

Policy Insights

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Positioning South Africa in 21st Century Global Nuclear Security Debates

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African perspectives
Global insights

Executive summary

South Africa's third term on the UN Security Council (UNSC), which began in January 2019, takes place within a more constrained domestic milieu than its previous terms. Concerns about local economic growth prospects, the state's dwindling capacity to meet its developmental targets and the country's waning soft power tend to dominate public discourse in the country, underscoring a need to re-prioritise traditional foreign policy issues. Yet, despite these constraints, South Africa has pursued a third term at the UNSC – signalling the government's continuing intention to play an active role in global peace and security issues. This policy insight argues that South Africa's domestic economic constraints provide it with an opportunity to be more innovative in how it engages diplomatically in global nuclear security debates. A greater reliance on alliances and partnerships is an important way to maintain its relevance in global affairs.

Introduction

Several developments have increased the probability of a serious nuclear threat to global peace and security in recent years. Rising tension between the two Koreas and the US was identified in 2017 as one of the key global drivers of a potential nuclear war. In that year, the Korean Peninsula crisis reached 'Tier One' status in the Council on Foreign Relations Preventive Priorities Survey for the first time – reflecting the global sense of urgency surrounding developments on the Korean Peninsula.¹

Similarly, increasingly strained relations between the US and Iran – and the US decision in May 2018 to withdraw from the UN-sanctioned Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – squarely placed the issue of nuclear security on the international agenda. Furthermore, in February 2019 the US announced its intention to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia. Despite efforts to inject a new dynamic in non-proliferation negotiations, global insecurity is compounded by the refusal of some nuclear weapons states and others to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which opened for signature in 2017 and aspires to a world free of nuclear weapons.

The UNSC has responded to heightening tensions by imposing sanctions on Iran and North Korea as a deterrent. Sanctions, however, are a reactive band-aid to the historical tensions in these two instances, and a deeper engagement is necessary in overcoming the challenges that they present. Peace in Iran and the Korean Peninsula is of global importance. In 2018, 21% of the world's crude oil was traded via the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf – 80%

¹ Paul B Stares, *Preventive Priorities Survey: 2017* (Centre for Preventative Action, Council on Foreign Relations, December 8, 2016), <https://www.cfr.org/report/preventive-priorities-survey-2017>.

of this destined for markets in Asia.² Similarly, events in the Korean Peninsula directly threaten Chinese, Japanese, Russian and South Korean interests. Given the centrality of Asian markets in international trade, insecurity and war could prove to have catastrophic implications for global markets.

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Apart from being vulnerable to the potential global fall-out of a nuclear war, neither North Korea nor Iran is of immediate geo-strategic importance for South Africa (although the country will undoubtedly be affected by broader instability in their respective regions). Yet, these countries offer a unique opportunity for South Africa, during its third term on the UNSC, to extend its reach and profile in global nuclear diplomacy forums – largely because of its decision to voluntarily denuclearise its weapons in the mid-1990s.³

This policy insight explores the ways in which South Africa might elevate the work it is doing on nuclear disarmament with regard to the Korean Peninsula and Iran. It first assesses South Africa's foreign policy ambitions and the ways in which changing circumstances are forcing the country to become smarter about how it pursues its diplomacy. This analysis attempts to situate South Africa's position on nuclear non-proliferation within the context of its foreign policy of 'ubuntu', which is value driven and focussed on human security. It then briefly unpacks the nuclear security threats in the Korean Peninsula and Iran by expanding on the nature of the crises, before making some observations about how South Africa might play a more active role in 2020, when it also chairs the AU.

The changing landscape of South Africa's foreign policy

South Africa has clearly articulated a foreign policy of ubuntu that stresses the promotion of human dignity, equality, democracy and peace as a precursor to prosperity.⁴ This foreign policy position has been articulated in a number of government policy documents. Policy analysts often use the 2011 White Paper on Foreign Policy to gain a deeper understanding

2 US Energy Information Administration, "The Strait of Hormuz is the World's Most Important Oil Transit Checkpoint", June 20, 2019, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=39932>.

