winner, most of all the Mozambican people.
- * South Africa itself is at the epicentre of this peacemaking dynamic. For decades, the battlefield in Pretoria's fight to uphold white minority rule knew no national boundaries. Thanks to courageous decisions by many South Africans, that long war is now over, with the struggle about to move to the negotiating table.

Thus, for the first time in memory, peace throughout this entire region is within reach. In fact, the ingredients are present for a lasting peace. Armed resistance movements have discovered that without outside support and

encouragement they cannot succeed, and in the emerging world order such support and encouragement have become anachronistic. The real success that liberation movements and governments have achieved has been a result of diplomacy, not military exploits; the ANC, for example, has more missions overseas than the South African government has embassies; and South Africa's growing readmission to the world community is based on courageous and creative diplomacy by all concerned.

Not only liberation movements, but governments in the region have also been forced to confront the reality of the emerging new international order, whose contours are only just becoming visible. Against popular but relatively ineffectual insurgencies, governments can defend the status quo – but only at the cost of undermining the economic and moral basis of their legitimacy. In the long run, this is inevitably a losing proposition – the classic "guns and butter" dilemma – as governments in Luanda, Pretoria and elsewhere have been forced to acknowledge. The interests of incumbent governments and resistance movements thus converge in the exercise of the only feasible option open to both of them: negotiation, compromise and powersharing.

IV. DYNAMIC FACTORS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA II: DEMOCRATISATION

If the peacemaking dynamic has a purpose beyond arranging temporary ceasefires and facilitating negotiations, it must surely be in the development of democracy. Just as peace must precede democracy, so too must democracy follow peace or that peace will not last. Democratisation appears now to be gaining momentum throughout southern Africa:

- * Botswana, for example, continues to be one of the best examples of multi-party democracy in Africa;
- * Namibia is following suit.
- * Multi-party elections are set for next week in Zambia;
- * and there are signs that Zimbabwe is moving away from strict ideological adherence to the one-party state;
- * and ironically it may very well be South Africa which becomes the leading force for democracy in southern Africa, if not the continent as a whole.

Democratisation is also the common language of all former combatants turned negotiators – from the ANC and the South African government; to UNITA and the Angolan government; to SWAPO; and ultimately RENAMO also will come to this conclusion.

Although the actual form of democracy may differ from country to country, there is growing acceptance that there can be no lasting domestic peace and no sustained economic development in a country where government is not based on the suffrage and consent of the governed. As the world has learned, the best guarantee against the extremes of tyranny and anarchy is a multi-party democracy – not a single-party democracy, no matter how well intentioned – but a multi-party democracy based on enlightened market principles. Promoting precisely this kind of democracy is the cornerstone of US policy in Africa.

We realise, of course, that each nation has its own conditions, its own needs and its own range of viable options. The US recognizes that the establishment of a new constitutional order here in this country is a South African task. The solution to this country's problems must come from South Africa. Even if it had one, the international community could not impose a solution on South Africa; South Africans will find that blueprint themselves.

In South Africa, the debate on what forms of democracy are best suited to this country is well advanced. But similar discussions are taking place throughout southern Africa. Much of the future economic success and political stability of the region will depend on the outcome of this debate and on negotiations leading to the establishment of a new democratic order in the area.

Because so much is riding on the outcome of this debate, the ability of US and other Western governments to provide development assistance is likely to depend increasingly on the efforts of the recipients to achieve true democracy. As US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen recently stated: "We are making clear the link between political and economic liberalisation and outside assistance. We will help countries pursue a democratic course (and those already with democratic systems). In an era of escalating demands for scarce resources, we cannot waste non-humanitarian assistance on governments which themselves refuse the path to democracy, and we will not do so." From an American perspective, that's the logic of the new international order.

V. REGIONAL COOPERATION: SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

Earlier in my remarks I indicated that to date regional organisations in Africa have by-and-large not been successful; I also stressed that southern Africa is a different case; and that peacemaking and democratisation are two powerful forces around which a new regional identity and new forms of regional cooperation could be based in southern Africa. Without wishing to sound prescriptive, I'd like to offer, in conclusion, three modest suggestions for enhancing regional cooperation in southern Africa which can be a model for the rest of Africa.

Before offering them, let me state the obvious: the success of these or any other ideas on regional or domestic matters would require full consultation and consensus among all the competing political forces within South Africa.

HUMAN RIGHTS

South Africa's moves to jettison apartheid have produced in their wake a situation in which – for the first time since the floodtide of African independence in the 1960s – it is possible to conduct an honest dialogue on human rights violations elsewhere in Africa. In other words, the overriding and justifiable priority attached to the destruction of apartheid in South Africa made it previously difficult, if not impossible, to shine the spotlight on human rights abuses anywhere else in Africa.