3 Jo-Ansie van Wyk, "South Africa's Nuclear Diplomacy Since the Termination of its Nuclear Weapons Programme", *South African Journal of Military Studies* 42, no. 1 (2014): 80-101.

4 Government of South Africa, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 2011).

of the country's position on global issues, its motivation and prioritisation of foreign policy.⁵ The National Development Plan (NDP), adopted by Parliament and Cabinet in 2012, is another policy source on foreign policy issues.⁶ The NDP emphasises the primacy of economic diplomacy in South Africa's foreign policy, which was reiterated by the Ramaphosa administration when Cyril Ramaphosa was elected to power in May 2019.

Despite the growing importance of economic diplomacy in its foreign policy, South Africa still aims to play a leading role in global and continental security affairs. As Minister Naledi Pandor announced in the 2019 Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) Budget Vote Speech, South Africa's foreign policy remains premised on the following values:⁷

Pan-Africanism; which in its simplest form means the political and economic liberation of Africa; Progressive Internationalism and Human Solidarity with countries of the South, A Human Rights centred foreign policy and respect for international law; Multi-Lateralism [*sic*] and an International Rules Based Order to resolve conflict peacefully; and Economic Diplomacy.

In the lead-up to the 25th anniversary of South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, a foreign policy review was conducted by a panel appointed by the then minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Lindiwe Sisulu. In April 2019 the Review Panel released its report, which, while refraining from making public recommendations, made 'observations' that offer insights into South Africa's future foreign policy trajectory. In this report the authors focused on the need for global equality among states, and highlighted the importance of South Africa's using its position in international forums to promote and elevate the interests of Africa in pursuit of this equality, greater inclusiveness and representation.⁸

In January 2019 South Africa assumed a non-permanent seat in the UNSC for a third term. Historically, South Africa's agenda at the UNSC has been to advocate for its reformation reflecting African interests and the interests of the global South. Its position is encapsulated in the Ezulwini Consensus, which calls for reform of the UNSC permanent membership to include African representation, with veto power. While South Africa continues to push this agenda, there is arguably a shift in its attention towards issues of UN-AU collaboration. The country championed the theme of 'Women, Peace and Security' during its October 2019 presidency of the UNSC.

5 The white paper was converted into a draft bill that is pending approval in Parliament. However, the Foreign Services Bill is technical in orientation and lacks the value-laden exposition of the white paper. The new bill may be viewed at Department of International Relations and Cooperation, "Foreign Service Bill", http://www.dirco.gov.za/department/foreign_service_bill_2018.pdf.

6 At the time of writing the NDP was being reviewed by government - the results of which were expected to be shared with the president in October 2019.

7 DIRCO, "Budget Vote Speech of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation delivered by Deputy Minister Alvin Botes, Cape Town, 11 July 2019", <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2019/bote0711.htm>.

8 Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation, *Foreign Policy Review: A Strategic Reflection and Critical Appraisal of the Orientation and Implementation of South Africa's Foreign Policy*, 17 April 2019, https://cisp.cachefly.net/assets/articles/attachments/78187_foreign_policy_review_report_media_pack_17-04-19.pdf.

South Africa's agenda at the UNSC has been to advocate for its reformation

South Africa also assumed the chair of the AU in 2020 and will chair the African Peer Review Mechanism until 2022, to better coordinate initiatives between the AU and UN.⁹ This, and the country's commitment to the AU theme for 2020, 'Silencing the guns: Creating conducive decisions for Africa's development', expresses its determination to remain engaged in peace and security issues at the global and continental level.

However, an under-performing domestic economy has taken its toll on South Africa's foreign policy initiatives over the past few years, resulting in budget cuts at key government departments, including DIRCO.¹⁰ This has seen the closing down of non-essential missions, and a greater urgency for the government to adopt more innovative and cost-effective ways of undertaking its diplomacy.

A consistently declining defence budget has also resulted in weakened capacity to carry out humanitarian and peacekeeping obligations on the continent, eliciting a warning from the defence minister that South Africa needs to re-think the role of its armed forces

A consistently declining defence budget has also resulted in weakened capacity to carry out humanitarian and peacekeeping obligations on the continent, eliciting a warning from the defence minister that South Africa needs to re-think the role of its armed forces.¹¹ Reduced defence spending is already impacting the ability of the South African National Defence Force to respond to crises. This is evidenced by its diminishing humanitarian responses in the cyclone-prone coastal areas in Mozambique; and the capacity constraints experienced by South African peacekeepers stationed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).¹²

9 Statement by public official during closed seminar, Pretoria, 23 July 2019.

10 Rudolf du Plessis and Aditi Lalbahadur, "The Africa We Want': Unpacking the Primacy of Africa in South Africa's Foreign Policy", Opinion and Analysis (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, May 4, 2016), <https://saiia.org.za/research/the-africa-we-want-unpacking-the-primacy-of-africa-in-south-africas-foreign-policy/>.

11 Mayibongwe Maqhina, "Defence Force Becoming 'Unsustainable Because of Budget Cuts'", *Independent Online*, July 17, 2019, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/defence-force-becoming-unsustainable-due-to-budget-cuts-29360872>.

12 Dean Wingrin, "SANDF Retains over R1 Billion in UN Refunds for DRC Deployments", *Defence Web*, August 2, 2019, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/sandf-retains-over-r1-billion-in-un-refunds-for-drc-deployments/>.

In recent times, South Africa has also rarely assumed leadership positions in conflict mediation. In the most recent electoral crisis in the DRC it preferred to channel its interventions through other regional mechanisms on the Great Lakes, rather than bilaterally.¹³

Against this backdrop of cost-cutting, the UN is also undergoing significant shifts introduced by current Secretary-General António Guterres, as well as the announcement by the US that it will curtail its funding for UN peace operations. In December 2019 the UN took the decision to extend the mandate of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC for a year as part of a strategy that will see the mission being drawn down by December 2022.¹⁴ As a result, South Africa's only peacekeeping presence on the continent – in the DRC – is likely to come to an end.¹⁵

Global nuclear security threats: Iran and the Korean Peninsula

In 2019 three global security threats were classified as nuclear security issues: continuing tensions in the Korean Peninsula; heightening unease in Iran following the US decision to withdraw from the JCPOA; and conflict in Kashmir that has re-ignited an age-old territorial dispute between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan. Although this conflict does not pose a direct threat to global security, there is a possibility that escalated tensions may increase the nuclear threat if the conflict is not swiftly resolved.

The Iran nuclear issue has been escalating since the US announced its withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018. The deal, brokered by the Obama administration, was meant to curb Iran's nuclear capabilities, which are considered to threaten peace in the Middle East. A nuclear-capable Iran poses a threat not only to Israel, a key ally of the US, but also to other US allies in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. An emboldened Iran could further destabilise Syria and increase its sponsorship of Hezbollah, Hamas and rebel insurgents in Yemen. A neutered Iran is therefore of incremental importance to peace in the Middle East.

After the US' withdrawal from the JCPOA, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced in July 2019 that Iran had exceeded the agreed-upon limit on its stockpile of enriched uranium, putting concerns about an Iranian nuclear weapon programme back in the headlines. Days later, Iran announced it had enriched uranium to about 4.5% purity, again breaching prior agreed-upon levels.¹⁶

13 Elizabeth Sidiropoulos and Aditi Lalbahadur, "Troubling Times Ahead: Election Scenarios for the DRC" (Occasional Paper 287, SAIIA, Johannesburg, 2018), 12, <https://saiia.org.za/research/troubling-times-ahead-election-scenarios-for-the-drc/>.