Now, however, we have that opportunity. The protection of human rights and the safeguarding of democracy is, or should be, a common glaring concern in the southern Africa region. No one nation can fully insulate itself from the effects of civil conflict or human rights abuses in neighbouring states. Refugee flows are only the most obvious and alarming illustration of this fact. In a fourteen year war for independence (followed by a sixteen year civil war), for example, it is estimated that more than three hundred thousand Angolans were killed, eighty thousand maimed, tens of thousands orphaned, and one million of Angola's nine million inhabitants forced from their homes. At the moment even right here in South Africa, we are seeing more than 3,600 refugees a month being repatriated to Mozambique; no one knows how many thousands are actually streaming in. At some point, governments in the region should consider putting in place mechanisms for regular consultations on human rights issues, possibly in the same fashion as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which originally provided for detailed treatment of human rights issues on a Europe-wide basis. In

other words, a CSCSA, a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Southern Africa.

Initially, one would expect opposition to this idea. But the eventual emergence of a CSCSA or a Southern Africa Human Rights Commission, operating according to an agreed code of conduct and empowered to examine alleged human rights problems in member states, could prove to be a powerful moral force. This idea was mooted by US Senator Dennis DeConcini - Co-Chairman of the CSCE - during his discussions on a recent visit here. If in the southern Africa region individual states commit themselves to the protection of fundamental liberties, can they not also be expected to open themselves to the fair scrutiny of their neighbours? Although admittedly ambitious, a Southern Africa Human Rights Commission or CSCSA would send a strong signal to the rest of the world about the region's commitment to democratic values. It is precisely because there are so few precedents in Africa that the signal would be received with great interest internationally.

SECURITY COOPERATION

Maintaining regional peace in the post-apartheid era will to a large extent be a task left to southern Africans themselves. Here one could examine as a possible model the Joint Commission on Namibia, moribund for having largely accomplished its mandate and now lacking a clearly defined new mission - and about to hold its final session in Havana next month. The idea of establishing such a mechanism would be:

- * to ensure regular consultations among southern African states on security issues and for the exchange of security information;
- * to have it serve as a confidence building measure and early warning system for any regional security problems;
- * to have it function as a forum for discussion of regional security issues;
- * to help clear up doubts and suspicions;
- * and to deal with potentially troublesome military-related issues.

More concretely, a permanent Southern Africa Security Commission would also be in a position:

- * to convene and investigate cross-border complaints on short notice;
- * to address any concerns about troop levels, arms transfers and arms purchases;
- * to raise potential disputes to the political level well before they give rise to serious misunderstandings;
- * to provide a regional arms control forum.

The overall idea is to create a regional dialogue with a view to reducing tensions, overcoming historical suspicions and animosities, promoting arms reduction and resolving any disputes that might arise.

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Finally, there is the overarching question of regional economic cooperation. Too much has perhaps been said already about the benefits which will accrue to the entire region from the demise of apartheid. The image of the new South Africa as a locomotive for economic development in the region and beyond has become overworked. Many serious observers are now concerned lest an apartheid-free South Africa be inward-looking, protectionist and autarkic - too preoccupied with redressing the historical inequities of apartheid to concern itself with its immediate neighbourhood. Under this scenario, the new South Africa will be an aid recipient, with few resources to spare on its neighbours.

Moreover, it is argued, even if South Africa were to try to play an active role in an organization such as SADCC, that institution would collapse because of South Africa's economic might. It has become popular to point out that all of sub-Saharan Africa with its 450 million people produces only a GDP equivalent to that of Belgium with its 10 million inhabitants. What is often left unsaid is that of that amount, South Africa produces one half. With South Africa's economy outperforming that of the ten SADCC states combined in virtually every sector, Pretoria might so dominate the organisation that cooperation could become meaningless, or so the argument goes.

Despite these understandable fears, I believe that there is no alternative to seeking closer regional economic cooperation as a matter of active policy. Unlike much of the rest of Africa, southern Africa is rich in resources, infrastructure, know-how and development potential. What is urgently needed is for SADCC to

review its ten-year old mandate to reduce the dependency of southern African states on South Africa and to devise a new mandate designed to increase southern African interdependence.

CONCLUSION

Global trends argue for some serious re-thinking about how a South Africa without apartheid and its neighbours achieve a greater degree of integration. In a world where Africa as a whole runs the increasing risk of marginalisation, the states of southern Africa have little option but to build together an integrated region or otherwise risk oblivion and irrelevance.

Regional integration in southern Africa, in summary, might usefully take three basic forms: security cooperation, economic integration and human rights coordination. Fortunately, in two of these three areas, regional structures already exist which require only adjustment and evolvement to the new realities in southern Africa – that is, the Joint Commission on Namibia and SADCC. For the third, a potential model already exists in Europe, the CSCE. The challenge is thus to adapt two outdated structures and one foreign prototype into regional bodies suited to the peacemaking and democratisation needs of southern Africa. Like South Africa, the emergent southern African sub-area offers Africa its best hope yet for peace and democracy.