14 UN, "Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2502 (2019), Extends Mandate of Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo, SC14059", December 19, 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc14059.doc.htm>.

15 France 24, "UN Considering Drawdown of DRC Mission", March 7, 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190307-un-considering-drawdown-dr-congo-mission>.

16 ADL, "The Iranian Nuclear Threat: Why It Matters", <https://www.adl.org/resources/fact-sheets/the-iranian-nuclear-threat-why-it-matters>

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For its part, South Africa expressed concerns about the destabilising effect of the US decision to withdraw from the JCPOA. In her budget vote speech in 2018, Sisulu remarked:¹⁷

[W]e were shocked by the announcement of the US administration on 9 May to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the P5+1 ... The action by the US President to pull out of the Iranian Nuclear Deal that was sanctioned by the United Nations amounts to taking the world back by many decades onto the brink of conflict and tensions. The era of uncertainty and unpredictability which bodes ill for the sanctity of multilateral agreements has reared its ugly head. True strength is the protection of the vulnerable and fellowship with others in the resolution of world conflicts. For the fact that this deal was supervised and sanctioned by the United Nations should have been adequate binding on all signatories. We wish to urge the US to reconsider its position and seek to implement the Iranian Nuclear Deal.

This exposition by South Africa on developments regarding Iran also included concerns over the erosion of multilateralism and the rise of unilateralism. In this regard, South Africa views the rise of unilateralism as a significant threat to international order and the antithesis of its foreign policy values. The Foreign Policy Review Panel appointed by Sisulu reiterated the country's concerns over instability in the Middle East, advising that 'South Africa must always be ready to assist all efforts aimed at finding lasting solutions to the conflict challenges faced by the people of the Middle East'.¹⁸

The situation in Iran worsened in January 2020, when on 3 January a revered Iranian general, Qasem Soleimani, was assassinated by US forces executing a directive issued by President Donald Trump. The decision to eliminate such a high-ranking Iranian official was widely seen as extreme, raising fears that Iran's response would propel the two countries into a war.¹⁹ However, Iran's response to the killing has indicated that, although bruised and wounded, the country did not intend on pursuing further aggression with the US.

17 DIRCO, "Media Statement by LN Sisulu, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation on the Occasion of the Budget Vote of the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation, 15 May 2018, Parliament", <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2018/sisu0515.htm>.

18 Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation, *Foreign Policy Review*, 8.

19 Helene Cooper et al., "As Tensions With Iran Escalated, Trump Opted for Most Extreme Measure", *The New York Times*, January 4, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/04/us/politics/trump-suleimani.html>.

The government expects to collect approximately \$160 million from the carbon tax and roughly \$8.3 billion in revenue from the broader tax reform

Developments in Iran are even more worrying considering that the issue of disarmament under Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the most contested issue – and that it was the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East that led to disagreement at the Review Committee of the NPT in 2015 and resulted in no consensus. There are fears that the Review Committee meeting in 2020 will result in the same outcome – signalling a significant blow to the NPT.

Compared with the language South Africa used to express its position on Iran, the country appears to be more guarded on the issue of the Korean Peninsula. In 2017, when North Korea began to test its long-range missile capabilities, flying over Japanese air space, Pretoria condemned the actions as a threat to peace, stability and security.²⁰ It urged North Korea to turn to diplomacy to resolve tensions, concluding that there could be no military solution to the situation. ‘Only through diplomacy and negotiations can lasting solutions be found to the challenges affecting the Korean Peninsula.’²¹

Figure 1 gives an account of current nuclear weapons states and their arsenals. It may appear that the threat posed by North Korea is disproportional to the arsenal at its disposal. However, this is misleading, considering that the other interested parties in this dispute – the US, China and Russia – are also significant nuclear-weapons states.

Although tensions in the Korean Peninsula are most acutely felt between North and South Korea, the involvement of the US since the Korean War in the 1950s means that it is an important actor. China and Russia are long-time allies of North Korea.

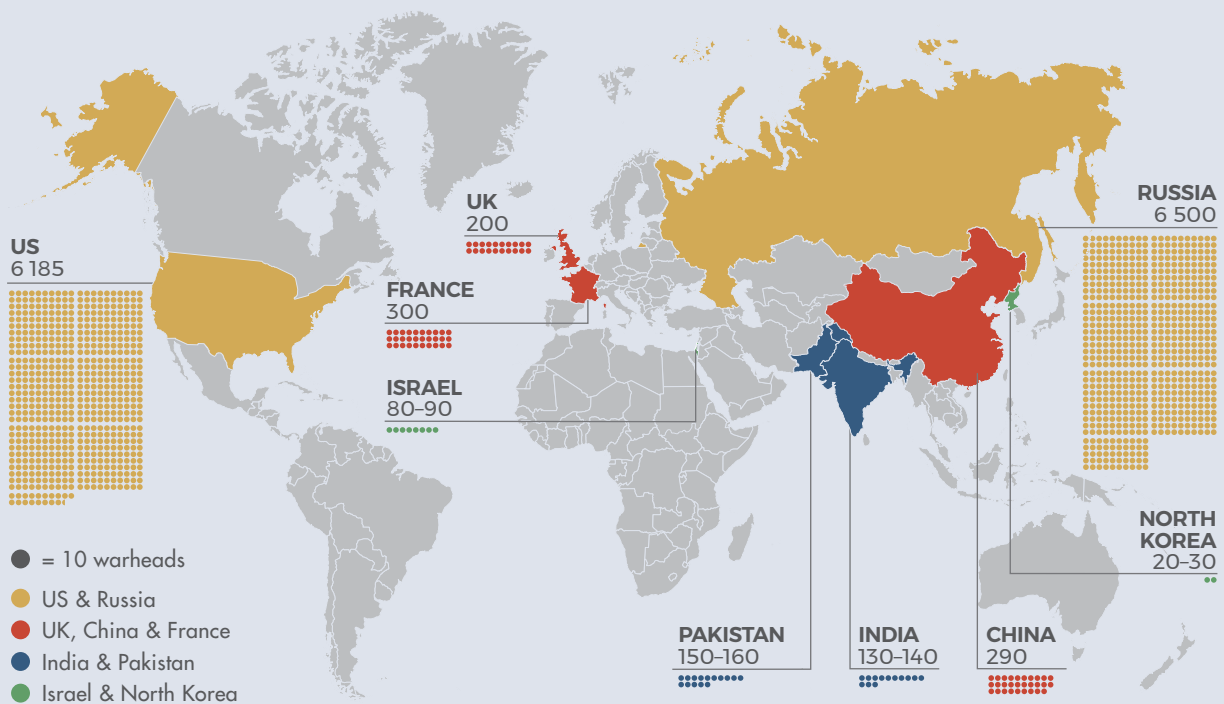
Trump has overturned long-standing US foreign policy positions on North Korea by spearheading dialogue with Kim Jong-Un in Singapore in 2018 and again in Vietnam in early 2019. Initial optimism surrounding the talks has subsided, however, as the last round ended abruptly over a misunderstanding regarding the parties’ demands and expectations. North Korea, it seemed, was only willing to permanently shut down the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex in exchange for relief from UN sanctions, while the US expected complete denuclearisation.²²

20 DIRCO, “South African Government’s Position on the Reported Sixth Nuclear Weapons Test Conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)”, September 5, 2015, <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2017/dprk0905.htm>.

21 DIRCO, “South African Government’s Position”.

22 C Seong-Chang, “Reasons for the DPRK-US Summit Collapse and the ROK Government’s Task: Encouraging the Exchange of UN Sanctions Relief with a Step Further from Yongbyon Factor”, *Sejong Commentary* 2019-6 (March 1, 2019).

Figure 1 Global nuclear weapon stockpiles (2018)



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2019: Armaments, Disarmament & International Security* (Solna: Oxford University Press, 2019), 10, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/yb19_summary_eng.pdf

Strengthening South Africa's engagement on nuclear non-proliferation

In this contested space, questions arise regarding South Africa's capability and place in pushing a peace and security agenda globally and on the continent. To be effective, and to continue to play a leading role, it must implement its agenda more smartly. This policy insight makes a case for South Africa's continued leadership in the realm of nuclear security.

Van Wyk argues that South Africa conducts 'niche diplomacy' in the area of nuclear security issues, which began when it voluntarily disarmed its nuclear arsenal in the early 1990s.²³ Besides signing on to the NPT and the IAEA Safeguard agreements, South Africa became actively involved in the denuclearisation of the African continent when it participated in and facilitated the signing and ratification of the African Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Treaty (more commonly known as the Pelindaba Treaty) in 1996.

23 Van Wyk, "South Africa's Nuclear Diplomacy".

This was swiftly followed by its signing on to a number of nuclear export regimes. These actions deftly positioned South Africa as a global norm entrepreneur in nuclear diplomacy, increasing its power, prestige and influence. In 2017, as part of the New Agenda Coalition of middle powers united on nuclear disarmament, South Africa pushed for the TPNW, which was passed by the UN General Assembly on 7 July 2017.²⁴ It is considered a missed opportunity that the country has been unable to chair the 1540 Committee of the UNSC during its current tenure, which would have given it an opportunity to lead discussions on current nuclear security threats at the UNSC.²⁵ Its failure to take up this position is largely owing to the fact that it was unable to volunteer for this role, because of delays in staff deployment ahead of its assumption of the UNSC role in New York.²⁶ Instead, the chairmanship was taken by Indonesia.

The emerging importance of the humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons has given non-nuclear weapons states such as South Africa a greater voice in the nuclear weapons debate

Although the country may have missed out on an opportunity to spearhead anti-nuclear weapons initiatives at the UNSC during its current tenure, other global avenues remain open. One of them is the Review Conference of the NPT that will take place between April and May 2020. Swart argues that the emerging importance of the humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons has given non-nuclear weapons states such as South Africa a greater voice in the nuclear weapons debate.²⁷ She further notes that South Africa has an important role to play in leading and building bridges in consolidating an African position on nuclear non-proliferation, saying that an 'African common position on nuclear disarmament could serve both to consolidate African support for the humanitarian consequences process and to prepare the ground for possible negotiations on a nuclear ban treaty', as well as improving African countries' performance in the preparatory meetings of the NPT and the Review Conference.²⁸

24 Van Wyk, "South Africa's Nuclear Diplomacy", 89.

25 The 1540 Committee was established after the adoption of Resolution 1540, which affirms that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery constitute a threat to international peace and security. The resolution obliges states, inter alia, to refrain from supporting by any means non-state actors in developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery. See 1540 Committee, "General Information: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)", <https://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/about-1540-committee/general-information.shtml> for more information about the committee's agenda, mandate and scope of work.

26 Personal interview, Foreign Policy Analyst, Pretoria, December 6, 2019.

27 Sarah Swart, "An African Contribution to the Nuclear Weapons Debate", *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 753-773 (doi:10.1017/S1816383115000843).

28 Swart, "An African Contribution", 764.

It is vital, however, to bear in mind that Africa (and indeed South Africa) can contribute only marginally to these global debates. Baklitskyi has outlined how the adoption of the humanitarian initiative in the 2015 Review Conference was seen as a non-starter for nuclear-weapons states because it calls for a legal framework to eliminate nuclear weapons:²⁹

For their part, the nuclear-weapons states rejected this approach, maintaining, contrary to the opinion of the majority of member states, that there is no need for urgent disarmament actions, and joined the non-nuclear weapons states in discussing terminology instead of substance.

Considering these challenges, it would be in South Africa's interests to pursue a more strategic approach to nuclear security threats – one based on a careful calculus of partners, issues and resources. To this end, championing initiatives such as 'Friends of the Chair' – understood as informal groups of states formed to support the peacemaking of the UN³⁰ on issues in Iran or the Korean Peninsula over and above the work being done in the UN General Assembly and other spaces – might be an important way to press forward on solutions to the current security threats. Gauging the appetite for this kind of intervention could be explored through the Arria-Formula Meetings at the UNSC, which replicate UNSC deliberations in a more informal and open manner, making them more accessible.

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South Africa should also use its term as AU chair in 2020 to work towards a unanimous African position on the need for nuclear disarmament, the African safeguarding agenda and strengthening of the oversight mechanisms of the Pelindaba Treaty, and closer AU Peace and Security Council – UNSC cooperation on nuclear disarmament and nuclear threats. South Africa is strongest when it can work with African partners on a common agenda, when it is also more able to reach out to other partners.

Finally, South Africa, with its African and global partners, can play an effective role in supporting the peaceful use of nuclear technology to support development, an important quid pro quo for the valuable and important stance that most developing countries have

29 Andrey Baklitskyi, "The 2015 NPT Review Conference and the Future of the Nonproliferation Regime" (Washington DC: Arms Control Association, July/August 2015), <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2015-07/features/2015-npt-review-conference-future-nonproliferation-regime>.

30 Theresa Whitfield, "A Crowded Field: Groups of Friends, the United Nations and the Resolution of Conflict" (Occasional Paper, Centre on International Cooperation, New York, Volume 1, 2005), https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/ACrowdedField_WhitfieldCIC2005.pdf.

taken on nuclear disarmament. This is a crucial confidence-building measure that can support peaceful nuclear cooperation in the long run.

Conclusion

Today the world faces renewed threats to nuclear security on a number of fronts. Escalating tensions between Iran and the West and the unabating conflict in the Korean Peninsula, coupled with growing unilateralism by the US (in particular), mean that these conflicts are becoming more unpredictable and therefore more fragile.

2020 is shaping up to host a confluence of important dates for South Africa on the global and continental stage – particularly as it coincides with important milestones in the advancement of nuclear diplomacy. Between April and June 2020 the Conference of States Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty will meet in Pretoria and New York, and the Review Conference of the NPT will commence. This, coupled with the fact that South Africa will also chair the AU in the same year and continue its second year on the UNSC, gives it a unique opportunity to elevate the issue of non-proliferation and disarmament and advance Africa's perspectives in both forums.

Advancing a 'Friends of the Chair' model of engagement on the Iranian and Korean issues may be an expedient way for South Africa to put forward solutions to these global nuclear challenges, while skirting some of the contentious political impasses developing at the NPT around disarmament. It may also provide an opportunity for the country to show leadership in nuclear diplomacy issues – thereby continuing a long-established legacy – and drawing on alliances and partnerships to not only promote multilateral cooperation but also advance its normative agenda.

Integral to this is an understanding that global security issues such as Iran and North Korea are central to South Africa's national interests and that South Africa has an obligation (despite dwindling resources) to remain active in global issues. This understanding will prove essential in driving the political will necessary to overcome the everyday realities facing the country as it struggles to revive its economy.

Economic revival, while of utmost importance, cannot replace the work done to extend South Africa's soft power on the continent – and globally – in striving to achieve a peaceful, prosperous and just global order.

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Cover image

Seoul, South Korea: People watch TV showing a North Korean missile launch at the Seoul Railway Station on October 2019. North Korea fired what was believed to be a submarine-launched ballistic missile from waters off its east coast, South Korea's military said, demonstrating its nuclear delivery capabilities just days before resuming denuclearization talks with the United States (Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images)

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